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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 21, 2017.

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

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

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

RELEASE SANDY PHAN-GILLIS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, China is illegally imprisoning an American citizen, Mrs. Sandy Phan-Gillis. March 19 marked the 2-year anniversary since Sandy illegally was incarcerated by the Chinese Government.

Sandy is from Houston, Texas. She has lived there for almost 40 years. She worked tirelessly to improve U.S. relations with China. She believed that closer engagement would improve the lives of both Americans and the Chinese.

As a member of the Houston Mayor's International Trade and Development Council, Sandy traveled to China in March 2015 with Houston Mayor Pro Tem Ed Gonzalez. Their purpose was to help a trade mission to promote business between Houston, Texas, and China.

It was on this trip when Sandy was unlawfully arrested by China's State Security. The Chinese accused her of being a spy for the FBI. She was thrown into solitary confinement and subjected to torture and relentless questioning.

Mr. Speaker, there are worldwide horror stories about Chinese prisons. Sandy was hospitalized twice because of the treatment by China's spy agency while she was incarcerated in China.

Sandy suffers from several serious medical conditions. The Chinese threatened to take away her access to medicine, basically threatening to kill her, unless she confessed to being a spy. She even suffered a fear-induced heart attack because of their brutality while she was in custody.

Sandy's false imprisonment is a travesty and a farce.

Here is a photograph of Sandy before she was imprisoned in China.

Her lawyers and her family have never received a copy of the warrants for her detention or her arrest. It took the Chinese over a year while she was in jail before they even charged her with a crime. She was not allowed to speak to a lawyer for over a year.

According to the Chinese Government, Sandy was spying for the FBI back in the nineties—that was over 25 years ago—but the Chinese Government has not been able to provide a scintilla of evidence to back up their outlandish false claims.

The FBI has stated Sandy never, ever has worked for them, and her passport shows that she never traveled to China in the timeframe the Communist State Security accuses her of going on spy missions in China. In fact, there is documentation proving Sandy was working in Houston, Texas, at the time.

Mr. Speaker, I am a former judge, and I have looked at the evidence in this case. There is no evidence, and she should be released. The Chinese allegations are a total illusion on the part of the Communist government.

Sandy has been denied the basic rights she is entitled to, even under Chinese law and international law. The United Nations has reviewed Sandy's case and determined that she had been arbitrarily arrested and that her rights have been violated. After 2 years in jail, she has not had the chance to have an appearance before a judge.

Sandy spent her entire life trying to improve China's trade relations with the United States, and for her efforts, she was put in jail by the Communist Chinese.

If Sandy isn't safe in China, then no American is. On any given trip, an American citizen like Sandy can be snatched by the Communists and put in jail just on a whim.

Supposedly, the State Department has raised Sandy's case with their Chinese counterparts over 20 times, but more pressure needs to be applied. We know that China is a gross human rights violator. They persecute minorities in their country.

China cannot be allowed to illegally detain and torture an American citizen and face no consequences for their unlawful acts. Hopefully, Secretary Tillerson will make freeing Sandy a top priority for this administration.

The last time Sandy's husband, Jeff, whom I have met with, was able to speak with her was way back in September of 2015. Sandy has already missed out on 2 years of her life with her loving husband and her daughter.

It is time to let Sandy go. She is not guilty of any crime. The only crime being committed is by the Chinese Government for their false imprisonment of an American citizen.

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.
Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

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And that is just the way it is.

REPUBLICANS PUSH THROUGH THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, this week we will consider the most important bill that this House will consider in this Congress.

Every day we are hearing from more and more Republican Members of this House and of the Senate who oppose—who oppose—who oppose—the dangerous healthcare bill on the floor this week.

Just yesterday, conservative Republican Representative JUSTIN AMASH tweeted the following—a very conservative Republican from the mid-part of our country said this: ''While I've been in Congress, I can't recall a more universally detested piece of legislation than this GOP healthcare bill.'' Or health no care bill.

This is just the most recent in a long list of statements by Republicans on the demerits—demerits—of the bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

It is interesting that they have named it the American Health Care Act. The only thing they struck from our title was ''affordable.'' It should tell you something about the bill. They replace it with a system that requires Americans to pay more and get less.

This bill has been rushed through the committees without a single public hearing—not one, no testimony or expert view. And when the committees marked it up, it did not have what we call a CBO score.

That is simply Washington-speak for the agency that is nonpartisan, bipartisan, with the Director appointed by the Republicans to give us the advice of the consequences of the enactment of such legislation.

They came back and told us that there would be 24 million less Americans insured by 2026. That would total 58 million uninsured Americans as a result of this bill just 9 years from now.

Republicans are rushing it to the floor for two reasons. First, they know that if the American people see what this bill would do and what it would cost, it wouldn't pass.

As a matter of fact, we have some information on that already because, at town meeting after town meeting after town meeting that Republicans have held and Democrats have held on this bill, the overwhelming number of people that came to those town meetings said: This is a bad bill. It will hurt us. It will hurt our health care. It will hurt our families. It will hurt our children.

We are rushing this bill that was introduced just some 2½ weeks ago. It was introduced on a Monday night, late at night. It was marked up less than 36 hours later in both committees. And they were so intent on getting it marked up and speeding it along that they held a hearing for 26 hours straight. Excuse me. It was not a hearing. No witnesses. They just held a markup for 26 hours straight.

Now, I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that millions of Americans were awake at 4 a.m. in the morning to see what the committee was doing. Obviously, I am not sure of that at all. Perhaps that was the strategy.

Now that the CBO score which I just related to you has been released, we know the harm that this bill will bring. As I said, 24 million Americans kicked off their insurance, including 7 million Americans who are currently covered under plans provided by their employers, premiums for individual policyholders rising 24 to 29 percent.

This is not my view. This is the Congressional Budget Office, whose Director was appointed by this Republican Congress. His predecessor, Dr. Elmendorf, testified in a hearing that we held, because Republicans refused to hold a hearing on this bill, and he agreed with the Republican-appointed Director and Congressional Budget Office.

So you have a bipartisan agreement that this bill will harm Americans—and not just those 24 million Americans. It will harm all Americans because their premiums and copays and deductibles will go up. States will be forced to drop 14 million Americans from Medicaid—and I understand there is a manager's amendment that is going to make it worse—while cutting benefits and provider payments.

A less fiscally sustainable future for Medicare, they shorten the life of Medicare's fiscal sustainability by 3 years, from 2028 down to 2025.

The list goes on, Mr. Speaker, of the reasons why this bill would be a disaster for families in our country.

The second reason they pushed the bill through so quickly is because they wanted to bring it to the floor this week—not next week, not the week after, not after thorough consideration, not after hearings, not after listening to the American people, but this week.

Why this week? Because this week marks the seventh anniversary of the enactment of the law they are seeking to repeal, in other words, optics, spin, propaganda, message. That is what their timeline and their bill are all about: messaging—not results, not reform, political messaging.

This is the fulfillment of a campaign pledge based on a premise that is no longer sustainable. Seven years after the law's enactment the facts are clear. It has expanded coverage, improved benefits, banned discrimination against women and people with preexisting conditions and disabilities, and prohibited annual and lifetime limits on coverage.

Now, they keep some of those things in their bill because they were so popular they thought they couldn't get rid of them. But they have voted 65 times to repeal all those benefits.

Is the Affordable Care Act perfect? Of course not. In the areas where it has fallen short, let's fix it—together.

But this bill—this bill repealing the law and making Americans pay more for less—will throw our healthcare system into turmoil and put millions of families and small businesses at risk. That is why doctors oppose it. That is why hospitals oppose it. That is why senior organizations like AARP oppose it. There are literally 1,000 organizations, plus, that have opposed this legislation.

We are now hearing reports, Mr. Speaker, that Republican leaders are making secret backroom deals with individual Members in order to win their support, the kind of desperate maneuvering that shows how unpopular this bill is.

Republicans, Mr. Speaker, must remember that, as the governing majority, they will be responsible for what happens to our healthcare system under their watch. And I do not just mean this bill. I mean the lack of certainty and the turmoil that they have been creating for the Affordable Care Act market since not only Trump was elected, but since they started attacking this bill some years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my Republican friends, for the sake of their constituents, for the sake of the children of this country, for the sake of those who are at risk because of health challenges that confront them, I urge my Republican friends to abandon this dangerous bill and instead work with us to strengthen our healthcare system for all of our citizens.

□ 1015

CONGRATULATING ROTARY CLUB OF MIAMI

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Rotary Club of Miami on its 100th anniversary, which will be celebrated through the Century of Service Gala this Saturday, March 25.

The Rotary Club of Miami is the fifth oldest rotary club in Florida, and has been working around-the-clock to make positive and long-lasting contributions to our beautiful south Florida community. Through community service projects and philanthropy, this organization has helped establish several institutions that aim to assist some of the most vulnerable members of our society, including the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, the YMCA of Greater Miami, and Boys Town of Florida.

Since its inception, the Rotary Club of Miami has been headed by extraordinary individuals with a vision to make south Florida an even better place in which to live. Its first president was Dr. James Jackson, who was

instrumental in establishing Jackson Memorial Hospital, which is now the third largest public hospital and the third largest teaching hospital in our great country.

Another Miami staple of the Rotary Club of Miami is the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, which was established by one of the club members, and is ranked the number one eye hospital in the United States.

The Rotary Club of Miami also helped found one of the largest burn centers in the south, the Bone and Tissue Bank at the University of Miami. And the Rotary Club of Miami has also supported education by providing scholarship opportunities for high school, college, and postgraduate students.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the Rotary Club of Miami for its impressive legacy. I thank everyone who is involved in this club supporting this wonderful organization. And I wish the members of the Rotary Club of Miami much continued success in the decades to come.

TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSMAN ROBERT GARCIA

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a former Member of the House, Robert Garcia, or, as we used to call him, Bobby, who passed away nearly 2 months ago.

I had the opportunity to serve with Bobby for only a few months before his retirement, but during that short time, I was able to see firsthand his commitment to our great Nation.

Bobby was a patriot. After graduating from high school, Bobby joined the Army and went on to serve as part of the Third Infantry Division in the Korean war, where he earned two Bronze Stars.

As the first Hispanic woman elected to Congress, I have been invigorated by Bobby's unwavering passion to fight for better opportunities for our Hispanic community. He was a founding member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute and NALEO, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, to ensure that more Hispanics become involved in our political arena.

Bobby was also instrumental in guaranteeing that Hispanics were counted in the U.S. Census. One of Bobby's legacies, Mr. Speaker, was the creation of free enterprise zones designed to spur job creation and economic opportunities in inner city neighborhoods. Bobby also led the effort to establish the Martin Luther King national holiday.

The loss of Bobby's experience and knowledge is felt in New York, in Puerto Rico, and all across our country by everyone who benefited from his contributions. Bobby Garcia's memory will stand as a great example of a tenacious public servant and a remarkable life lived.

REPUBLICAN ATTACK ON MEDICAID

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, one of the most disturbing aspects of the Republican attack on the Affordable Care Act and the success we have had in extending care to Americans has been the specific attack on Medicaid. Fourteen million of the 24 million people who will lose coverage under the Republican bill are under the Medicaid program. Medicaid is critical to the provision of health care in the United States. Medicaid covers more people than Medicare.

Medicaid expansion has been transformational in the 31 States that took advantage of the provision in the Affordable Care Act to provide coverage to people who make up to 138 percent of poverty—roughly $16,600 for a single individual and almost $34,000 for a family of four.

Until then, Medicaid has provided extension of care to the elderly, to the poor, and to the disabled. It was helpful, but very restrictive. In some cases, people who earned a modest sum—$7,000, $10,000, $12,000—were ineligible, especially in those 19 States that refused to take advantage of the opportunity to expand the Medicaid coverage at Federal expense.

Mr. Speaker, this is America. So even though these poor, disabled people did not have access to Medicaid, many of them did ultimately secure health care. But they got it too late. They got it in the emergency room. They didn't get it in a clinic in a timely fashion. And, of course, the cost for that charity care in emergency rooms or in clinics was borne by the rest of us in increased costs for our insurance.

The Republican draconian provisions, even before they put into effect an absolutely unnecessary and unenforceable work requirement, will be devastating to millions. Bear in mind, these people now are receiving care in an appropriate clinic session. They will be getting it now when it is too late, and that burden shifted on to the rest of us.

There will be a tax credit that doesn't help people who don't have enough money to buy meaningful coverage in the private market. Under the Republican plan, coverage will become worse, deductibles and copays will become higher, and we risk destabilizing the insurance market for the rest of us.

Now, we have heard on the floor, in committee, and on the news shows our Republican friends and the President talking about the Affordable Care Act is in a death spiral and that the insurance industry is collapsing. Hardly.

There was a fascinating article in the weekend New York Times that looked at the insurance industry. Since March of 2010, with the passage of the Affordable Care Act, the overall stock market has more than doubled. It has increased 136 percent. But the managed care health organizations have increased their stock value almost 300 percent. The largest, UnitedHealth, 480 percent.

A signal of an industry in a death spiral?

Absolutely not. The companies are healthy and investors are bidding up their stock. The CBO report that our Republican friends did not want us to have before we voted on the bill in committee in the middle of the night testifies to this underlying stability of the insurance market and the Affordable Care Act.

Medicaid under the Republican plan will be shifted back increasingly to the States, which have repeatedly proven that they are incapable of maintaining high eligibility funding to help the poor and the near poor. And when budget crunches hit, it is the poor who suffer most with restrictions in their coverage.

We have also heard that the Republican plan will provide much-needed flexibility. That is nonsense. There is already ample flexibility under the Affordable Care Act. I represent Oregon. We were able to negotiate an agreement with the Federal Government under the 1115 waiver program that other States have that represented a unique partnership with the Federal Government to achieve better care, better results, and restrain Medicare costs. We have got the flexibility. There is no need to destroy the program.

OBAMACARE IS FAILING HOOSIERS

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

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come here to the floor and talk about what is really happening under the Affordable Care Act, better known by the American people as ObamaCare.

I just left a meeting with the President of the United States where he lobbied my colleagues to make clear to the American people what a disaster this law has been and why the law needs to be repealed and replaced with something far better.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that ObamaCare is failing Hoosiers. Healthcare costs continue to rise, and people have less coverage and less choice today than ever before. No doubt, some have benefited from the law, but millions more Hoosiers have been hurt by the law and are worse off today than they were before this law was passed.

I have heard from countless Hoosiers in the Sixth District of Indiana, who are hurting under ObamaCare and who have sent me here to repeal this disastrous law.

There is one message from a constituent from Greenfield who said: ''I am a perfectly healthy human being, and I used to pay $230 a month with a $500 deductible for my health care. Since ObamaCare, my premiums have risen to over $1,480 a month with a $10,000 deductible.''

Or a dad in Shelbyville, who lost the healthcare plan he liked when

ObamaCare took effect, and whose prescription costs for his daughter have now doubled and tripled under ObamaCare.

Or the owner of a small telecom company in southern rural Indiana, who tells me that he and his employees have faced higher health insurance rates every year since ObamaCare with out-of-pocket costs increasing as well, not to mention the endless paperwork and red tape. He says: ''ObamaCare has been an absolute disaster for small businesses and our employees.''

I heard from a cancer survivor from Vevay, whose plan went from $199 a month to over $800 a month, and who couldn't keep her plan or her doctor. She says: ''I am a cancer survivor, and the old policy has taken me through three surgeries and worked well for me. Now we're paying over $1,300 a month with a $5,000 deductible, and the policy paid nothing the entire year. Then, we received a notice that, in 2017, the premium would raise again.''

Or the family physician from Muncie, who told me his patients have ''more limited options, longer wait times for approval of vital procedures and medications, and—through the confusing nature of the health insurance marketplace—have ended up with plans they didn't understand and couldn't afford.''

Or the hardworking mom and wife in Shelbyville, whose husband lost hours at work because of ObamaCare's full-time employee mandates, and whose own health insurance increased in cost with less coverage. She says: ''We work hard for our benefits, and now the benefits are terrible. I am paying more for worse coverage, and we lost income. It was a double whammy.''

These Hoosiers and so many others are being crushed by ObamaCare and its burdensome taxes, mandates, and fees. We can do better for Hoosiers, and this week we will. We will start the process of repealing ObamaCare and replacing it with something better.

This week, Congress will vote on the American Health Care Act, the first phase of our plan to repeal and replace ObamaCare. This is a transformational change that will do away with ObamaCare's costly mandates, provide much-needed relief to Hoosiers, and create a healthcare system that actually lowers costs and increases choice. We are going to keep our promise, come together, and get this done.

□ 1030

ENDING FEDERAL MARIJUANA PROHIBITION ACT

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

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1227, the Ending Federal Marijuana Prohibition Act, which I have introduced with my Republican colleague, a fellow Army veteran and former prosecutor from the State of Virginia, Congressman TOM GARRETT, where we are seeking to address our outdated and widely problematic marijuana laws by federally decriminalizing marijuana.

FBI reports have shown that, in 2011 alone, an individual in the United States was arrested for marijuana use, sale, or possession every 42 seconds—every 42 seconds—mostly in poor and minority communities. Our current laws are turning everyday Americans into criminals, sending them to jail, ruining their lives, tearing apart families, and wasting huge amounts of taxpayer dollars to arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate people for marijuana use, a drug that has been proven time and time again to be far less dangerous than alcohol both for individual consumers as well as for the people around them.

Dr. Donald Abrams, who is chief of oncology at San Francisco General Hospital, has talked about how, in the 37 years that he has worked and served as a physician, the number of patients that he has admitted to his hospital with marijuana complications is zero. The number of patients that he has admitted due to alcohol use is ''profound.''

So, rather than actually helping people, our current laws are turning them into criminals, forever impacting their future and the future of their families. Over the years, we have spent hundreds of billions of dollars locking people up for nonviolent marijuana offenses, creating strain within our criminal justice system, and clogging court calendars, resulting in further overcrowding of our prisons.

Now, just a few weeks ago, I had the chance to go and visit a number of our prisons and jails in Hawaii, where I saw firsthand the crumbling infrastructure, the extreme overcrowding and facilities in dire need of upgrades, as well as the shortage of services that are actually needed to help rehabilitate people and reduce our recidivism rates.

So whether you personally think that marijuana use is good or bad, whether you would choose to use marijuana or not, the question is: Should we really be sending people to jail and turning them into criminals for it? The answer is no. The fiscal impacts and the social impacts of our current policy are having devastating ripple effects on individuals and our communities and are only continuing to perpetuate the problem.

For example, the contradiction that we see currently between State and Federal laws on marijuana has created a serious problem for many of our local businesses. I have talked with local bankers in my home State of Hawaii who expressed great frustration, and even confusion, about the contradiction between our laws with the fact that even though our State of Hawaii has legalized and authorized marijuana dispensaries to grow, process, and dispense medical marijuana, Federal law prohibits banks and credit unions from offering any type of financial services to both businesses and individuals whose financial transactions have anything to do with marijuana.

So what this means in practical terms is that our State-recognized and licensed medical marijuana dispensary owners as well as their employees can't open a bank account. They can't get a loan from our local bank. The businesses, literally, have to hold thousands, or even millions, of dollars from their transactions and have to conduct their transactions in cash. Businesses that provide services to these medical marijuana dispensaries are also unable to access financial services due to the gaps between Federal and State law.

So as we look at ways that we need to update our outdated drug policies and the need for us to reform a very broken criminal justice system, we need to take into account the growing body of evidence that suggests the medicinal benefits of marijuana, including, preventing epileptic seizures, reducing anxiety, and even halting the growth of cancer cells.

However, the FDA still currently classifies marijuana as a schedule I drug, basically saying that marijuana is just like heroin, LSD, and MDMA, ignoring the fact that at least 28 States, including my home State of Hawaii, have already accepted the medical use of marijuana under State law.

In addition to passing H.R. 1227, we need to require the FDA to remove marijuana from schedule I based on State-accepted medical use. These reforms that we are calling for in this bipartisan bill are common sense and they are long overdue, long overdue changes that will help to reduce the strain on our criminal justice system, create certainty and reduce contradictions and confusion between State and Federal law, and update those Federal laws to actually meet the needs and progress that States are making across the country.

REPEAL AND REPLACE

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, any discussion of the American Health Care Act needs first to consider where we would be without it.

ObamaCare is collapsing. More people are paying the State tax penalty or claiming hardship exemptions than are choosing to buy ObamaCare policies. In a third of the counties across America, there is only one provider to choose, and we are now seeing counties where there are no providers at all.

ObamaCare premiums soared an average of 25 percent last year, and we are warned that this year will be worse. I have strongly advocated that the House address this crisis in a single, comprehensive bill that fully repeals ObamaCare and replaces it with a healthy, competitive market.

Instead, we have to rely on the reconciliation process in order to bypass Democratic obstructionism in the Senate, and this only allows us to repeal parts of ObamaCare and enact only parts of a replacement. Finishing the job will require administrative actions and followup legislation in the Senate, both somewhat speculative enterprises. So we need to ask if this bill alone is enough to produce a better healthcare system for the vast majority of people.

Its biggest defects are its failure to restore to consumers the failure to shop across State lines and to fully free consumers from having to purchase coverage they don't need and don't want. I am afraid in States that have insurance commissioners who refuse to approve innovative replacement plans, consumers will be stuck in a market still governed by ObamaCare mandates. This will require followup measures.

Critics cite the Congressional Budget Office estimate that 24 million Americans will lose their coverage, but this conclusion is largely based on the premise that unless people are forced to buy health insurance they won't. In fact, people won't buy health insurance that is not a good value for them; and, clearly, they believe ObamaCare isn't.

We envision a vigorous buyer's market where plans across the country compete to offer consumers better services at lower costs, tailored to their own needs and wants. This is the AHCA's biggest achievement: replacing coercion with choice for every American.

It ends the individual mandate that forces Americans to buy products they don't want. It ends the employer mandate that has trapped many low-income workers in part-time jobs.

It begins to restore consumers' freedom of choice, the best guarantee of quality and value in any market.

It allows Americans to meet more of their healthcare needs with pretax dollars.

It relieves the premium base of the enormous cost of preexisting conditions by moving them to a block-granted, assigned risk pool.

In making this transition, though, it is important to leave no one in the lurch, and that is where we need to heed the CBO's warning. The fact that many low-income families could no longer afford basic health care is what produced ObamaCare in the first place.

Now, when fully implemented, our reforms will correct the government mandates that trapped people in restricted markets that forced health care out of reach. But until then, the CBO warns that a 64-year-old, for example, earning $26,500 will see her out-of-pocket health costs balloon from $1,700 to $14,600 per year. This is neither morally defensible nor politically sustainable.

The Budget Committee adopted my motion, on a bipartisan vote, to ask the House to correct this inequity by adjusting the tax credits to assure that health plans are within the financial reach of every family. I want to thank the leadership for responding to this motion by creating architecture in the bill to shift an additional $75 billion for this purpose.

As our pro-growth economic reforms cause incomes to rise and our healthcare reforms bring healthcare costs down, families will be earning more and will be paying less of what they earn for their health care, and reliance on these tax credits will recede.

But we need a bridge from the present to the future, and we simply can't get there without addressing the bill's initial impact on older, low-income Americans.

It is also important that we assure stability in the Medicaid system as we transition to flexible, State-run programs that correct the inequities of ObamaCare that have pushed the elderly, blind, and disabled to the back of the Medicaid line. This bill does so.

I wish it did everything necessary to restore an optimal health insurance market, but it moves us toward that goal. And even as a stand-alone measure, I am confident that it will ultimately create a market in most States that will produce better services, greater choices, and lower costs for the vast majority of Americans.

THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT HAS IMPROVED AMERICAN LIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, this is a monumental week here on Capitol Hill as we will decide the fate of health care in America.

Despite the evidence that the Affordable Care Act has made a positive difference in the lives of everyday Americans, Republicans are set to destroy it. But the Affordable Care Act has improved the quality of life for tens of millions of people all across this country.

As a result of the Affordable Care Act, people born with preexisting conditions can no longer be denied health insurance.

As a result of the Affordable Care Act, young people can remain on their parents' health insurance all the way through to the age of 26.

As a result of the Affordable Care Act, women can no longer be discriminated against with respect to the issuance of insurance simply based on their gender.

As a result of the Affordable Care Act, seniors are paying less for lifesaving prescription drug medication.

As a result of the Affordable Care Act, more than 1 million people throughout this country—including in rural America—are able to receive substance abuse treatment because of them being caught up in the opioid addiction epidemic.

The Affordable Care Act has made a positive difference in the lives of everyday Americans, yet this President says it has been a disaster. This is the same President who, for 5 years, perpetrated the racist lie that Barack Obama was not born in the United States of America, who said that he received more votes than Hillary Clinton, who claimed that there were more people at the inauguration than in 2009. This is an individual who still maintains that his predecessor, Barack Obama, committed a felony and ordered a wiretap, despite testimony from the FBI Director to the contrary.

Let's be clear. What will be an unmitigated disaster is TrumpCare, which House Republicans are working to jam down the throats of the American people.

TrumpCare, the Republican healthcare plan, will result in 24 million Americans losing their health care.

TrumpCare, the Republican plan, will gut Medicaid, stripping it of $880 billion, taking dead aim at seniors, the poor, and the afflicted.

TrumpCare will impose an age tax on people between the ages of 50 and 64, causing some in that category who are currently paying approximately $1,700 per year to pay close to $14,000 in age tax—on people between 50 and 64.

□ 1045

That is TrumpCare, the Republican plan, an unmitigated disaster taking dead aim at the American people. It will result in tens of thousands of Americans dying. It is a death sentence. Seniors will die. The poor will die. The chronically ill will die. Rural Americans will die. People between the age of 50 and 64 will die. And the executioner will be the authors and those who support the Republican healthcare plan.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

MNIKESA'S ACA TESTIMONY

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the testimony of one of my constituents. Her name is Mnikesa Whitaker-Haaheim. She is a fifth-generation, college-educated woman, founder of Ballet Haven, a rigorous dance training program. She is an English teacher who has won the Teacher of the Year award twice. And I regret to tell you that she is also living with and dying from a debilitating disease, and these are her words:

''The debate about healthcare has turned into something of a spectacle—as if it exists apart from the flesh and bones that are experiencing the consequences of the decisions being made. I think it is exceedingly important to talk about the felt experience of illness.

''The feeling like an elephant's sitting on my chest—daily—because I

have pulmonary fibrosis. No, I have never smoked. Not cigarettes. Not anything. Ever. I am simply sick. The feeling of my leg bones splintering, waking me up with the pain, several times a night, several times a week. Each leg is splayed beneath me as if I'd fallen from a window. Of course that's not what happened. This is just what joints and muscles feel like as part of my rare disease.

''The feeling of having a widespread flu-like, bone-crushing ache that does not end. I don't have the flu. I have a rare, autoimmune disease. This is what my entire body feels like 90 percent of the time. The feeling of choking without warning, regularly on coffee. On water. On my own spit. This is what my disease feels like.

''The feelings I'm talking about are what it is like to not be able to take a deep breath, ever, because over 70 percent of my lungs have turned to hardened, stony, scar tissue. The feeling of not even remembering what it is like to take a deep breath.

''Because my particular disease is one that is categorized as autoimmune, it would be several months before we got the correct diagnosis; autoimmunity is notoriously difficult to diagnose.

''And unless you are a specialized medical professional or happen to know someone who is afflicted by rheumatoid disorders, you have likely never heard of what I have: anti-synthetase syndrome—scleroderma. It is rare, progressive, and aggressive. Often it is fatal, especially with the amount of lung damage that I have incurred.

''When after 2 years of chemotherapy, the progression of my pulmonary fibrosis and overall disease process was not successfully remaining stable, I had to go on supplemental oxygen. Within 6 months, I was getting so sick that I eventually had to medically retire at 36 years old; it was a heartbreaking decision.

''I loved my job, and I was good at it. Without the protections afforded to me through the Affordable Care Act, my oxygen, the cost of seeing my numerous specialists, paying for 14 medications, admissions to the hospital, and life-threatening emergency trips to the ER would be nothing short of financially catastrophic for my family.

''A rare disease like mine baffles many doctors. It has not been uncommon for my caretakers to have to spend hours on the phone with insurance companies fighting for a drug that is literally thousands of dollars but necessary for my treatment.

''When you have a rare illness, you often have to try new things. Insurance companies will unabashedly see you as a risk. Why? You are expensive, rare and dying. That is an unholy trinity.

''But since the Affordable Care Act, my medications have been affordable. Access to care is not accessible if you cannot afford it, and what the ACA has done is create a safeguard so that the care that my doctors have prescribed for one of their sickest patients is truly accessible to that patient because I can afford it.

''I come from a family who has, for generations, always worked and always paid into 'the system.' There are next to no services available for a relatively young woman like me at social services. I know. I've checked. I am not old enough for a full teacher's pension, but do receive a small disability allowance. I receive a small Social Security check, but I am well below the poverty level.

''I need you to understand that people like me are not asking for anything for free. I am willing to continue to pay for the quality health care that I have had. I am willing for there to be changes made to it.''

''I find it unconscionable, however, that decisions can be made regarding life and death without actual regard for the felt lives and actual deaths that you will be responsible for if you repeal the ACA.

''I do not know the course that my disease will take. But I have the blood of some powerful ancestors flowing in me, and their fight for life continues in me as well. I am honored to do so in their memory and on behalf of the millions of Americans who do not have the words or the ability to speak for themselves yet are terrified of losing their affordable, solid coverage under the ACA.''

Those were her words—and she is not alone in her fear of repeal. Mr. Speaker, I will enter into the RECORD testimony from other women in my district whose lives have been changed by the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. Speaker, we owe it to Mnikesa and everyone like her across the country to protect their health care and to reject this repeal bill.

MICHIGANDERS WILL LOSE COVERAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the American Health Care Act.

This week, the Republicans will call for a vote to push 24 million Americans off of their health care and transfer massive healthcare costs on working families across the country.

Today I will take a moment to talk about the impact that TrumpCare will have on my district, the 14th District of Michigan. Under this bill, 70,000 constituents of mine will lose coverage by 2026.

One of the pillars of the existing Affordable Care Act were allowing States like Michigan—who, for the record, has a Republican Governor who worked hard to make sure that we were able to have Medicare expansion so that we could use the Affordable Care Act in Michigan.

One of the pillars of the Affordable Care Act was to expand Medicaid coverage to millions of people. According to the statistics from Healthy Michigan, which is our process for affordable health care in Michigan, over 650,000 Michiganders enrolled and gained access to health coverage.

In Oakland and Wayne Counties, which I represent, there are over 140,000 individuals enrolled in Healthy Michigan, the Affordable Care Act. Under the Republican bill, these same Michiganders will lose the coverage that they depend on for their long-term care.

Approximately 200,000 seniors, disabled individuals, children, and women who receive care through traditional Medicaid will be severely impacted by the Republican health plan. That includes half of all the children in Michigan, including over 100,000 children in my district alone.

Republicans are using the repeal-and-replace legislation once again to target women's health by defunding Planned Parenthood. No matter how many times it has been substantiated, it is a fact, it has been stated, the Republicans do not seem to understand or refuse to accept the fact that Federal dollars do not pay for abortions.

Planned Parenthood provides a variety of preventative care, including contraception and cancer screening for millions of Americans and women in this country.

Instead of allowing Planned Parenthood to continue their important mission of providing women across the country with quality health care, Republicans have decided to jeopardize the health of millions of Americans because of a blatantly partisan witch hunt.

I would like to take a minute to share a letter one of my constituents wrote me about her experience with the Affordable Care Act:

''As a self-employed person, the first time in my life I've been able to have health care in Michigan has been through the Affordable Care Act, and I still only very, very rarely go to the doctor.

''But I'm happy to pay into the system every month because I believe that's what it means to be a good citizen: that a healthy community is a safer community, a happier community, and a more creative community.

''Health care is a very important issue to me. My brother has cystic fibrosis, and it is only through Medicaid expansion that he is still able to receive health care.

''The thought of the Medicaid expansion being phased out and my brother being somehow responsible for paying for tens of thousands of dollars per month for necessary medication destroys me.''

Mr. Speaker, my constituents deserve better. I urge my colleagues to oppose TrumpCare, the American Health Care Act.

I will stand here and say that the Affordable Care Act is not perfect, but if we really do the job that we are sent here to do as Members of Congress, we would sit down together and fix what is wrong with our existing healthcare

program so that every American will be able to continue to stay on their health care, still be able to allow their children to stay on their health care, and still be able to get health care without being penalized for a pre-existing condition.

Let us work together to make health care affordable for all Americans.

CRITICAL PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

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

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the Republican plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act and to address two critical public health issues that are important to the families of Maryland's Fourth Congressional District.

Nearly 26 million Americans are estimated to have chronic kidney disease. 700,000 people, including 3,000 in my district in Prince George's County, have irreversible kidney failure or end-stage renal disease often because of complications of diabetes and high blood pressure, where you cannot survive without a kidney transplant or dialysis treatment. And 70 percent of those patients are on dialysis treatment at least three times per week.

This is a serious issue for us to consider today because nearly 50 percent of all end-stage renal disease patients rely on Medicaid. If we pass the Republican plan to gut Medicaid, we are making life-and-death choices for these patients who are disproportionately seniors, minorities, and some of our most vulnerable neighbors.

I saw the potential impact of these brutal cuts on my constituents when I toured a DaVita Dialysis facility in my district. Nearly half of all people with end-stage renal disease in Prince George's County are being treated at a DaVita facility. There I got to speak to several patients receiving lifesaving treatment, and I heard how important it was for them to have access to dialysis.

Many of these patients simply would not get care if it wasn't for the Medicaid expansion, subsidies to afford quality health coverage, and the consumer protections under the Affordable Care Act that prevent health plans from denying coverage because of pre-existing conditions and prohibiting insurers from dropping people from plans when they become ill. These are real people who will suffer the consequences of our actions if we pass this pay-more-for-less bill.

As Republicans rush to pass this bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with more expensive and worse care, we are also turning a blind eye to the impact on the opioid crisis that is ravaging many of our communities. In my district in Anne Arundel County, the number of people killed by heroin and opioid overdoses in 2016 was more than the prior 2 years combined.

□ 1100

Records show there have been more overdoses in the first 3 months of 2017 than all of 2016. And last week alone, over a 24-hour period, there were 16 overdoses and 3 fatalities in Anne Arundel County. The Republican bill offers no solutions for this drug crisis. In fact, it makes it worse by dramatically cutting Medicaid and ending the requirement that addiction services and treatment be covered by States.

Because of the Affordable Care Act, 1.3 million people are receiving treatment for substance abuse disorders or mental illnesses under Medicaid expansion. In Maryland, Medicaid pays for nearly 40 percent of all addiction treatment medication.

Without this expansion, the clear majority of those people would either fall into the treatment gap, unable to receive substance abuse treatment because of a lack of insurance or public funds, or be forced to wait months or years to get into publicly-funded treatment programs.

The so-called flexibility Congressional Republicans want to give States would only mean less funding for substance abuse. This is a step in the wrong direction, at a time when we are facing this urgent public health crisis.

Reducing access to addiction treatment would lead to more drug overdose deaths and more trips to our emergency rooms. We know that untreated addiction leads to more crime and more homelessness. Again, I worry that the proposals being offered in this House could cost the lives of thousands of people in my State and around the country.

The GOP plan for repeal will hurt a lot of people: the 24 million Americans who will be uninsured; the millions of middle-income families, especially the elderly, who will pay thousands of dollars more for care; the 33 million children and 10 million people with disabilities impacted by Medicaid cuts; the 390,000 women who will lose care if Planned Parenthood is defunded.

But these aren't just numbers in a CBO report, they are the dialysis patient in Upper Marlboro, or the family whose son is finally getting the addiction treatment he needs in Severna Park.

Mr. Speaker, let us think about all of these families before we vote on this ill-conceived and ill-advised bill. Let's not put partisanship before patients.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 2 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

Pastor Chris Bell, 3 Circle Church, Fairhope, Alabama, offered the following prayer:

Our Lord and Father, I come to You today in this place of government of the Nation that I love to ask for Your hand of blessing and guiding wisdom upon the leadership of these United States of America.

We know that all good gifts come from Your hand, and this beautiful and free Nation in which we live is one of those gifts.

We thank You today for the many ways that You have blessed us, from our bountiful natural resources to our freedom to work and to speak and to worship.

And it is because of these blessings that You have also given us a great responsibility to our world to live and to lead by example.

So, by Your grace today, I humbly ask that You would help these leaders of our Nation and our citizens to be a continued light in the darkness.

We confess now our need for Your help and Your guidance. Please place Your mighty hand on us today, for You have told us in Your Word to trust not in our own understanding, but to trust You and acknowledge You in all of our ways and You would make our path straight. May we do this today and in the future.

It is in the name of our Lord, Jesus, I pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. BYRNE 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.

WELCOMING PASTOR CHRIS BELL

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BYRNE) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, it is written in Philippians 4:6:

> Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

As this body debates important issues, it is critical we begin with prayer. I am honored my constituent Pastor Chris Bell was able to lead today's prayer.

Mr. Speaker, Pastor Bell studied theology and communications at the University of Mobile and Luther Rice Seminary, and he has over 20 years of ministry experience.

Pastor Bell is currently the lead pastor at 3 Circle Church in southwest Alabama. 3 Circle Church has five campuses, with weekly attendance reaching over 2,000 people.

In addition to their regular services, Pastor Bell and 3 Circle Church have a focus on mission and serving others locally, regionally, and around the world. These missions make a real difference.

So on behalf of Alabama's First Congressional District, it is an honor to welcome Chris and his wife, Nan, to the people's House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

THE THREAT OF NORTH KOREA

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was grateful to participate in a panel discussion at the dynamic Hudson Institute about the growing threat North Korea poses to the United States and our allies, with Hudson fellow research director Rebeccah Heinrichs and senior fellow Arthur Herman.

We discussed the growing threat of North Korea's testing medium- and long-range missiles, the gruesome capabilities of conventional weapons, and their rapidly proceeding nuclear program.

We further discussed the importance of missile defense, specifically the THAAD missile system and the boost phase interceptor system, and how they could deter the threats from North Korea.

I also spoke on the bipartisan resolution that I introduced last week, a resolution condemning North Korea's development of their missile program, calling for the consideration of all available options to protect the people of South Korea.

I look forward to working with Foreign Affairs Chairman ED ROYCE, Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and President Donald Trump to ensure that all options are on the table when responding to the growing threat posed by North Korea.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

WORKING TOGETHER ON THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will celebrate 7 years since the President signed the Affordable Care Act into law. The following day my colleagues across the aisle will vote to eradicate the undeniable progress it has made.

On Thursday, when the House votes on the American Health Care Act, we will vote to take away health insurance from millions of Americans; we will vote to raise premiums on seniors; we will vote to damage women's healthcare programs; and we will vote to reduce access to care for LGBTQ people.

Policies that were once derided as socialist are now mainstream, considering so many of the popular parts of ACA are retained in the Republican replacement.

The majority of the country does not want to repeal ACA but to improve it in a bipartisan way. The only way to create a meaningful change for the American people is to work together across the aisle.

As Lincoln said: ''We cannot escape history. We . . . will be remembered in spite of ourselves.'' A vote to repeal ACA will be a stain on that legacy.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY

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

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize and celebrate National Agriculture Day.

I proudly represent the largest agriculture-producing district in the country, the big First District of Kansas. In my home State, it is Kansas Agriculture Month, a month to celebrate our State's largest economy.

Today is an opportunity to remind my colleagues of the hardworking Americans who produce the bounty of American harvest and livestock. The food that sustains them doesn't originate in a grocery store.

Let us remember as we move forward with regulations and with trade policy that there are families with generations of history on their farm or ranch who face the consequences of every decision. They feed America and our economy.

This day and every day, we are grateful that God made a farmer.

CELEBRATING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I, too, am excited to celebrate the signing of the Affordable Care Act signed by President Barack Obama.

In the hearing last Thursday of the Budget Committee, we noted that Medicaid that provided health insurance in this bill, now the TrumpCare bill, will be cut $880 billion for working people, for seniors in nursing homes, for the blind, and for the disabled.

We note that this meaningless TrumpCare amendment, for which the President is now rallying his troops, coming up to the Hill two and three times—maybe he will be here tomorrow—is as meaningless as the first part of it was: 24 million Americans will lose their insurance—TrumpCare will double that amount in 2026; 52 million will not have insurance—giveaways to billionaires, 1 percent of the rich people in America; and destroying 2 million jobs.

But what I am most concerned about is my constituent in the Heights who could not take her medicine before the Affordable Care Act. Tragically, a young woman had a stroke and a heart attack and now is in a nursing home. She uses the health insurance of Medicaid, $880 billion, to provide for her lifeline, but yet TrumpCare comes to destroy that.

I want to celebrate the Affordable Care Act because it saves lives.

COMMEMORATING ROSIE THE RIVETER

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in commemoration of National Rosie the Riveter Day, an effort to raise awareness for the 16 million women working during World War II.

These women left their homes to work or volunteer full-time in factories, farms, shipyards, banks, and other institutions in support of our military. These brave women worked with the USO and the Red Cross. They drove trucks, riveted airplanes, collected critical materials, rolled bandages, and served on rationing boards.

These Rosie the Riveters embodied the ''we can do it spirit'' forever connected with them by Norman Rockwell's iconic painting.

As we mark the contributions and triumphs of women this Women's History Month, I am proud to join the effort and recognize these brave heroes with a National Rosie the Riveter Day.

I am especially proud to represent a ''Rosie'' and Bucks County native, Mae Krier, for her efforts in advocating for this long-deserved recognition. Mae was a riveter on Boeing aircraft in Seattle. She was a builder of B–17s and B–29s, which went off to fly missions over Europe.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize National Rosie the Riveter Day and have the pleasure of welcoming Rosies from around the Nation here at the Capitol today.

THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT AND OPIOID ADDICTION

(Mr. SCHNEIDER asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, across the country, communities are struggling with an epidemic of opioid addiction, abuse, and overdose; and across party lines, we all agree something must be done to address this crisis.

But the repeal-and-replace plan proposed by my Republican colleagues adds fuel to the fire. The bill eliminates the Affordable Care Act's requirement that Medicaid cover basic mental health and addiction services.

Economists estimate 1.3 million Americans receive treatment for substance abuse and other mental health disorders through the Medicaid extension.

Across the States that have expanded Medicaid, like Illinois, the program is used for 27 percent of all addiction treatment.

We are not going to arrest our way out of this epidemic; instead, we need to treat addiction like the disease that it is. Removing the mental health coverage requirement pulls the rug out from more than a quarter of all those seeking help from opioid addiction.

Mr. Speaker, opioids now kill more Americans than car accidents. The Affordable Care Act offers hope and is saving lives. The Republican efforts to repeal the ACA is a bleak step backwards. I strongly urge my colleagues to vote against this legislation.

ADVOCATING FOR PATIENT-CENTERED HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a practicing physician who believes that we must repeal the disaster that ObamaCare has brought us and return to a patient-centered system.

My patients have dealt with skyrocketing premiums, unaffordable deductibles, and a formulary so restrictive it is an insult to call it a real treatment.

Medicaid expansion is no better and gives only the illusion of sound coverage. These patients can't find doctors. They can't find specialists who will see them, which results in more hospital admissions, more unnecessary hospital referrals, more expensive trips to the emergency room, and higher costs to the program and to the taxpayers.

There is nothing compassionate about cramming more people into a failed system just so politicians can score political points. All they have done is force a second-class insurance onto first-class people.

All Americans deserve better than ObamaCare. We can provide a better healthcare delivery system for them where everyone has access to affordable care, and it starts with the passage of the American Health Care Act.

LOSING HEALTHCARE COVERAGE UNDER THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

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

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, since January I have received hundreds of messages from constituents who are panicked that they will lose healthcare coverage with the Republican plan, where people will pay more for less.

Although the talking points of the Republican plan references access to health care, care will only be accessible for people with enough money to pay.

A message I received from Vera Caldas:

> My husband has leukemia, and if it wasn't for the ACA, he would be dead by now. I am living in fear that if he loses ObamaCare, that will mean his death sentence since he won't be able to afford insurance to continue his treatment.

A message from Lee Portillo:

> The ACA allowed my wife to start her Silicon Valley beach business in Venice, California and still have access to health care. The ACA is pro small entrepreneur and gives us the freedom to work on our own and still have insurance.

My constituents, like millions across the Nation, are afraid they might be one of the 14 million people who will lose coverage if the Republican plan is passed.

□ 1215

TRUMPCARE IS A TERRIBLE BILL

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this week Republicans plan to vote on TrumpCare to push 24 million Americans off healthcare coverage and saddle families across the country with massive health costs. TrumpCare is an assault on families and a broken promise to the American people.

Twenty-four million people will lose their health insurance. It will terminate the assistance that people depend on to afford quality coverage. It will destroy the Medicaid program, the bedrock of our social safety net for more than 50 years.

Medicaid covers 74 million children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and seniors with long-term care needs. Under TrumpCare, deductibles and out-of-pocket costs will skyrocket and families will be exposed to crushing health costs. Premiums will rise dramatically—particularly, for older Americans—because TrumpCare allows insurance companies to charge five times higher than what others pay for the average, five times higher for our near senior citizens. This means thousands and thousands of dollars more in premiums, which low-income seniors cannot afford.

TrumpCare shortens the life of the Medicare trust fund by 3 years and cuts $880 billion from Medicaid.

Mr. Speaker, this is a terrible bill, and it puts the entire healthcare system at risk.

DO NOT REPLACE THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT WITH TRUMPCARE

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

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about the Republican's sick plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with TrumpCare, where the wealthy will get huge tax cuts and the rest of America will pay more for less. Twenty-four million will be losing their doctors, their nurses, and their medicine, and my constituents are frightened.

Just ask Amy Bernard, whose mom, Francine, like 70 percent of Americans living in nursing homes, pays for it with Medicaid. Francine was a teacher. She planned for her retirement. She had savings, Social Security, and a pension. Then she was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, and she spent all her savings on in-home care. And then one day after a near-fatal fall, her family realized she needed around-the-clock care.

TrumpCare means tax cuts for the very rich, less for the rest of Americans, gutting Medicaid, and sending folks like Francine to the curb.

DO NOT REPEAL THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday we will vote on the future of health care for America. We need to do what is right for our district and for our constituents. We need to protect the Affordable Care Act.

The ACA works, but like America's other great healthcare program, Medicare, it needs a little time to get there. Today, Medicare covers over 55 million Americans and is a staple for our seniors; but back in 1965, people had a very negative opinion of Medicare. Today, 52 years later, Medicare is one of the most efficient healthcare systems in our country.

I urge my colleagues: Do not repeal the Affordable Care Act. If you do, 24 million Americans will lose their coverage and older Americans will pay higher premiums. I ask my colleagues to keep the ACA. Let's do the right thing.

BIG PHARMA IS A BIG WINNER IN TRUMPCARE

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, Thursday these Republicans are awarding a

new grand prize, a big-dollar award. Unfortunately, the contest has been rigged so that your name is not in the winner's circle. Instead, the world leaders in prescription price gouging, highest drug prices to Americans than just about anywhere, are declared the winners of the grand prize in the Trump Republican sweepstakes that they call repealing ObamaCare.

With Big Pharma's exceptional, distinguished service in charging astronomical prices and blocking competition to their government-approved monopolies, these Republicans have included a no-strings-attached $25 billion tax windfall for Big Pharma in their so-called ObamaCare repeal.

Now, with their latest late-night amendment, the prize is already growing bigger and bigger by the moment. And all of those American families that are out there struggling, trying to access lifesaving drugs, they don't win a dime in this contest.

Mr. Speaker, let's reject this phony Republican giveaway where only Big Pharma is the big winner.

HONORING THE LEGENDARY CHUCK BERRY

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

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a legendary American musical genius, an inaugural member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and a former neighbor and friend of the Clay family for six decades, the father of rock and roll, the immortal Chuck Berry, who died this past Saturday at the age of 90.

I grew up just a few blocks away from the Berry residence. My sisters and I came up with his kids, and our families knew each other very well. Chuck Berry was one of the first Black superstars whose innovative music was not only popular with African-American audiences, but with young music fans around the world.

Since his death, tributes from across every spectrum of music have poured in, including The Rolling Stones, U2, Sir Paul McCartney, Stevie Wonder, Bruce Springsteen, and hundreds of other internationally known artists who were deeply influenced by Chuck Berry's magical music.

On behalf of my family, I want to express our deepest condolences to the Berry family; and on behalf of music fans everywhere, I want to give thanks for the life of this legendary American treasure whose legacy and unique sound will live on for generations, a true St. Louis original, the real king of rock and roll: Chuck Berry.

TRUMPCARE IS A TOTAL DISASTER FOR AMERICA

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

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, TrumpCare—a total disaster for America. Here it is by the numbers, per our own nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office: 24 million Americans will lose coverage, with 14 million Americans losing coverage in year one; 15 to 20 percent increases in health insurance premiums in year one; and if you are paying $1,700, you will be paying $14,600 in premium increases if you are a 64-year-old making $26,500 per year.

But where does the money go? $592 billion in tax cuts for the rich. That is where it is going.

The conclusions: TrumpCare robs health care from American working families to give tax cuts to the rich.

So vote ''no'' on TrumpCare to vote ''yes'' on health care for America's working families.

EMBRACE THE GOAL OF HEALTH CARE FOR ALL OUR CITIZENS

(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 country, since Harry Truman, has had an illusive but desirable goal, and that is health care for all of our citizens. We made two strides: one in 1964, with the passage of Medicare; another in 2010, with the passage of ObamaCare.

We should be moving towards Medicare for all our citizens. Instead, this bill does not move forward. It goes back.

Number one, 24 million Americans will lose their health care.

Number two, Americans who have been living a life of toil and effort all of their lives from the ages of 50 to 64—at a time when they need health care the most—are in danger of losing it with the excessive tax that is being imposed on them by this bill.

Number three, our community hospitals, from the prairies of Nebraska to the hills of Vermont, those are critical institutions providing care. They have gone from red ink to black ink as a result of the Affordable Care Act. Every single one of those is in jeopardy, and that is going to deprive our citizens in those communities of access to affordable health care.

This bill must be defeated. Let's embrace the goal of health care for all our citizens.

REPUBLICANS SHOULD JOIN DEMOCRATS IN REJECTING TRUMPCARE

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, thousands of my constituents have contacted me very concerned about the Republican healthcare bill—TrumpCare—which would mean higher costs and worse care for hardworking families.

On the campaign trail, then-candidate Trump promised that ''everyone would be covered'' under his plan. We now know that is a broken promise, that under TrumpCare 24 million Americans will lose their health insurance—24 million people.

What kind of promise is that?

Then-candidate Trump promised that there would be no cuts to Medicaid, but he will cut $880 billion from Medicaid.

What kind of promise is that? A broken promise.

Seniors overwhelmingly voted for President Trump, but he has already forgotten them, imposing an age tax on them. If you are 50 to 64, fasten your seatbelts. You are going to pay five times what a younger, healthier person would pay for worse coverage.

This is a terrible bill. Democrats and Republicans should reject it.

TRUMPCARE MISSES THE MARK

(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, there is kind of a rather ridiculous healthcare bill that this body may or may not be considering soon.

First of all, it creates an entirely new entitlement program at the State level rather than the Federal level.

Second of all, in an unrelated matter, it provides huge tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires—mostly in New York and California—which has nothing to do with making health care affordable. I mean, it is fine. Republicans want to do that. We get that. They always want to cut taxes for millionaires, but don't put it in the same bill as we are here trying to provide health care for people and bring down our insurance rates.

Third of all, this bill that is supposed to somehow help is going to increase insurance costs to American families by 15 to 20 percent. Most families can't afford that, and 24 million people will lose their insurance.

So there is just no way, shape, or form that this bill makes any sense.

There are a lot of positive improvements and suggestions that we can make to the Affordable Care Act. There are a lot of great ideas with us providing a public option, more pricing transparency, a lot of great ideas that probably Democrats and Republicans support; but, frankly, they missed the mark on this bill.

These aren't ideas that Democrats or Republicans support, because they are bad ideas that cost families money.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 372, COMPETITIVE HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM ACT OF 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 209 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 209

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 372) to restore the application of the Federal antitrust laws to the business of health insurance to protect competition and consumers. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–8 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

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

□ 1230

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. 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. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on House Resolution 209, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today I am pleased to bring forward this rule on behalf of the Rules Committee. The rule provides for consideration of H.R. 372, the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act. The rule provides for 1 hour of debate for the bill, equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee. The rule also provides for a motion to recommit.

Yesterday, the Rules Committee had the opportunity to hear from Judiciary Committee Chairman BOB GOODLATTE and Congressman DAVID CICILLINE on behalf of the Judiciary Committee.

I thank Chairman GOODLATTE and the Judiciary Committee staff for their work on this legislation. As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I had the opportunity to review this legislation at both a committee hearing and a markup.

We heard from several witnesses at the Judiciary Committee hearing, including the bill's primary sponsor, Congressman PAUL GOSAR of Arizona.

In addition to the bill's sponsor and the Judiciary Committee, I would also like to recognize one of my colleagues from Georgia, Representative AUSTIN SCOTT, for his interest in this topic and leadership on this legislation. Congressman AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia testified before the Judiciary Committee on this bill and has worked actively to highlight this issue.

The issue of competition in the health insurance marketplace is not a new one, but it is one that deserves more attention. Legislation similar to the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act passed the House under a Democrat-led Congress in 2010 and under a Republican Congress in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, much of our attention on the floor this week is focused on making health care more affordable and accessible to the American people. The Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act is part of that plan.

From shore to shore, we have seen and heard stories about the soaring costs of health care and the health insurance markets that have been hamstrung by ACA regulations. As a result, insurers have fled the exchanges while consumer choice and access to quality care have disappeared along with them.

Today, more than ever, we need to institute reforms that restore options for Americans by encouraging healthy competition in the health insurance market. The problem actually dates back to the 1940s, and the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act helps address a problem that has increasingly demanded attention.

In 1944, Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court held, for the first time, that insurance was part of interstate commerce and was, therefore, subject to Federal antitrust laws. Congress responded a year later by passing the McCarran-Ferguson Act, which established certain exemptions from the Federal antitrust regulations for the business of insurance. That law remains in place today, and reexamining it in the context of our health insurance market has received bipartisan support.

The Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act would amend the 1945 McCarran-Ferguson Act to apply our three main antitrust laws—the Clayton Act, the Sherman Act, and the FTC Act—to the health insurance industry.

To be clear, this bill does not impose new or radical regulations upon the health insurance industry. It merely applies longstanding antitrust laws to the business of health insurance, laws that have applied to the rest of the economy for decades. By restoring the application of our competition and antitrust laws to the health insurance industry, we strengthen the foundation for a competitive health insurance market.

The high prices and lack of choices that patients find in health insurance flow back from a lack of competition in the market and a barrage of regulations. So it is past time that we reestablish a basis for a system in which insurance providers compete for customers in a patient-driven marketplace.

While we work to bring common sense back to health care, we also have to look at the broad context of where the industry is and how it got there. In that spirit, this bill recognizes the importance of open and free competition across the economy, including the healthcare marketplace. Part of the government's role is to guard the American people rather than creating special interest exemptions that ultimately work against the hardworking citizens. H.R. 372 establishes that there is no basis for further exemption of the health insurance industry from the Federal antitrust law.

Importantly, however, H.R. 372 also contains narrowly defined safe harbors to protect historically procompetitive collaborative activities that are unique to the business of insurance, including the collection and distribution of historical loss data and the performance of actuarial services that do not involve a restraint of trade.

The Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act is not a magic pill or a silver bullet, but it is a key component of our broader plan to restore competition and common sense to the healthcare marketplace.

The principles captured by this bill are part of our House Republican Better Way plan and a part of our plan to address the harm done that ObamaCare has brought on our healthcare system and those who depend on it.

I look forward to the underlying legislation once again receiving broad support from both sides of the aisle.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule today, one that provides for consideration of H.R. 372, the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017, a good bill that I support.

Mr. Speaker, the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act amends the McCarran-Ferguson Act so that the health insurance companies would no longer be exempt from Federal antitrust regulation.

Currently, unfortunately, most types of insurance, including property or life insurance, are exempt from Federal antitrust regulations and statutes. The McCarran-Ferguson Act makes it clear that the insurance industry heretofore has been regulated only by States. Additionally, the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission have retained authority for antitrust enforcement involving mergers and acquisitions of insurance companies, but not dominations of markets and competition.

As a result of this exemption, the health insurance industry does not

have to share pricing information, and actually can currently communicate with one another to fix prices. Now, that doesn't make sense.

I firmly believe that the more transparency in our healthcare system, the better off consumers will be. Repealing the health insurance exemption of the McCarran-Ferguson Act may improve competition, but it would almost also result in more transparency in health insurance. It is something that we sorely need. So I intend to join many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in supporting the underlying bill because it increases transparency.

The reality is that this bill does nothing to replace the protections of the Affordable Care Act. It doesn't even make a dent in addressing the many problems created by the Republican healthcare legislation, the American Health Care Act.

Mr. Speaker, so I don't want anybody listening to this to be distracted by a bipartisan bill that we hope becomes law. In any way, shape, or form, this bill does nothing when, in 2 days, we are considering a bill that threatens the health care for 24 million Americans, increases prices for Americans who are currently insured by 15 to 20 percent, and throws millions off of the rolls of the insured.

The Republican healthcare bill that is coming to the floor Thursday will cause a huge disruption in coverage for millions of Americans. It creates an entirely new entitlement program. It would throw 24 million people who currently have insurance out of insurance. And for anybody who still has insurance, their rates go up 15 to 20 percent.

How is that a good idea? It is not.

This bill today does nothing. Nothing. I don't even think the advocates of it would say it does anything to address those increases in costs for consumers or 24 million people losing their health care or the creation of a brand-new costly entitlement program in a time of record deficits.

For constituents—and we all represent people from our districts—for people like Greg and Nikita, Coloradoans who have shared their stories with me, the passage of the American Health Care Act, the Republican healthcare bill, would devastate their lives.

Greg was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer in 2014, in his midforties. After several surgeries, his doctors told him his condition is inoperable and could only be treated chronically by medication. It is a very expensive injection that has so far been successful, thank goodness, at keeping the tumor from growing and allowing Greg to live an ordinary life.

Now, Greg needs this shot every 3 weeks. It is thousands of dollars each time. And despite working at least two jobs, it is not something that Greg could afford to have—Greg would not have health care without the Affordable Care Act. He would have to quit his jobs and become destitute and go on Medicaid.

The Republicans are basically saying to people like Greg: We want you to be lazy. We want you to quit your job so you could have health care. We want you to live off the government dole of this brand-new entitlement program that we created to hand you money rather than work for yourself and pay for your own insurance.

That is the message the Republicans are sending to people like Greg across the country.

Nikita lives in Boulder and has spent much of her life battling endometriosis. In 2014, she was having trouble walking because of her condition and she missed work for a few weeks. After the passage of the Affordable Care Act, she was able to afford the surgery that she needed to improve her mobility and manage her pain.

In her message to me, Nikita emphasized that affordable health care is what allows her to work and to be a citizen that pays taxes and contributes to society rather than somebody who is shut in at home, living off the government dole like Republicans are trying to force her to do with the new entitlement program that they are creating.

If Nikita didn't have the healthcare coverage she obtained through the Accordable Care Act, she said that she would be on disability and Medicaid, costing the government far more money and preventing her the dignity of holding a job and working to support herself and paying taxes.

Both Greg and Nikita expressed fear that the benefits they receive under the Affordable Care Act would disappear if the Affordable Care Act is dismantled in favor of this new Republican entitlement program that encourages people not to work. The American Health Care Act threatens to pull the rug out from so many of my constituents and millions across the country while simultaneously raising rates by 15 to 20 percent for people who are currently insured and paying for their own insurance.

Look, H.R. 372 is a fine bill. Republicans are using it as a talking point, claiming that somehow it addresses costs in some meaningful way. And given how complicated the healthcare system is and the critical role that we all have to play in it and every little piece plays, it is important to lay out the facts of the Republican plan, which H.R. 372 does nothing to address.

It is a fact fewer people will be covered under the Republican plan. The Congressional Budget Office says 24 million people will lose their healthcare coverage over the next decade.

It is a fact that middle-aged Americans will pay five times more in premiums. The age tax is a big part of the Republican healthcare bill. Americans ages 55 to 64 will see their cost increase by over $8,000. Most of my constituents in that age group simply can't afford that every year.

It is a fact that those currently enrolled in Medicaid programs are at risk of losing their coverage. The Republicans' concern that Medicaid expansion to the Affordable Care Act was coercive, they should be equally concerned about the per capita cap in the Republican plan. It is the flip side of the same coin.

Those are just some of the many troubling facts about the Republican healthcare bill.

H.R. 372, removing the antitrust exemption, is a fine bill. It does nothing to address any of those problems or change any of those facts and figures that I cited as to why this bill doesn't fix health care.

In fact, frankly, this bill is a distraction from the real topic we should be discussing—how to improve health care in this country. I don't think we should improve it by giving tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires, forcing people like Greg and Nikita not to work and to be destitute in order to get health care and go on the government dole, creating a brand-new entitlement program that States administer, increasing the costs of insurance for people who are already insured by 15 to 20 percent.

Mr. Speaker, if those are the answers, what is the question? Is it how to make health care cost more and how to have less people covered?

If that is the question, the Republican bill is a good answer.

That is not the question my constituents are asking me, and I don't think it is a question their constituents are asking my Republican colleagues.

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

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT) to continue discussing the rule before us about the McCarran-Ferguson repeal.

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 372, the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017, which would take a big step towards creating a more business- and consumer-friendly insurance market that works for all Americans.

As I listened to the comments just before I stood up, I heard that this is a fine bill. It is more than a fine bill. This is a good bill. Let me tell you how I know it is a good bill—because, a few years ago, both NANCY PELOSI and MIKE PENCE voted for it.

Now, what the Democrats don't want to tell you is that on February 24, 2010, less than a month before the Affordable Care Act was signed into law, there was an agreement that allowing the insurance companies to be exempt from the antitrust laws in the country was a problem.

So how is it that with a bill that passed 406 ''yes'' votes to 19 ''no'' votes—when it came out of the dark rooms, the Affordable Care Act was brought to the floor with the comments of: Well, you will have to read it to find out what is in it.

Perhaps the Democrats should have read it to find out what wasn't in it, because the leadership not only sold America out, they sold them out. This bill passed 406–19. Yet, in the back rooms where they put the Affordable Care Act together, they didn't include the provision.

While the Affordable Care Act certainly has played a major role in the disruptions patients and providers have experienced, the decades-old special exemption—which they voted to take away, and then the leadership of the Democratic party gave it back to the insurance industry—shielding insurers from Federal antitrust laws has eroded confidence and competition in the marketplace. Fortunately, we have a vehicle before us to walk back this special deal.

The legislation currently before the House would inject much-needed competition into the health insurance market by eliminating the antitrust exemptions for health and dental insurers, leveling the playing field and giving consumers and providers more leverage and better options. There are very few antitrust exemptions in our country, and for good reason.

This exemption is not only damaging to the consumer when they purchase health insurance, but it damages the healthcare providers, further limiting consumers' access to services.

The dominance of the market that large insurers have enjoyed has forced many providers to move, close, merge, or sell to larger regional hospitals, impacting parties across the industry. In the 24 counties of Georgia that I represent, patients have few healthcare choices left that impacts their ability to receive quality care and negotiate a policy that meets their unique needs.

Echoing that sentiment, I think anyone who has skin in the game will tell you that a majority of the problems in the healthcare marketplace trace their roots back to a lack of competition.

□ 1245

Yet, the Democrats left the insurance industry exempt from the antitrust laws once again when they passed the Affordable Care Act.

While insurance companies have the power to negotiate, just as they proved in the negotiations with the Democrats on the Affordable Care Act, pharmacies, physicians, and hospitals are left without a seat at the table. When the insurance companies get to determine who is and isn't able to provide healthcare services, the insurer-provider relationship is closer to extortion than negotiation.

So why do we allow the health insurance industry that controls, through their contracts, who your doctor is, who your pharmacist is, which medicine you can get, and which hospital you can go to, to be exempt from the antitrust laws of the country? How could the Democrats do that to you in the Affordable Care Act?

By definition, health care and health insurance are not the same thing, but when one industry, one insurance company controls such significant portions of the cash flow of all of the providers in a region, no provider can stay in business without a contract with that carrier; therefore, the insurance company gets to determine who is and who is not able to provide health care.

Removing this antitrust exemption for health insurers means one more option for consumers, increased competition between providers, and greater certainty for insurers when it comes to hammering out policies and working for consumers across the spectrum. It should have been done long ago, but the Democrats turned their back on the American public and, again, granted the health insurance industry an exemption from the antitrust laws of the country.

While this is certainly not an end-all, be-all to reforming our broken and dysfunctional healthcare system, it is a commonsense step towards untangling the mess our health insurance marketplace has become.

I also think it noteworthy to mention, again, February 24, 2010, the Health Insurance Industry Fair Competition Act passed the House with a vote 406–19 only 1 month prior to the Affordable Care Act being signed into law. And yet, the American citizens, once again, were sold out by the Democratic Party.

I strongly believe this piece of legislation currently before the House lays a firm foundation in our work to fulfill our promise to fix our badly broken healthcare system. Today we have the opportunity to provide relief to consumers and providers alike, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 372, the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017.

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

Two weeks ago, the Republicans pushed ahead with their healthcare bill, despite not knowing the impact of the legislation. A week later, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office announced that the bill would take health insurance away from 24 million people and increase costs by 15 to 20 percent for those who currently have insurance.

Mr. Speaker, late last night the Republicans introduced a major manager's amendment that changes the bill, frankly.

Mr. Speaker, just as it was irresponsible to move forward without knowing the full effects of the original bill, it is completely reckless to even know whether this manager's amendment makes it better or worse and the impact that it has on health care for American families. It is reckless to consider and vote on their amended bill before the Congressional Budget Office even says how much it costs, or how much it will increase insurance by, or whether it throws people off insurance rolls.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule that would require a CBO cost estimate that analyzes the impact of any legislation amending or repealing the Affordable Care Act, as well as the impact of any manager's amendment to that legislation to be made publicly available before the bill may be considered on the House floor.

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH), the ranking member on the Committee on the Budget, to discuss our proposal.

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

The one question I think many Americans who follow this debate would be asking now is: What is the rush? What is the rush?

For 7 years now, our Republican colleagues have consistently said we are going to repeal the Affordable Care Act. More than 60 votes have been taken in this body to repeal the Affordable Care Act. We kept asking: If you are going to repeal it, what are you going to replace it with? You can't just say, do away with it, and leave millions and millions of Americans in the lurch.

So finally, 2 weeks ago yesterday, we have gotten their answer. TrumpCare, RyanCare, the American Health Care Act, call it what you will, we finally got an answer.

What has happened since those 2 weeks? We had no hearings on this bill. We had quick markups. They lasted a long time, but we had—the bill was introduced Monday night—markups in the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Ways and Means Committee on Wednesday. And this was on just a steamroller to try to get this accomplished before anybody knew what was in it.

Now, the CBO report from last week came out indicating things that I think most Americans would be frightened by. 24 million Americans lose their coverage over 10 years; but, more significantly than that, 21 million lose their coverage within 3 years; 14 million next year.

Consider that. All of the gains in coverage made under the Affordable Care Act done away with in 3 years. Premiums going up for Americans.

I can't believe Speaker RYAN tried to put lipstick on a pig. He said he thought the CBO report was really encouraging because, 10 years from now, premiums would be 10 percent lower. The only way they are 10 percent lower is because, under the TrumpCare, older Americans, 50 and older, in the individual market get priced out of the market with huge premium increases.

So they are gone. Only younger and healthier people are in there. Yes, premiums would be lower for them. Other people are out of business.

So that report comes out, causing a great deal of consternation on the part of the sponsors and supporters. They bring it, schedule it to come to the floor on Thursday, March 23, because they think that is cute because that is the seventh anniversary of the passage of the Affordable Care Act. But, again, no hearings, no real analysis; and what is more important, no CBO revised report on the changes that were introduced late last night.

This is outrageous. And I love to hear my Republican colleagues try to portray the process under which the Affordable Care Act was drafted and considered with some kind of nighttime secretive deal. They weren't here, most of them. I was.

I was on the Ways and Means Committee, one of the drafting committees. Fourteen months we worked on that legislation—14 months. Seventy-nine hearings in the Congress on that legislation. Hours and hours and hours of markups on that legislation. Cost estimates throughout the process. I can't imagine a more exhaustive and public process than we went through for the Affordable Care Act.

And here, 2 weeks from introduction to proposed passage, we have no real public discussion of a piece of legislation that directly affects the lives and probably, unfortunately, the deaths of many, many Americans.

So, Mr. Speaker, we don't need to rush to judgment. I don't think the American people are waiting around saying: I don't need to know any more; ObamaCare is so bad, and my life is so bad that I can't wait another 2 weeks to find out what this really would do to me and my family. No, we need to give more time.

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

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

Mr. YARMUTH. We don't need to do this this Thursday without a full rendering of the cost of the new manager's amendment to TrumpCare. We suspect, although we don't know, that it is going to look even bleaker; that more people will lose their coverage; that costs and rates will be higher. But shouldn't we understand exactly what those statistics are, what those projections are before we vote on something that is so significant for tens of millions of Americans?

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it is entirely appropriate that we require that a new CBO report be done on the manager's amendment before we vote on something that, again, means life and death to American families.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am awaiting the graphic presentation about some of what is at stake in this debate about the Affordable Care Act, the fundamental debate about whether we try to fix health care in this country, make insurance cost less, or whether we move backwards under this Republican healthcare proposal.

The Republican healthcare proposal would create an entirely new entitlement program administered by the States. In creating this program, it would throw 24 million people who have healthcare insurance today off of the insurance rolls. They would become uninsured Americans.

It would add an age tax on older Americans. It would also increase the cost of health care for people who have health care today and pay for it, by 15 to 20 percent. Now, they wouldn't be getting more for that 15 to 20 percent.

Mr. Speaker, if you can believe it, they would actually be getting less insurance for that 15 to 20 percent because many of the requirements that insurance has to have are rolled back, the Federal protections under this Republican healthcare bill.

Somehow, at the same time it does all these things, the same time it costs 24 million Americans their insurance, the same time it increases rates by 15 to 20 percent—and, by the way, these figures are from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, the head of which was appointed by Republicans.

These are solid predictions that are done by people who were appointed by Republicans. We are not citing any outside group or naysayers who don't like the bill. These are the objective Congressional Budget Office numbers that we are citing here in their entirety.

So, in addition to costing people 15 to 20 percent more, this bill also, for reasons unknown, gives an enormous multibillion-dollar tax break to millionaires and billionaires in New York and California. That is where most of them live. Now, there are a few in other places, of course, too.

But it is just unclear why, at the same time Republicans are trying to change the healthcare law, they want to go back to giving enormous tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We are not even talking the wealthiest 1 percent. We are talking, like, one-tenth of a percent who are going to see the bulk of the benefit from these tax cuts, at the same time that health care is being taken away from 24 million people who have insurance today, and at the same time those who are fortunate enough to be able to continue to have it will have to pay 15 to 20 percent more.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, this bill is so unpopular. If you are going to go through the trouble of creating an entirely new entitlement program, at least do it in a way where it actually helps people afford coverage versus hurts their ability to afford coverage.

Now, I gave the example in my remarks of Greg, and that is far from unique because people today, who rely on the subsidies to be able to get health insurance within the Affordable Care Act, if the Republican bill passes, would have to quit their jobs and rely on Medicaid instead, or they would have to take a lower-wage job. Instead of earning $40,000 or $50,000 a year, they would have to quit that job and try to take a minimum-wage job so they could qualify for Medicaid.

Essentially, this Republican healthcare bill is telling Americans, you need to be lazy and not work if you want health care because, if you want to work a job, we are going to take it away. We are only going to provide it if you quit your job or take a minimum-wage job under Medicaid.

So that is not the message or the incentives that we want to send to the American people. One of the great aspects of the Affordable Care Act is it actually, for the first time, provided an incentive for people to get increases in their wages, to get better jobs, to work additional hours.

Before the Affordable Care Act, we were locked into a scenario where people who were on Medicaid lost their Medicaid benefits if they got a raise at work, depending on the size of their family. It could have been a raise from, let's say, $14 an hour to $16 an hour. They couldn't work overtime. They couldn't work a second job, as so many people do to escape from poverty because they would lose their health care.

The Affordable Care Act said: You know what? We are going to allow you and encourage you to work that second job, to get a raise and support your health care as you make your way out of poverty into the middle class. What a great idea.

The Republican proposal creates a brand new entitlement program, but rolls back those affordability protections that help people work their way out of poverty, and leaves no alternative for people like Nikita and Greg, other than you have to quit your job or work a minimum-wage job because, otherwise, we are going to take your health care away from you.

□ 1300

That is the reason that the projections came back—no surprise—that 24 million people will lose their healthcare insurance. It is the reason that healthcare insurance rates will increase 15 to 20 percent.

We don't know the reason that they are also giving a tax cut to billionaires in the same bill. We know they want to do that, but they should do that in a tax bill. There is an effort at tax reform. I think they are talking about giving an additional tax cut to billionaires in that bill. That will be debated separately. But it is unclear how—or it is more than unclear as to why it would help make health care more affordable to give a tax cut to billionaires. It just doesn't make any sense. Let's debate that under a different bill.

I am happy to do that. As part of a broader tax proposal, we will see what else is in it. We know Republicans want to do that, but they shouldn't do that under the guise of health care.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, what you have here in this Republican bill, which this current bill does nothing to change—and this bill will pass, it has passed before, and we hope the Senate acts on it to remove the antitrust exemption. This bill does nothing to change the facts on the ground that the Republican healthcare bill that creates a brand new entitlement program would make Americans pay more for less, 24 million people would lose their insurance, there is an age tax on older Americans, guts Medicaid, huge tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires, increases of 15 to 20 percent for Americans who are lucky enough to retain their insurance, and discourages work and encourages people to be lazy at home to get health care.

It is the opposite of what we want to do. It is contrary to the American work ethic, and it is contrary to all incentives around cost containment. I hope—I really hope, Mr. Speaker—that the House defeats this awful bill to replace the Affordable Care Act, even as we pass some of these commonsense bipartisan measures like the one before us today that, around the edges, could potentially affect antitrust within insurance companies.

Mr. Speaker, the bill under consideration today is a commonsense piece of legislation. It has passed the House before. Ultimately, however, it distracts from the elephant in the room. The American Health Care Act is the Republican bill to roll back and change the Affordable Care Act and create a brand new entitlement program while increasing the insurance rates for American families, providing tax cuts to billionaires, and throwing 24 million people off of the insurance rolls.

My colleagues across the aisle had 7 years to work with us to improve the Affordable Care Act, but they refused to work with us to make health care more affordable and to expand coverage. Instead, they have drafted a bill that does the exact opposite. No wonder we were unable to find common ground when our goals were different.

The goals of myself and Democrats have always been to reduce costs and expand coverage. Reading into what the Republican goals must be if this bill meets them, it seems like they are working to decrease coverage and increase costs—the opposite of what we are working for.

How will my colleagues look into the eyes of a former veteran or a small-business owner or a middle class family or my constituents like Greg or Nikita and somehow tell them that they would be better off under a plan that forces them to quit their jobs and become destitute? How will Republicans defend the vote to senior citizens when the age tax in this bill will force most seniors to pay premiums five times higher than what others pay for healthcare coverage? What will my colleagues say to 24 million people who lose healthcare coverage entirely under this bill?

The Republican healthcare bill that this body will consider on Thursday will do extraordinary damage to the healthcare system and leave millions of Americans guessing as to how much healthcare costs will cost and what will be covered. The American healthcare bill threatens to roll back important protections in coverage gains delivered by the ACA, and discussion of anything else at this point is a diversionary tactic, plain and simple.

Mr. Speaker, let's defeat the previous question and figure out how much this mysterious manager's amendment even changes the bill for better or worse. My colleague, Mr. YARMUTH, made a very compelling argument about how we need to know the actual costs and benefits of any bill we vote on; yet, this body is being forced to vote blind on a manager's amendment that we saw for the first time today and could even change by tomorrow, and we won't even know how it affects the costs of this bill or how it affects the lives of Americans who have health care today or aspire to it.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to defeat the previous question and vote ''no'' on the rule, to vote ''yes'' on this commonsense bill to modify our antitrust statutes which Democrats and Republicans have supported overwhelmingly in the past, but never, not once, to take our eye away from the ball of trying to decrease costs rather than increase costs and trying to expand coverage rather than retract coverage.

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

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

I would just like to remind those from the House that if you do defeat this rule, you will not vote on this commonsense piece of legislation. So let's at least put the correct procedural order out there.

We need to vote ''yes'' on this rule and get on to the underlying piece of legislation, which is a piece that has passed this House not only unanimously by voice vote in the Republican Congress but also with an overwhelming vote just recently in the Democratic administration as well. So we are moving forward on this.

I think what is interesting here, and what I have worked on, and we are going to have a lot of discussion on for the next 2 days is repealing and replacing ObamaCare. I think it was interesting that my friend—we share many a night and day in the Rules Committee, we share different opinions, but he made mention of the elephant in the room. I will just make mention of the donkey in the room.

It is amazing to me now that we are actually concerned about people losing health care. We are actually concerned about prices going up. We are actually concerned about these issues that have been going on for 7 years. We are having an $800 billion tax because we have removed the taxes and impediments of ObamaCare. We are actually—instead of mandating the folks that they buy insurance that they can't afford and can't use, we are actually getting a marketplace that will actually give them better choices and results.

I think the interesting part here is not knowing the cost and benefits. Good gracious. All we have to do is look back over the last 7 years, Mr. Speaker. When we understand what is going on, let's also, as we throw out the discussion—it was made in comment by my friend, 7 years to fix. You can't fix broken in this regard. When he goes about it traditionally wrong, it is not fixing. When you take away the markets, when you take away the individual market, and when you are taking away the very incentives that actually are the underpinnings of our health care to enlarge and grow, if your goals were to reduce and expand, then you failed miserably. You have not reduced costs, they have gone up. You have not expanded choices, they have gone down.

I have listened to it about as much as I can right now. We are going to have the next 2 days to give people health. It is why we are over here for the majority speaking because of the failure of the ACA in ObamaCare. When we understand that, then we can look at pieces of legislation like the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act that should have been part of this a long time ago. Yet, we choose to begin discussions about a failure. It is about a failure.

Choose the status quo. Squint your eyes, look real hard, it is not getting worse, it is really okay, just help us tweak it, help it get better.

It is not getting any better. In fact, any insurance company is on a death spiral. ObamaCare is failing. Some of the CBO estimates about increased costs 10 years out are based on ObamaCare pricing. There wouldn't even be an ObamaCare plan in 10 years because it won't be there.

So we will have these arguments. We will have these discussions. But if you want to move forward a commonsense piece of legislation, if you want to move forward a bipartisan piece of legislation, if you want one that actually the American people sent us here to do to actually make things better, then vote ''yes'' on the rule and vote ''yes'' on the underlying bill because that is why we are here—real solutions from a real majority that will answer the questions and then gladly defend it to an American people who are tired of being told about and talked about and taking things away because we didn't read it to know what was in it. That is why, because you couldn't know what was in it.

Now we are going to tell you what is in it, and we are going to put back a

marketplace that actually works for Americans. When we do that, we will gladly put the market back there where they can actually have a plan they can afford and actually use. When we understand that, the health care and the plan we put forward will be one that works for the American people, not against them.

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

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 209 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS

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

SEC. 2. In rule XXI add the following new clause:

13. (a) It shall not be in order to consider a measure or matter proposing to repeal or amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PL 111–148) and the Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act of 2010 (PL 111–152), or part thereof, in the House or in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union unless an easily searchable electronic estimate and comparison prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office is made available on a publicly available website of the House.

(b) It shall not be in order to consider a measure or matter proposing to repeal or amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PL 111–148) and the Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act of 2010 (PL 111–152), or part thereof, in the House or in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, that is called up pursuant to a rule or order that makes a manager's amendment in order or considers such an amendment to be adopted, unless an easily searchable updated electronic estimate and comparison prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office reflecting such amendment is made available on a publicly available website of the House.

(c) It shall not be in order to consider a rule or order that waives the application of paragraphs (a) or (b).

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana). The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. 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 H.R. 1353.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 231, nays 185, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 176]

YEAS—231

Abraham
Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Guthrie
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Newhouse
Noem
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—185

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Grothman
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee

Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—13

Allen
Beyer
Deutch
Emmer
Fortenberry
Lewis (GA)
Marchant
Payne
Rush
Sinema
Slaughter
Thompson (MS)
Tsongas

□ 1335

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

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

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 176.

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

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. POLIS. 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 234, noes 182, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 177]

AYES—234

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Newhouse
Noem
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—182

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—13

Beyer
Deutch
Fortenberry
Lewis (GA)
Marchant
Norcross
Payne
Rush
Schweikert
Sinema
Slaughter
Thompson (MS)
Tsongas

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1342

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.

TRANSPARENCY IN TECHNOLOGICAL ACQUISITIONS ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1353) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require certain additional information to be submitted to Congress regarding the strategic 5-year technology investment plan of the Transportation Security Administration, 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 Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 414, nays 2, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 178]

YEAS—414

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano

Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
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Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—2

Hastings
Napolitano

NOT VOTING—13

Beyer
Deutch
Fortenberry
Lewis (GA)
Marchant
Payne
Rokita
Rush
Sinema
Slaughter
Thompson (MS)
Tsongas
Welch

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1349

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

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. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall Vote number 178 on H.R. 1353, I mistakenly recorded my vote as ''nay'' when I should have voted ''yea.''

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall Vote number 178 on H.R. 1353, I mistakenly recorded my vote as ''no'' when I should have voted ''yes.''

PRIVILEGED REPORT ON RESOLUTION OF INQUIRY TO THE PRESIDENT

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, from the Committee on Energy and Commerce, submitted an adverse privileged report (Rept. No. 115–54) on the resolution (H. Res. 154) of inquiry requesting the President of the United States and directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to transmit certain information to the House of Representatives relating to plans to repeal or replace the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the health-related measures of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1101, SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH FAIRNESS ACT OF 2017

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 210 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 210

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 1101) to amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to improve access and choice for entrepreneurs with small businesses with respect to medical care for their employees. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. In lieu of the amendment recommended by the Committee on Education and the Workforce now printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–9 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce; (2) the further amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

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

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may 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 210 provides for consideration of H.R. 1101, the Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2017.

President Trump promised to repeal and replace ObamaCare, which is negatively affecting our economy and causing great hardship on the American people. Congress is responding this week with multiple bills to do just that.

After years of endless premium increases, we must take steps to make health insurance more accessible and affordable, including for small businesses that employ the majority of Americans. H.R. 1101, the Small Business Health Fairness Act, will do just

that by helping to level inequalities between large and small employers, ultimately making health insurance more affordable for millions of Americans.

Simply put, the Small Business Health Fairness Act will empower small businesses to band together through association health plans to purchase health insurance. This will allow them to increase their bargaining power, negotiating for lower health insurance rates on behalf of their employees, just like their large competitors do.

Additionally, the bill will allow their plans to fall under the Employee Retiree Income Security Act of 1974, or ERISA, and the Department of Labor, just like the large self-funded employer plans, preempting a myriad of State regulations that often make insurance unaffordable for small businesses.

The usefulness of this legislation is easy to imagine. For example, a small accounting firm might employ just three or four people while the largest firms employ tens of thousands. If that small firm could join together with others just like it to provide health insurance through their national association, it could have the same bargaining power and be subject to the same regulation as the firm with thousands of employees. This parity means more options and lower costs for employers and employees.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation's small businesses were hit especially hard by the passage of ACA. In fact, a 2016 survey by the National Federation of Independent Businesses found that small businesses identified the cost of health care as their number one challenge.

An estimated 300,000 small-business jobs were destroyed, and an estimated 10,000 small businesses closed altogether due to the failed ObamaCare policies.

Since 2008, 36 percent of all small businesses with fewer than 10 employees have stopped offering healthcare coverage. This has resulted in less overall healthcare options for working families.

ObamaCare's compliance costs and mandates have resulted in $19 billion in lost wages for small-business employees.

The bottom line is that small businesses—the backbone of our Nation's economy—and their employees are feeling the pain of ObamaCare's failures and broken promises.

I meet with these small-business owners from south Alabama every day. They want to take care of their employees and provide them with high-quality health insurance. Through enacting the Small Business Health Fairness Act, we can help thousands of small businesses achieve that goal.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to point out that this legislation includes strong protections to ensure association health plans are solvent and that the families covered by them are indeed protected. A sponsor of a plan must be a bona fide trade, industry, or professional organization and can't be established for the purpose of providing medical care.

The sponsor must have existed for a period of at least 3 consecutive years before providing group health insurance coverage. The association health plan must be operated by a board of trustees and will be supervised by the Department of Labor. This will include minimum capital requirements and a requirement that plans have a stop-loss and solvency insurance.

Finally and most importantly, the bill prohibits association health plans from discriminating based upon health status and preexisting conditions.

Mr. Speaker, the Small Business Health Fairness Act is about ensuring our Nation's small businesses are afforded the same opportunities given to large corporations and labor unions. When similar legislation has been brought to the floor in the past, it has received strong bipartisan support, as I hope this bill will today.

Ultimately, this bill is just one part of our larger plan to rescue the American people from the failures of ObamaCare. This week, the House intends to vote to repeal ObamaCare, along with its mandates and its taxes.

But we do also understand that the pre-ObamaCare status quo is not acceptable. That is why the House is already moving to consider bills to give Americans the freedom, choices, and control they deserve.

Our solutions are built on free market and patient-centered principles. By getting the government out of the way and increasing competition, we can draw down costs and help Americans obtain health care that actually works for them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 210 and the underlying bill.

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

□ 1400

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule today that provides for consideration of H.R. 1101, the so-called Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2017.

This bill, first of all, from a procedural basis, did not allow even a discussion of the amendments that my Democratic colleagues brought forward to improve the bill. This rule has something called the structured amendment process, which basically means that Democrats are locked out from presenting our ideas for improving this bill. We are not even allowed a 10-minute debate or a vote on any of the ideas that many of my colleagues brought forward.

The gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) proposed an amendment to require the legislation only take effect if the Congressional Budget Office determined premiums for older workers wouldn't increase. Sounds like a reasonable idea to at least debate for an hour, 10 minutes. It is important to do.

The gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES) offered an amendment that would have required all association health plans to continue the 10 essential health benefits of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to obtain State certification—again, not even allowed to vote on her amendment.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT) offered an amendment to allow States to continue regulating any association health plan, including regulations related to benefits, consumer protections, and rating restrictions—not allowed.

These amendments would have improved the underlying legislation. They should have been allowed to proceed to the floor. Unfortunately, the only amendment that made it in was from the Republican side of the aisle, and all of the great ideas that Members on my side of the aisle offered were prevented from being even allowed to be debated under this restrictive rule.

I find it very troubling that my colleagues on the other side seem to prefer a partisan vote to collaboration and to considering valuable proposals that might help improve the quality of health care just because they happen to come from Democrats.

But there is a bigger issue here. Of course, in addition to the faulty process, the bill is simply a bad bill and does nothing to address the problems with the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, which is pending before this body.

One of the issues raised under this bill is it could lure away young and healthy workers, creating a distortion in the market. The ACA changed that practice by requiring health insurance sold through an association to meet the same insurance standards of coverage sold to the individual and small group market, preventing cherry-picking and providing a basic level of protection for consumers. This bill would roll back that progress, creating a separate set of rules for association health plans, essentially exempting them from complying with State regulations.

There is also little evidence that it has even been effective to expand coverage. That is why many consumer and advocacy groups, including, for instance, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, have come out opposed to this bill.

But even more disturbing is the fact that we are considering a bill that even its proponents would agree does not in any way, shape, or form replace the protections of the Affordable Care Act. This is a bill that is narrow in scope. In fact, when we marked it up in our committee, the Education and the Workforce Committee, that very same day, the Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees were marking up a bill to create a brand-new entitlement program, remove health care

from 24 million Americans who have it today, and increase costs by 15 to 20 percent for those who are paying for their insurance today.

At that time, the Republican healthcare bill had only been public for 24 hours. When the committees marked it up, we didn't even know how much the bill cost or how many people would lose coverage as a result. That information only came later, after committee members voted to amend or not amend the bill.

Frankly, it is unconscionable to deny people healthcare insurance. It may be a life-or-death proposition, and we need to do a better job understanding bills before we vote on them, which is one of the reasons that we need to make sure we know the cost of this so-called manager's amendment, these midnight changes to the repeal of the Affordable Care Act.

What is interesting with this proposed American Health Care Act the Republicans plan to bring to the floor, it was just reported—and I will be submitting the article for the RECORD—that the Republican bill actually results in more people being uninsured than if ObamaCare were simply repealed outright.

So rather than repealing it outright, what Republicans are doing is giving a tax break to billionaires, creating a brand-new entitlement program, throwing 24 million people off the insurance rolls, and increasing costs by 15 to 20 percent. It would actually throw less people off insurance if they simply repealed ObamaCare.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD an article from The New York Times.

[From The New York Times, Mar. 21, 2017]

The Upshot—Public Health

FEWER AMERICANS WOULD BE INSURED WITH G.O.P. PLAN THAN WITH SIMPLE REPEAL

(By Margot Sanger-Katz)

The Congressional Budget Office recently said that around 24 million fewer Americans would have health insurance in 2026 under the Republican repeal plan than if the current law stayed in place.

That loss was bigger than most experts anticipated, and led to a round of predictable laments from congressional Democrats—and less predictable ones from Republican senators, including Bill Cassidy of Louisiana and John Thune of South Dakota, who told reporters that the bill needed to be ''more helpful'' to low-income people who wanted insurance.

But one piece of context has gone little noticed: The Republican bill would actually result in more people being uninsured than if Obamacare were simply repealed. Getting rid of the major coverage provisions and regulations of Obamacare would cost 23 million Americans their health insurance, according to another recent C.B.O. report. In other words, 1 million more Americans would have health insurance with a clean repeal than with the Republican replacement plan, according to C.B.O. estimates.

The C.B.O. estimated what would happen after a simple repeal when it considered a bill that Congress passed last year. (President Obama later vetoed that bill.) The bill left parts of Obamacare in place, so the 23 million estimate didn't come with the kind of detailed analysis that accompanied last week's score of the American Health Care Act. But the similarity of the two estimates highlights some of the difficulties of the current proposal, both for Democrats, who are strongly criticizing potential coverage losses, and for the repeal-or-die crowd, who hate the structure of this new bill.

''It's reaffirmed how exceedingly complicated and convoluted the approach the House leadership took,'' said Dan Holler, the vice president for communications and government relations at Heritage Action, an advocacy group firmly in the repeal-or-die camp.

Late Monday, House leadership revealed a set of amendments to the bill, which will be considered when the bill comes up for a vote. But, if they are adopted, the changes are unlikely to have major effects on overall coverage numbers. If anything, the changes might lead to a larger increase in the number of Americans without health insurance.

The people who would end up without health insurance are slightly different in the two cases. The current bill would cause more people to lose employer insurance, while a straight repeal bill would most likely cause more people who buy their own coverage to become uninsured. A simple repeal would be worse for Americans with pre-existing conditions, but the current bill would be worse for older Americans who are relatively healthy. Both approaches would lead to major reductions in the number of Americans covered by Medicaid.

The bill that Congress passed in 2016 is the third scenario. It would have kept Obamacare's major insurance regulations on the books, including its rule that health insurers need to sell insurance at the same price to healthy and sick customers of the same age. It would have removed funding for the expansion of Medicaid, dropped subsidies to help people buy health coverage, and eliminated the individual and employer mandates in the law.

The results of those changes would be drastic: In a decade, 32 million more people would be without health insurance, according to the estimates. The C.B.O. essentially said it was a policy combination that would break the insurance market, resulting in substantially more people losing coverage than gained it under Obamacare.

The kind of full repeal that some Republicans are calling for would, of course, be hard to pass. Even if every member of their caucus supported the approach, most experts believe that repealing Obamacare's major insurance provisions would require a type of legislation that would be vulnerable to a Senate filibuster, and would thus require at least eight Democratic votes.

All three approaches would result in meaningful reductions in the number of Americans with health coverage. But, in the end, it appears that the long-term effects of the current Republican plan don't look that different from full repeal.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, Margo Sanger-Katz said, in part: ''But one piece of context has gone little noticed: The Republican bill would actually result in more people being uninsured than if ObamaCare were simply repealed. Getting rid of the major coverage provisions and regulations of ObamaCare would cost 23 million Americans their health insurance. . . . In other words, 1 million more Americans would have health insurance with a clean repeal than with the Republican replacement plan, according to CBO estimates.''

So it is just unclear what the Republicans are trying to do here. If the goal was to come up with something worse than repealing the Affordable Care Act, they certainly reached that goal: less people will have coverage, more tax breaks for billionaires, higher rate increases for most Americans. On every account, it actually underperforms a cleaner repeal.

What Democrats wanted to do is improve the Affordable Care Act. And I want to be clear, none of us have ever argued the Affordable Care Act is perfect. I pushed for fixes. So many of my Democratic and Republican colleagues have pushed for fixes to strengthen the law, like repealing the medical device tax, which adds cost to health care, and altering the Cadillac tax on insurance premiums.

In the Education and the Workforce Committee, I actually offered three amendments to show some of the ideas that I and some of my colleagues had to improve the Affordable Care Act. They offered an amendment to establish a public option in the exchange, to provide a baseline of competition in every ZIP Code in this country—defeated on a partisan vote. I should add that my proposal for a public option—and I am a cosponsor of the bill to do the same—would actually reduce the budget deficit by over $50 billion.

I also offered an amendment for pricing transparency to help make the market in health care work. One of the major market fallacies in health care is a Byzantine pricing structure where, frequently, different entities and people are paying different amounts for the same thing. If we had simple pricing transparency and quality transparency, we would go a long way towards making markets work in health care—defeated on a party vote.

Finally, I offered an amendment that would have allowed reimportation of prescription drugs. When you have a situation where—we have a popular example of this in the EpiPen, costing Americans who need access to the EpiPen over $400, and yet in neighboring countries—Canada, Australia—EpiPens cost $40 or $50, one-tenth as much.

It is not unique to the EpiPen. By no means is that an exception to the rule. In fact, it is the rule. By allowing reimportation of prescription drugs, a proposal that was backed in the Senate in a bipartisan way by many of my Democratic and Republican colleagues as a budget amendment, we could actually reduce costs in health care, making the goal of expanding coverage even easier with those reduced costs.

You know, when I think about health care, I think it is important to think about who in our districts and States it most affects. I think of Pat Hayward, a constituent in my district who lives in Loveland.

Pat has so many family members who would be directly impacted by the repeal of the ACA. For instance, her husband has melanoma and over the years has needed several procedures to remove cancerous cells from his skin.

Had those procedures not been done in a timely and efficient manner, it could cause major complications, including premature death for Pat's husband.

Prior to the Affordable Care Act, when they tried to change insurance carriers, her husband was told that any coverage would exclude coverage of cancers, the very type of coverage he needed, because it was a preexisting condition. They literally would have had to choose between bankruptcy or being forced out of their home and into destitution or not getting the life-saving melanoma treatments that he needed.

But it is not just Pat's husband who has benefited and perhaps is alive and thriving today because of the protections of the Affordable Care Act. Pat's eldest son took advantage of a provision that allowed him to stay on his parents' plan until he got a job with health insurance at age 25.

Their younger son has struggled with anxiety and panic attacks, but thanks to comprehensive mental health treatment and the protections of the mental health parity that are in the Affordable Care Act—and being rolled back under the American Health Care Act, the Republican bill to replace it—their son is now back in college and thriving.

Pat, herself, expressed gratitude. The Affordable Care Act covers wellness visits and tests like mammograms, which can detect problems early, reduce costs, and save lives.

I share this story—and Pat wanted me to share her story—because families like the Haywards are like families in every State, in every county, in every ZIP Code in the country. American families have faced their share of medical challenges, as have mine, and I am sure that yours has as well, Mr. Speaker. Medical challenges crop up unexpectedly. They don't have any bias toward a political party. They affect Democrats and Republicans and Independents and Greens and apathetic voters and diligent participants in our civic system. They make no distinction.

But the Affordable Care Act is there to make it easier for families across our country to stay healthy, to get better, to save their lives so that kids can grow up with their parents healthy, kids can grow up and be able to go to school and get good jobs.

And like so many of my constituents, Pat told me she would rather see the current system improved than thrown out entirely, and I agree. That is why I offered the pricing transparency amendment, the public option amendment, and the reimportation of prescription drug amendment; and there are dozens of other ideas to improve the Affordable Care Act from my side of the aisle. I offered amendments in committee that would have codified these provisions into law.

I plan to continue to fight to improve access and lower healthcare costs, but dismantling the Affordable Care Act is simply counterproductive towards that end.

The Republican proposal to create a brand-new entitlement program would cause 24 million Americans to lose their insurance—over 1 million more than repealing the Affordable Care Act. For those who are lucky enough to still have their insurance, it would increase rates by 15 to 20 percent.

It would also, for reasons unknown, have an enormous tax cut for billionaires and millionaires. We know Republicans want to do that, but they should do that through a tax bill, not through something that is supposed to be a healthcare bill—enormous tax cuts. We are not even talking the wealthiest 1 percent. Most of those tax cuts go to the wealthiest one-tenth of 1 percent of Americans. That certainly doesn't help reduce the cost of health care.

Again, this bill can be debated, and, frankly, many of us feel it presents a problem in the risk pools that remove consumer protections. There is a solvency issue around some of these groups. There is a legitimate debate to be had, but we certainly haven't heard anybody present that somehow this bill is any kind of answer to making health care more affordable or expanding coverage.

What we have before us over the next couple of days is a bill that not only is the answer, but is a bill that creates an even bigger problem. The Republican healthcare bill would dig us in a deeper hole with regard to health care, leaving more Americans without coverage, creating a costly, brand-new entitlement program, and raising rates for those Americans who are lucky enough to still have their insurance after the Republicans remove it from tens of millions of people.

If that bill is the answer, what is the question?

Is the question, Mr. Speaker: How do we make health care cost more for American families?

Is the question, Mr. Speaker: How do we have less people covered and throw 20 million people off of health care insurance?

Is the question, Mr. Speaker: How do we make sure that, rather than work hard and try to get a raise or work two jobs, Americans are forced to quit their jobs and be lazy and not work just so that they can have Medicaid eligibility, which is what the brand-new Republican entitlement program would do?

Or, is the answer to move forward in a bipartisan way to improve the Affordable Care Act, a discussion that so many of us are excited to have.

I was disappointed that my three amendments were shut out in partisan votes in committee, and I am hopeful that by resetting this process, we can work together to reduce costs and expand coverage. Defeating the rule today will be the first step towards accomplishing that.

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

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

My colleague from Colorado raised an important question: What are the Republicans trying to accomplish here? It is pretty simple. We are trying to give freedom and choice back to the American people who lost their freedom and choice and control over their healthcare plans, who lost freedom and control over their health care because of an ill-considered law passed by this Congress several years ago.

He talked about the cost to American consumers. If you want to pass something that is going to increase cost to American consumers, this Congress did that several years ago. Look at the dramatic increase in healthcare insurance premiums, the dramatic increase in people's deductibles that have occurred since the Affordable Care Act—the so-called Affordable Care Act—was passed here in Congress several years ago.

We are trying to reverse that. We are trying to get control back. And, in fact, we know from the Congressional Budget Office score that it will lower premiums by 10 percent. We haven't seen premiums go lower in years. So if they want to know what we are trying to accomplish, it is plain on its face.

The gentleman referred to some amendments that he offered in committee. Every one of those amendments was ruled nongermane.

And for those of us that maybe don't understand a lot about what ''germane'' means, it is pretty simple. You can't offer amendments to a bill that aren't related to the subject matter of the bill.

The chairwoman of the committee ruled that he offered amendments that weren't germane to the bill that we have today. So the gentleman didn't lose because people were trying to lock him out of the process. He just offered amendments that had nothing to do with the underlying bill.

He talked about the fact that this underlying bill for the rule we have today will lure away young and healthy workers.

1415

Let me say it again. I said this in my principal remarks. Under this bill, none of these association health plans can discriminate against anybody. They can't do that. They can't say we are only going to let young or healthy people in the plan. They have to admit everyone. So there is no discrimination here. Everyone will be covered.

And remember how many people in America work for small businesses. All types of Americans work for small businesses. We are not trying to hurt them. We are trying to give them more opportunities to get better health insurance that will cost less money.

And if there was anything in here that would cause discrimination, we would have heard long and hard about that before this point. I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is not a relevant argument to this particular bill. Every plan that is going to be

under this bill must comply with the regulations of the Department of Labor, just like big corporation plans have to comply with the regulations of the Department of Labor.

We are simply treating small businesses through these associations the same way we treat big corporations. We have essentially denied to the employees of small businesses the same opportunities to get good health insurance at a lower cost that their colleagues that work for bigger corporations get.

The reason the bigger corporations have this is because the Department of Labor comes up with a nationwide rule so you don't have all these different variations from State to State and allows for those big companies to do the things that they can do so very well because of their size to get better health care for an affordable cost for their employees. We are giving the same thing to these small businesses through their associations.

And remember, this is not just one bill. We actually just passed a rule. We will be considering another bill that will exempt, from the provisions of McCarran-Ferguson, health insurance so we get more competition into the health insurance market.

This bill is on top of that. It is on top of the AHCA that we will be considering later this week and other bills that will be coming, because there are a host of things that we are doing on this side of the aisle to make sure we restore freedom and choice and affordable care to the people of our country.

We are not removing people from health insurance in any of the bills that we are doing. We are giving them the freedom to choose. And that is what America is really all about: the freedom to choose.

Right now we are coercing, by law, people to go out and buy health insurance that they don't want. That shouldn't be done in America. We are going to give them their freedom back. And if they chose not to buy health insurance, that is their right as Americans. That is not taking something away from somebody. That is giving them their freedom back.

So I would suggest to the gentleman that, if he wants to look for something that is going to help the workers of America, this bill and the other bills that our side of the aisle are proposing will do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN).

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Alabama, for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1101, the Small Business Health Fairness Act.

As a surgeon in north Florida, I witnessed, firsthand, the disaster that is ObamaCare. After ObamaCare was passed and implemented, small medical practices across the country were faced with new, crippling regulations that threatened their very existence.

I ran a small urology practice in Panama City and faced the very devastation that these new regulations on small business imposed. Thankfully, I was able to work with several other small practices to create the Advanced Urology Institute, a 45-physician practice with over 400 employees and offices throughout north Florida. Cooperation and pooling of our resources allowed our practice to reduce costs and to better serve our patients.

My experience underscores why the Small Business Health Fairness Act is so crucial. The Small Business Health Fairness Act allows small businesses to operate under the same principle when purchasing health insurance for their employees.

By joining together across State lines through associations, small businesses can achieve the economies of scale enjoyed by big businesses and unions when purchasing health care. It will empower small businesses to purchase better plans at a lower cost, which means working families can get the care they need at a price they can afford.

It is time to put small business employees on a level playing field with those of large businesses and those in unions. The health insurance market and this bill does just that.

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

Mr. Speaker, first of all, amendments that were brought forward by Ms. BONAMICI, germane. Republicans shut it down, didn't allow a debate.

Amendment brought forward by NORMA TORRES for this very bill, germane—not allowed to be debated for not even 10 minutes, not 5 minutes, not even 1 minute. Mrs. TORRES wasn't even allowed to offer her amendment under this rule that only allowed Republican amendments.

Finally, Mr. ESPAILLAT's amendment to this bill, yes, germane. He was, nevertheless, shut out in a party-line vote by the Rules Committee and not allowed to present his amendment before the floor that would simply allow States to continue protecting the benefits and consumer protections and rating restrictions in associated health plans, very simply.

Mr. Speaker, we are here considering the rule for H.R. 1101 and we still don't have a cost estimate from our nonpartisan experts at CBO. We certainly believe this legislation will increase premiums for the middle class and seniors, but we don't have any idea how much so. It is becoming a pattern, Mr. Speaker.

Two weeks ago, the Republican majority pushed ahead with their healthcare repeal bill without a cost estimate. A week later, it turned out it will cost 24 million Americans their insurance and 15 to 20 percent increases for those who would still have it.

Late last night, there was a backroom, secretive manager's amendment that was proposed which we don't know the cost of or how it would affect coverage, and it is irresponsible for the Republicans to move forward without knowing the effect of the bill as amended.

If we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule that would require a CBO cost estimate that analyzes the impact of any legislation amending or repealing the Affordable Care Act, as well as the impact of any manager's amendment to that legislation, to be made publicly available before the bill may be considered on the House floor.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) to discuss our proposal to make sure we actually know the cost of what is before this body.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank the gentleman from Colorado for yielding and for his tireless advocacy on behalf of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition, first, to this terrible rule, of course, which made no Democratic amendments in order, but also in strong support of Congressman POLIS' amendment that requires the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office to score the final bill, which is the bill to take away health care from 24 million people, to score it as amended by the Republican manager's amendment before the bill is on the House floor.

This clearly is nothing new for Republicans, though. In fact, just 2 weeks ago, Republicans shamefully pushed ahead with the markup of their terrible ACA repeal bill without a score from the Congressional Budget Office. And this week, on the seventh anniversary of the Affordable Care Act, Republicans' terrible plan to repeal this lifesaving legislation will make it to the House floor.

One thing is clear. Republicans' proposals, of course written in secret back rooms, would be a disaster for struggling families, seniors, people with disabilities, low-income individuals, the poor, and the middle class.

It would, yes, rip away health care from 24 million people, reduce benefits, increase rates for those who can least afford this, and transfer $600 billion in tax cuts to the very wealthy. That is outrageous, but it gets even worse.

Late last night, in secret back rooms, Republicans introduced a dangerous manager's amendment that doubles down on the war on women's health and the poor, low-income, and struggling families.

Yes, once again, Republicans are attempting to move forward with a vote on the final GOP's take away health

care from 24 million Americans, a bill that includes a manager's amendment, without an updated Congressional Budget Office score.

The American people deserve to know the full damage of this disastrous bill. I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the previous question and support Congressman POLIS' amendment to ensure that we have updated Congressional Budget Office scores before this bill is brought to the House floor.

I thank the gentleman for this amendment, and I thank him for yielding me time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the manager's amendment that has been referred to was put on a public website last night. Everyone in the House of Representatives will have 3 days to read the manager's amendment. There is nothing secret about it.

Bills are not written in front of cameras. They are written so that they can be put on public websites for all of us to see it. This manager's amendment was handled like many, many other manager's amendments are handled, including the way manager's amendments have been handled by the other side when they were in the majority.

Let's remember, in 2010 when the reconciliation bill was passed that established the ACA, no amendments were allowed on the floor—none, zero. So if there is a precedent that has been set in this House, it was set by my friends on the other side of the aisle when they passed the Affordable Care Act and wouldn't allow any amendments by any Member of the House. That is the precedent.

There is nothing new about the way this manager's amendment was handled. It was handled the way manager's amendments are handled virtually all the time. Everybody in this House now has a copy of it, has plenty of time to read it and ask questions about it. Nothing secret going on here.

The truth of the matter is that we are moving forward with our plan, as we said we were, to repeal and replace ObamaCare, to give freedom and choice back to the people of America so that patients control their health care, not a bureaucrat in Washington.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, first of all, over 150 amendments by Democrats were rejected to this healthcare bill before us today, contrary to the process of 8 years ago when over 120 Republican amendments were not only made in order, but were actually incorporated into the healthcare bill despite the fact that, for final passage, not a single Republican voted for it.

So when we talk about the record and the precedent, there couldn't more of a night-and-day difference between what is occurring today where Democrats are locked out and the effort 8 years ago where Republican ideas were welcomed in the process.

I also want to ask my colleague from Alabama—I was hoping that he would yield me the time to do so, and I will have to yield him time for an answer—he mentioned that this manager's amendment has already been posted and we will have 3 days to look at it. I just want to get his assurance that the version that we saw posted is the actual version that will be brought to the Rules Committee and presented on the floor and there will be no further changes to the manager's amendment, if the gentleman can assure me of that.

Mr. BYRNE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. POLIS. I yield to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. BYRNE. As far as I know, speaking back to the gentleman from Colorado, the manager's amendments that were posted last night are going to be the manager's amendments that we will consider tomorrow in the Rules Committee.

Mr. POLIS. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I also would like to ask if we are going to have a score from the Congressional Budget Office prior to the House having to vote on that manager's amendment?

I yield, for an answer, to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I am ready to answer the question.

We believe that we will be receiving the CBO table prior to the vote on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, again, that simply confirms what our previous question would simply require, that before the bill is voted on we will simply know how much it costs and who it impacts. What could be more important than finding that out.

I think it is important to note that Democrats have been shut out of the process, at the committee level, in the amendments I offered. Even the germane amendments of this particular bill before us today, Democrats were locked out.

Rather than allow Members of both parties to participate in reducing the costs of health care and increasing coverage, Republicans have come up with a bill that actually increases costs and decreases coverage.

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, from what I saw in the CBO score of the bill, the AHCA bill actually reduces government spending, reduces taxes, and reduces health insurance premiums over the window of the CBO score.

□ 1430

So it does the exact opposite of what the gentleman suggested. It does exactly what the American people sent us here to do.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the statistics we are talking about, the fact that it will cost Americans 15 to 20 percent more to get health care, the fact that it will cost 24 million Americans their insurance, these are not statistics that are made up by some group that wants to oppose the Republican effort. They are facts that are arrived upon by the Congressional Budget Office, the head of which was appointed by a Republican. They do diligent work to determine how much bills cost and what their effect is.

Now, of course, you know, those are best estimates. Maybe, instead of 24 million people who will lose coverage under the Republican healthcare bill, maybe it will be 25 million, maybe it will be 23 million. There is always a little bit of variation on what those predictions are.

But whether it is 23 million or 25.6 million, the fact that Americans—millions, tens of millions of Americans—will lose coverage under this Republican bill should be a flashing warning sign that it is time to slow down and work in a collaborative manner to improve the Affordable Care Act, rather than create a brand new entitlement program that throws 24 million people off the insurance rolls, and increases the cost for those who remain by 15 to 20 percent.

This bill immediately before us is a diversion from the real story in health care. In my home State alone, 600,000 Coloradans would likely lose coverage if the American Health Care Act is rammed through Congress, as my Republican colleagues intend to do.

The American Health Care Act would roll back important protections and coverage gains. It would create a brand new entitlement program, while delivering record tax breaks for billionaires in New York and California.

It is clear that this bill threatens the health and welfare of hundreds of thousands of families in Colorado alone, tens of millions across the country. It is time that we get this process right and slow down, rather than cramming a midnight bill through the House of Representatives that we don't even know the cost of, before we are voting on it.

This is simple, Mr. Speaker. Democrats are excited to roll up our sleeves and work together to create a plan that will reduce healthcare costs. If you don't like the amendment I offered for allowing reimportation of prescription drugs, let's talk about other options.

What about Medicare negotiating prescription drug rates? What about removing tax deductibility for the advertisements for pharmaceutical companies?

What about expediting approval process at the FDA, which President Trump himself mentioned in this very Chamber as a proposal that can reduce the cost of approving drugs from the $1.2 billion it costs today, which is passed along to consumers, to a much lower cost, thereby passing the savings along to consumers.

There are plenty of good ideas the Democrats and Republicans can work together on. None of them are this bill before us today. None of them are in the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. So let's just stop this ridiculous partisan process.

I don't want 24 million Americans to be victims of partisanship in Washington. I don't want other Americans who pay for their healthcare insurance to be victims of partisanship in Washington.

I want to make sure that people in my district who are working hard and only able to afford coverage under the Affordable Care Act because of the healthcare subsidies are not forced into medical bankruptcy and to give up their jobs and rely on Medicaid because of Republican efforts to ram through this brand new entitlement program.

Let's get this right. There is plenty of opportunity to work together to reduce costs and expand coverage. The American Health Care Act does the exact opposite. It increases costs and reduces coverage.

And instead of these incremental bills, like this so-called Small Business Health Fairness Act, which actually winds up removing protections and pushing more costs onto working families and seniors, we should improve upon and fix the Affordable Care Act that we put in place 7 years ago. We should support innovation to produce healthier outcomes, to reduce costs, and, yes, to expand coverage across our country.

We have a unique opportunity in this Congress to put partisanship behind us, to work together to make affordable health care a reality for every American family. Because you know what? When you have a preexisting condition, like I talked about Pat's husband in my district who suffers from melanoma, it doesn't matter whether he is a Republican or a Democrat or Independent or whether he is not even registered at all.

What matters is that he is a father to two children, a husband to his wife, and he wants the ability to work with dignity, support himself, and have medical insurance to receive his lifesaving monthly injections that allow him to maintain his quality of life and continue to work and pay taxes and support his kids and family. That is what healthcare coverage is all about.

So let's stop this silly partisanship. This Republican American Health Care Act actually kicks more people off of the healthcare rolls than simply repealing ObamaCare. By creating this brand new entitlement program, they are actually costing an additional 1 millions Americans their healthcare insurance.

But the answer is not to cost 23 million people their healthcare insurance. It is not to take it away from 24 million people. You know what the answer is, Mr. Speaker, is to provide a way that more people can work hard and pay into the system, and that we decrease the number of Americans who lack access to healthcare insurance which, in turn, reduces the costs for the rest of us because of the cost shifting that occurs within health care.

Mr. Speaker, I know so many of my friends on the Republican and Democratic side of the aisle, dedicated public servants with thoughtful ideas that they have based on their life experiences, that they want to present before this body to reduce the cost of health care. Let's let them do it. Let's have an open process.

So, 150 amendments from Democrats were shot down in committees, not even allowed to be debated, not even allowed to be included in this healthcare bill. Three of mine were shot down. In this very rule today, amendments by Mr. ESPAILLAT and Ms. BONAMICI were not even allowed to be debated.

The American people want health care to be affordable, and they want Republicans and Democrats to work together to accomplish that end.

Let's vote ''no'' on this rule. Let's reset the process. Let's fix health care. Let's expand coverage. Let's reduce costs. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to accomplish those important goals that my constituents have sent me here to work on.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the previous question so we can know the cost of any manager's amendment before we vote on it; to vote ''no'' on the rule, and to vote ''no'' on the underlying bill.

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

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

I certainly agree with my colleague from Colorado that we should avoid silly partisanship, and I hope that that means we won't see silly partisan procedural motions and points of order between now and the end of the week. We have seen plenty of those up until this point in time by our friends on the other side of the aisle, and I hope that his statement means we won't see any more since he believes that silly partisanship is bad for this body and the consideration of these important healthcare bills.

We are not here today to talk about the AHCA. We are here today to talk about the Small Business Health Fairness Act. That is what this rule covers.

Let me go over again what has happened to small businesses, but, more importantly, what has happened to the people who work for small businesses. An estimated 300,000 small-business jobs were destroyed by ObamaCare; 10,000 small businesses closed because of ObamaCare.

Since 2008, 36 percent of small businesses that have fewer than 10 employees have stopped offering healthcare coverage altogether. ObamaCare's compliance costs and mandates have resulted in $19 billion in lost wages for small-business employees.

The majority of people in this country work for small businesses. We are trying to give them a fair shake. We are trying to give them their freedom and their choice back. We are trying to give them affordable care because their freedom and their choice and the affordability of their care has evaporated over the last several years.

Ask anybody in America. They come up to me all the time in my district and tell me this.

We, through this bill and the other bills we are considering, are repairing the damage done to the people of America by ObamaCare.

Now, my colleagues can throw up dilatory points of order and other procedural items later on if they want to engage in silly partisanship, or we can get down to the business of taking care of the workers in America.

This bill, or a concept like this bill, has been on this floor before and enjoyed bipartisan support. If we are going to drop silly partisanship, let's drop it right now on this rule and on this bill, and adopt it for the good of the workers in these small businesses throughout America.

Mr. Speaker, I again urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 210 and the underlying bill.

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

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 210 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS

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

SEC. 2. In rule XXI add the following new clause:

13. (a) It shall not be in order to consider a measure or matter proposing to repeal or amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PL 111–148) and the Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act of 2010 (PL 111–152), or part thereof, in the House or in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union unless an easily searchable electronic estimate and comparison prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office is made available on a publicly available website of the House.

(b) It shall not be in order to consider a measure or matter proposing to repeal or amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PL 111–148) and the Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act of 2010 (PL 111–152), or part thereof, in the House or in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, that is called up pursuant to a rule or order that makes a manager's amendment in order or considers such an amendment to be adopted, unless an easily searchable updated electronic estimate and comparison prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office reflecting such amendment is made available on a publicly available website of the House.

(c) It shall not be in order to consider a rule or order that waives the application of paragraphs (a) or (b).

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. DUNCAN of Tennessee). 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 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

VIETNAM WAR VETERANS RECOGNITION ACT OF 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of the bill (S. 305) to amend title 4, United States Code, to encourage the display of the flag of the United States on National Vietnam War Veterans Day, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 305

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 ''Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. DISPLAY OF FLAG ON NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY.

Section 6(d) of title 4, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''National Vietnam War Veterans Day, March 29;'' after ''third Monday in February;''.

The bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMPETITIVE HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM ACT OF 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 209, I call up the bill (H.R. 372) to restore the application of the Federal antitrust laws to the business of health insurance to protect competition and consumers, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 209, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–8 is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

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

H.R. 372

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 ''Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. RESTORING THE APPLICATION OF ANTITRUST LAWS TO THE BUSINESS OF HEALTH INSURANCE.

(a) AMENDMENT TO MCCARRAN-FERGUSON ACT.—Section 3 of the Act of March 9, 1945 (15 U.S.C. 1013), commonly known as the McCarran-Ferguson Act, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c)(1) Nothing contained in this Act shall modify, impair, or supersede the operation of any of the antitrust laws with respect to the business of health insurance (including the business of dental insurance and limited-scope dental benefits).

''(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply with respect to making a contract, or engaging in a combination or conspiracy—

''(A) to collect, compile, or disseminate historical loss data;

''(B) to determine a loss development factor applicable to historical loss data;

''(C) to perform actuarial services if such contract, combination, or conspiracy does not involve a restraint of trade; or

''(D) to develop or disseminate a standard insurance policy form (including a standard addendum to an insurance policy form and standard terminology in an insurance policy form) if such contract, combination, or conspiracy is not to adhere to such standard form or require adherence to such standard form.

''(3) For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) the term 'antitrust laws' has the meaning given it in subsection (a) of the first section of the Clayton Act (15 U.S.C. 12), except that such term includes section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 45) to the extent that such section 5 applies to unfair methods of competition;

''(B) the term 'business of health insurance (including the business of dental insurance and limited-scope dental benefits)' does not include—

''(i) the business of life insurance (including annuities); or

''(ii) the business of property or casualty insurance, including but not limited to—

''(I) any insurance or benefits defined as 'excepted benefits' under paragraph (1), subparagraph (B) or (C) of paragraph (2), or paragraph (3) of section 9832(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 9832(c)) whether offered separately or in combination with insurance or benefits described in paragraph (2)(A) of such section; and

''(II) any other line of insurance that is classified as property or casualty insurance under State law;

''(C) the term 'historical loss data' means information respecting claims paid, or reserves held for claims reported, by any person engaged in the business of insurance; and

''(D) the term 'loss development factor' means an adjustment to be made to reserves held for losses incurred for claims reported by any person engaged in the business of insurance, for the purpose of bringing such reserves to an ultimate paid basis.''.

(b) RELATED PROVISION.—For purposes of section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 45) to the extent such section applies to unfair methods of competition, section 3(c) of the McCarran-Ferguson Act shall apply with respect to the business of health insurance without regard to whether such business is carried on for profit, notwithstanding the definition of ''Corporation'' contained in section 4 of the Federal Trade Commission Act.

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 the Judiciary.

The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 372.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a bill that will move us a step closer towards restoring healthy competition in the health insurance industry. Today, the health insurance industry is besieged by dwindling competition and skyrocketing premiums. Insurance providers, States, and the public have been dealing with the disastrous repercussions of ObamaCare for the past 6 years and overregulation by States for much longer.

Congress finally has the opportunity to pass legislation to reverse the downward spiral of our health insurance industry. Any such legislation must encourage a robust and competitive health insurance market in which insurance providers actively compete for customers. Healthy competition ensures premiums are accurately priced and that customers are able to find a variety of policies to meet their specific needs and demands.

H.R. 372, the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017, represents a step on that journey, repealing the McCarran-Ferguson Act as it applies to the business of health insurance. There is wide support for this bill, and the Judiciary Committee has favorably reported similar legislation in the past, including legislation that was passed by the House, 406–19 during the 111th Congress.

The stated goal of the bill is to help restore competition in the healthcare market. I support this goal and firmly believe this bill must be coupled with larger changes to the existing Federal and State healthcare regulatory schemes.

As Speaker RYAN has noted, States ''should be empowered to make the right tradeoffs between consumer protections and individual choice, not regulators in Washington.''

This bill does not impact the State's ability to regulate the insurance market. Rather, this legislation levels the playing field for all healthcare industry participants. While insurers have been exempt from Federal antitrust laws for the past 70 years, healthcare providers and other participants have not.

□ 1445

This bill removes this exemption, ensuring that health insurers are better able to compete to provide quality coverage, thereby benefiting hospitals, doctors, and, most importantly, patients.

In addition, if separate legislation is passed to allow for the more open sale of health insurance across State lines, the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act will allow uniform Federal antitrust laws to be applied across the marketplace while allowing States to maintain authority as the primary regulators of the health insurance market outside of the antitrust sphere.

The McCarran-Ferguson Act was originally passed to leave the regulation of the business of insurance with the States and to allow insurers to engage in certain procompetitive collaborative activities.

This legislation limits significant uncertainty and unnecessary litigation that would likely result from a broader McCarran-Ferguson repeal, through the use of safe harbors for such historically procompetitive collaborative activities, specifically the collection and distribution of historical loss data, the determination of loss development factors, the performance of actuarial services that do not involve restraints of trade, and the use of common forms that are not coercive.

Absent these safeguards, insurers will likely disengage from certain proconsumer collaborative activities, eliminating or impeding smaller insurers from competing and disincentivizing larger insurers from exploring new products and markets. This will lead to further market consolidation and fewer product choices, the impact of which will eventually be borne by the consumer.

These narrow safe harbors create a presumption that certain procompetitive activities can continue while maintaining regulation and oversight to the extent any activity crosses over into a restraint of trade. As a result, insurers can continue to engage in proconsumer business practices and will be encouraged to provide a diverse range of offerings at fair and reasonable prices.

I thank Mr. GOSAR for introducing this legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote for the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in qualified support of H.R. 372, the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act, but I do not endorse the majority's exaggerated claims regarding the bill's impact on the affordability and availability of health insurance.

H.R. 372 would partially repeal the limited Federal antitrust exemption for the business of insurance established by the McCarran-Ferguson Act in 1945. Specifically, the bill only permits Federal antitrust enforcement with regard to the business of health insurance.

Now, House Democrats have long supported a full repeal of McCarran-Ferguson's antitrust exemption for all insurers, not just for health insurers. In 2010, under a Democratic House majority, we passed legislation to repeal the McCarran-Ferguson exemption for health insurers by a vote of 406–19, even though House Republicans had not previously supported moving any version of a McCarran-Ferguson repeal bill.

But let me be clear. Enacting H.R. 372 would in no way be a substitute for the many health insurance guarantees of the Affordable Care Act. The two things are completely separate. To begin with, enacting H.R. 372 would not significantly improve healthcare affordability or coverage. According to the Congressional Budget Office, H.R. 372's effect on health insurance premiums would probably be quite small, and enacting the bill would have no significant net effect on the premiums the private insurers would charge for health or dental insurance. That is according to the Congressional Budget Office.

The Consumers Union observes that the application of the antitrust laws to some health insurance activity, by itself, is simply not enough to create a vibrant insurance market because our long experience shows you can't expect a healthcare system to run effectively on competition alone. That is the Consumers Union.

Likewise, the majority's claim that enacting H.R. 372 would create major new competition by allowing cross-State insurance sales is unavailing. Current law, including the Affordable Care Act, already allows States to agree with each other to allow cross-State insurance sales.

Enabling Federal antitrust agencies to police certain forms of anticompetitive conduct will not, in and of itself, incentivize health insurers to offer products across State lines beyond the incentives that already exist for offering such products. It just won't happen by itself. Whatever the incentives for health insurers to offer such products, they have little to do with Federal antitrust law or enforcement.

Finally, enacting H.R. 372 would not ensure that the Affordable Care Act's prohibitions against discrimination and limits on premium growth would remain in place. H.R. 372 only applies to certain anticompetitive conduct and does not preserve or enhance existing protections for consumers of health insurance. For instance, it does not prohibit discrimination by health insurers on the basis of preexisting conditions, nor does it reduce premium growth or require health insurers to be accountable for price increases.

Repeal of the antitrust exemption for health insurance is a complement to and not a replacement for the Affordable Care Act's many consumer protections. This is not an either-or situation. We need H.R. 372 and the Affordable Care Act to be in place to maximize benefits, improve quality, and lower costs for consumers.

So while I support the bill with some reluctance, I take issue with the majority's rhetoric. It is very important that we set the record straight here.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR), who is the chief sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman GOODLATTE and the Judiciary Committee for their thorough work on this bill. I would also like to express my appreciation to the broad group of stakeholders who have helped to shape, improve, and support this commonsense and consumer-centric legislation.

As Congress, once again, faces the preeminent task of repairing our Nation's healthcare system, first and foremost, we must establish the proper foundation for a competitive and consumer-driven health insurance marketplace that empowers patients.

The Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017 will restore the application of Federal antitrust laws to health insurance and infuse much-needed competition and transparency to the industry. Ending the special-interest exemption is the essential first step to broader healthcare reform. Popular cost-reducing reform priorities, such as selling insurance across State lines and developing diverse, consumer-driven plans, are predicated on the robust competitive markets this bill will enable.

As a healthcare provider for more than 25 years, I understand firsthand the importance of a competitive and dynamic health insurance market. Patients, doctors, and hospitals alike benefit when health insurers compete to provide a variety of quality coverage options.

It is apparent that after 70 years, McCarran-Ferguson, the broad-stroked exemption created by Congress in the 1940s, was not wise. Over decades, and expeditiously since the passage of ObamaCare in 2009, the health insurance market has devolved into one of the least transparent and most anticompetitive industries in the United States. These antiquated exemptions are no longer necessary for health insurance. There is no reason in law, policy, or logic for the industry to have special exemptions that are different from all other businesses in the United States.

The interpretation of antitrust law has narrowed dramatically over the decades. Many of the practices which insurers say they need this exemption to do, such as analyzing historical loss data, have proven to be permissible by the Federal Trade Commission and the courts over the decades since McCarran-Ferguson was passed.

This narrowing of scope has resulted in a law whose efficacy and usefulness long since expired. Yet, the shell of this zombie law lurks to scare off potential, legitimate legal challenges from States, patients, and providers. These entities do not have the tools, money, or manpower to challenge these monopolies in court or head-on in the current market. Only the Federal Government, with its resources, can enforce the laws which rebalance the playing field of interstate commerce fairly.

I would like to stress the point that this legislation does not affect any other type of insurance other than health insurance. The language of the bill was carefully and deliberately drafted to exclude other areas of insurance, such as life insurance, property and casualty insurance, and excepted benefits like disability income insurance. In short, the legislation before the House today does not repeal the McCarran-Ferguson Act for life insurance, annuities, property and casualty insurance, disability income insurance, and long-term care insurance.

The broad stakeholders of healthcare professionals, insurance providers, and consumer protection groups support this narrow and important scope of the language. I am open to efforts to strengthen the narrow and deliberate scope of this legislation going forward should the need and opportunity arise.

Repeal of this specific section of the McCarran-Ferguson Act, which applies only to health insurance, has strong bipartisan support. As labeled earlier, in the 111th Congress, it passed by a vote of 406–19 and passed the Republican-led House in the 112th Congress by a voice vote. Similar legislation has been introduced by multiple Democratic Members of the House, and the text of my bill has been included in the Republican Study Committee's healthcare reform bill for the last four Congresses in a row.

The passage of the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act into law is an important first step towards increasing competition in health insurance markets and will assist with setting the foundation for real, competitive, and patient-centered healthcare reform.

At the end of the day, you can tell a lot about a bill by who supports it. H.R. 372 has the support of the healthcare professionals that actually provide care to patients, including doctors, dentists, surgeons, pharmacists, chiropractors, optometrists, and others. This key law, by liberating, liberates the insurance industry and doctors and empowers the patients. Doctors will see and insurance will see that the patient is empowered for new opportunities. Things that we can't even imagine today will exist through competition. It is the American way.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and the members of the committee for their work on this issue. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE), who is a distinguished leader of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his extraordinary leadership on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 372, the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017, would partially repeal a long-standing antitrust exemption established by the McCarran-Ferguson Act with respect to the business of health and dental insurance.

To qualify for this limited antitrust exemption, an insurer must be engaged in the business of insurance regulated by a State that is not designed to boycott, coerce, or intimidate.

While these requirements somewhat constrain anticompetitive conduct, it is clear that they do not preclude the most egregious antitrust violations, such as price fixing, bid rigging, and market allocation, by health insurance providers.

□ 1500

Health insurers should not be immune from antitrust scrutiny, particularly when they collude to increase prices, reduce availability, or otherwise engage in anticompetitive behavior.

That is why House Democrats passed a measure that is substantively similar to H.R. 372, in 2010, by a vote of 406–19, and in 2009, as well. In 1988, 1992, and 1994, Judiciary Democrats likewise favorably reported legislation to completely repeal the McCarran-Ferguson Act.

While H.R. 372 is only a partial repeal of this exemption, I encourage my colleagues to support this measure. But let me be perfectly clear about three things:

First, promoting competition in health insurance markets cannot occur at the expense of the strong protections established by the Affordable Care Act to make health markets more efficient and prohibiting discriminatory insurance policies. These protections are ''textbook measures that help promote competition in the insurance marketplace,'' as Professor Tim Greaney, a leading antitrust expert, testified in 2015.

Second, contrary to President Trump's suggestions on Twitter, repealing McCarran-Ferguson's antitrust exemption for health insurance will not remove State barriers or create new pathways for insurance companies to compete and offer products across State lines.

This simplistic approach to healthcare policy overlooks the fact that the Affordable Care Act already allows States to establish healthcare choice compacts to provide for cross-State insurance sales, while five States have already enacted out-of-State purchasing laws. But these laws have done little to encourage cross-State insurance sales because health insurers are simply not interested in selling these products across State lines.

The barriers to entry into health insurance markets ''are not truly regulatory, they are financial and they are network,'' as Professor Sabrina Corlette of Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute has observed.

Notwithstanding President Trump's exaggerated claims to the contrary, it is also clear that enacting this legislation is not a precondition for Congress

authorizing cross-State insurance sales.

My Republican colleagues on the Judiciary Committee agree, noting in their report on the bill that ''the general consensus, including among witnesses at the most recent Judiciary hearing on the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act, is that if Congress decides to allow insurers to sell across State lines, such action does not necessarily require a repeal of McCarran-Ferguson.''

And third, there is no evidence that enacting this bill alone will improve the affordability or availability of health insurance.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the effect of H.R. 372 on health insurance premiums ''would probably be quite small,'' and enacting the bill will have ''no significant net effect on the premiums that private insurers would charge for health or dental insurance.''

Additionally, because the McCarran-Ferguson Act does not apply to mergers, H.R. 372 will not prevent further concentration in health insurance markets.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, if Republicans were serious about actually enforcing the antitrust laws, they would fully fund the antitrust agencies. But as we know from the Trump administration's budget blueprint, Republicans plan to make deep cuts to the funding of enforcement agencies like the Justice Department, likely to the detriment of economic opportunity and fair competition.

In addition, President Trump has not even nominated heads to the antitrust agencies. According to the Partnership for Public Service, even though he has been in office for 60 days, President Trump has not picked a nominee for 497 of the 553 positions requiring Senate confirmation.

Worse still, President Trump is reportedly considering appointing a former lobbyist for a health insurance giant to run the Justice Department's antitrust division, which is tasked by Congress ''to protect economic freedom and opportunity by promoting free and fair competition in the marketplace.''

Citing lobbying reports, the International Business Times notes that this particular lobbyist participated in the ''antitrust issues associated with Anthem's proposed acquisition of Cigna,'' and his firm received $375,000 in lobbying fees.

Just last month, the Justice Department won an important lawsuit initiated under the Obama administration to block this merger, which, according to the Department of Justice, would have harmed consumers through increased health insurance prices, while stifling the exact innovation that is necessary to lower healthcare costs.

It is unsurprising that President Trump's corporate cabinet will probably include yet another lobbyist that will pursue an extreme agenda on behalf of special interests. But the significance of this potential appointment cannot be overstated and absolutely will not result in lower prices or more choices for the American people.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, while I support H.R. 372 as a complement to the Affordable Care Act, I agree with the ranking member that this bill is not a solution to improving the availability or affordability of health insurance.

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

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has 18 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Virginia has 21 minutes remaining.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman very much for his leadership. I acknowledge the chairman of the committee for his, as well.

I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and although I will make the points that I think are important, I wanted to take the time to thank Mr. CONYERS for the thoughtful legislation that he has introduced over the years.

This leads me to call this the Conyers bill because of the important contributions it makes to ensuring that our health care is competitive, our health insurance is competitive, and his thoughtfulness in this legislation. As it comes to the floor, I am reminded of Mr. CONYERS' influence on this legislation. It is an interesting time at which it comes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the importance of H.R. 372, the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017, a proposal to remove the antitrust exemption in the McCarran-Ferguson Act as it applies to health insurance.

Overall, the proposed legislation, as well as previous attempts by the Judiciary Committee to repeal the McCarran-Ferguson Act's antitrust exemption for health insurance, does not raise new or pressing issues.

Opponents of repeal assume problems that cannot be documented, unlike the very tangible and real economic and competitive costs that will be incurred if the exemption is allowed to continue.

As the Justice Department has explained, where there is effective competition, coupled with transparency, in a consumer-friendly regulatory framework, insurers will compete against each other by offering plans with lower premiums, reducing copayments, lowering or eliminating deductibles, lowering annual out-of-pocket maximum costs, managing care, improving drug coverage, offering desirable benefits, and making their provider networks more attractive to potential members.

That sounds, of course, like the Affordable Care Act, which we will celebrate tomorrow, for that was the day it was signed. That is what health insurance should be for the American people.

This legislation is a very thoughtful legislative initiative, and I am hoping that its coming to the floor is not like trying to put lipstick on a pig. That, of course, is the latest configuration of the meaningless TrumpCare, and which the amendment that will be coming forward will, again, in essence, throw people off health insurance. It will take away all that we are intending it to do, but this legislation has reason.

Other current enforcement tools and regulatory policies already in place address competition issues at the State and Federal level to police health insurance competition. In this and numerous other ways, effective regulation can promote improved healthcare delivery and improved cost control by ensuring that all insurance companies are required to follow certain basic consumer-friendly rules of the road.

Again, wouldn't it be great to have this very thoughtful legislation with all of the points of the Affordable Care Act: it eliminates preexisting conditions, has lowered premiums and continues to lower premiums, and is lowering or eliminating deductibles. All of those were thoughtful of Mr. CONYERS, and they would have been the right complement to the Affordable Care Act.

However, the additional risks of adding new regulatory uncertainty, increasing boundary-testing litigation, and distracting policymakers from more important ways to reduce healthcare costs and improve healthcare competition suggest that further caution and delay on this front is inadvisable, given present circumstances and conditions.

But let us not fool ourselves into thinking that the legislation before us is a panacea that will lead to affordable, accessible, high-quality health care for all Americans. If that worthy goal is the objective sought, the best way to achieve it is to retain and strengthen the Affordable Care Act and abandon the misguided effort of House Republicans to repeal this landmark legislation and replace it with the pay more for less act masquerading as a healthcare bill.

The Affordable Care Act works. I think we in the Judiciary Committee know it full well. We held hearings and briefings; we heard from the victims of those who did not have insurance, who had lost insurance, did not have enough insurance, or the insurance would not cover them.

I am reminded of a very emotional story of an 8-year-old girl in the office of an insurance company where her family was begging for coverage because she had leukemia; obviously, a preexisting condition. It is sad to say, but I understand that she lost her life.

The Affordable Care Act has significantly improved the availability, affordability, and quality of health care

for tens of millions of Americans, including millions who previously had no health insurance at all.

Americans are rightly frightened by Republican attempts to repeal the ACA without having in place a superior new plan that maintains comparable coverages and comparable consumer choices and protections, not throwing off 24 million Americans who will have no insurance.

It is beyond dispute that the pay more for less plan proposed by Republicans fails this test miserably. The Republican pay more for less act is a massive tax cut for the rich, paid for on the backs of America's most vulnerable: those who work and who happen to be of low income. This Robin-Hood-in-reverse bill is unprecedented and breathtaking in its audacity. No bill has ever tried to give so much to the rich while taking so much from the poor.

One number comes to mind: $880 billion taken away from Medicaid insurance covering nursing homes, patients, the blind, the disabled; again, then giving a great plus and a great refund in tax credits to the richest in America. They will be happy. It won't be health care. They have got private health insurance. But it certainly will be a big check that they get in the mail.

This pay more for less bill represents the largest transfer of wealth from the bottom 99 percent to the top 1 percent in American history. This Republic scheme gives gigantic tax cuts to the rich, and pays for it by taking insurance away from 24 million.

In addition, Republicans are giving the pharmaceutical industry a big tax repeal, worth nearly $25 billion over a decade, without demanding in return any reduction in the cost of prescription and brand-name drugs. That is very important.

To paraphrase Winston Churchill, of this bill, it can truly be said that never has so much been taken from so many to benefit so few.

The pay more for less plan destroys the Medicaid program. CBO estimates 14 million will lose Medicaid. In 2026, 52 million Americans will be uninsured.

We know that these combined policies will not help to cure some of the thoughtful deliberations that went into the underlying bill. We want more competition. We want the insurance products to be the kind of products that we can be sure provide health care.

In short, the Republican pay more get less plan represents a clear and present danger to the financial and health security of American families and to the very stability of our Nation's healthcare system.

Mr. Speaker, the healthcare marketplace is complex in how it operates and how it motivates providers, insurers, and consumers.

If I can quote the 45th President, he said: ''I didn't know how difficult this would be.'' Well, we know how difficult it can be, and was.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats held some 79-plus hearings. We had 181 witnesses-plus. We had hundreds of hours of hearings. We held thousands, I might imagine, of townhall meetings. We didn't hold one here and one there. I myself held 11 townhall meetings.

We continue to hear from not only the consumers, but the rural hospitals, the major hospitals, the senior citizens, and particularly those senior citizens on dealing with the cost of prescription drugs.

I am proud to say that we saved the dastardly Medicare part D by closing the doughnut hole, which is closed today, so that seniors under the Affordable Care Act do not fall into an abyss, a deep ocean, and have to, in essence, not take their drugs because they don't have enough money.

An effective regulatory framework is needed to shape this complex environment—and this is a word to the administration—to help safeguard consumers, help keep costs under control, and help make a full range of healthcare services. But our country's long experience shows that we cannot expect a healthcare system to run effectively on market competition alone. Markets can and do fail when proper regulation is lacking.

□ 1515

So the goodness of this bill has to go along with—a good example is recognizing what happens in the ACA's provision, banning insurance companies from denying coverage of preexisting disease—we had to help them along—preexisting conditions. We had to help them along. You have to help them along to be a good steward of the insurance that the American people need.

This is a key consumer protection that the free market demonstrates time and time again that it could produce and needed to do. That is where regulation and the antitrust laws come in to protect consumer choice. Let me go back and say that it could not produce on its own. It is a per se violation of antitrust laws for competing companies to agree to divide markets or to fix prices. The other sectors in the healthcare supply chain are already subject to antitrust laws, and it will be beneficial to the healthcare marketplace and to consumers if the healthcare industry joins them. That is why I said this bill is a thoughtful, important bill to dealing with the complex issues of insurance and health care.

I am sad to say that tomorrow, as we celebrate the Affordable Care Act, we will be looking toward Thursday, where we will be, in essence, debating a bill that takes 24 million people off of health insurance, period. 24 million will lose their coverage. Tax giveaways will continue again to the top 1 percent. That will be $600 billion in tax breaks to the rich and big corporations. In fact, the Republican bill gives $2.8 billion to 400 of the richest families in America.

Then to add to the downside, the Affordable Care Act was known to create more jobs. Unfortunately, this will see 2 million jobs destroyed and lost. Families will be paying more for less. Young people will be hit with a millennial penalty. And we don't know if this formula that they have still stops the 50- to 64-year-olds from paying higher premiums. Women lose comprehensive care, middle-aged Americans pay the age tax, seniors see Medicaid and Medicare weakened, preexisting conditions and disabilities may suffer, and it does not reduce the deficit as the ACA does.

My final point, if I can, we are glad to come to the floor and honor Mr. CONYERS for this important bill and support H.R. 372. I believe this legislation before us does a lot more good than it does harm, but I hope that we can, in a bipartisan manner—maybe even in a nonpartisan manner—reflect on what is needed to really insure the American people and we can work with the Affordable Care Act, which has all of these positive elements, and move this country forward through competition and health care that saves lives.

Mr. Speaker, overall, the proposed legislation, as well as previous attempts by the Judiciary Committee to repeal the McCarran-Ferguson Act's antitrust exemption for health insurance, does not raise new or pressing issues.

Opponents of repeal assume problems that cannot be documented, unlike the very tangible and real economic and competitive costs that will be incurred if the exemption is allowed to continue.

As the Justice Department has explained, where there is effective competition, coupled with transparency, in a consumer-friendly regulatory framework, insurers will compete against each other by offering plans with lower premiums, reducing copayments, lowering or eliminating deductibles, lowering annual out-of-pocket maximum costs, managing care, improving drug coverage, offering desirable benefits, and making their provider networks more attractive to potential members.

Other current enforcement tools and regulatory policies already in place address competition issues at the state and federal level to police health insurance competition.

In this and numerous other ways, effective regulation can promote improved health care delivery and improved cost control, by ensuring that all insurance companies are required to follow certain basic consumer-friendly ''rules of the road.''

It might be argued that increasing the federal government's role in regulating health insurance, through expanded antitrust enforcement, would appear to conflict with proposed reforms to delegate more responsibility to state governments.

However, the additional risks of adding new regulatory uncertainty, increasing boundary-testing litigation, and distracting policymakers from more important ways to reduce health care costs and improve health care competition suggest that further caution and delay on this front is inadvisable given present circumstances and conditions.

But let us not fool ourselves into thinking that the legislation before us is a panacea that will lead to affordable, accessible, high quality health care for all Americans.

If that worthy goal is the objective sought, then the best way to achieve it is to retain and

strengthen the Affordable Care Act and abandon the misguided effort of House Republicans to repeal this landmark legislation and replace it with their Pay More For Less Act, masquerading as the American Health Care Act.

The Affordable Care Act has significantly improved the availability, affordability, and quality of health care for tens of millions of Americans, including millions who previously had no health insurance at all.

Americans are rightly frightened by Republican attempts to repeal the ACA without having in place a superior new plan that maintains comparable coverages and comparable consumer choices and protections.

It is beyond dispute that the ''Pay More For Less'' plan proposed by House Republicans fails this test miserably.

The Republican ''Pay More For Less Act'' is a massive tax cut for the wealthy, paid for on the backs of America's most vulnerable, the poor and working class households.

This ''Robin Hood in reverse'' bill is unprecedented and breathtaking in its audacity—no bill has ever tried to give so much to the rich while taking so much from the poor and working class.

This ''Pay More Get Less'' bill represents the largest transfer of wealth from the bottom 99% to the top 1% in American history.

This Republican scheme gives gigantic tax cuts to the rich, and pays for it by taking insurance away from 24 million people and raising costs for the poor and middle class.

In addition, Republicans are giving the pharmaceutical industry a big tax repeal, worth nearly $25 billion over a decade without demanding in return any reduction in the cost of prescription and brand-name drugs.

To paraphrase Winston Churchill, of this bill, it can truly be said that ''never has so much been taken from so many to benefit so few.''

The ''Pay More Get Less'' plan destroys the Medicaid program under the cover of repealing the Affordable Care Act Medicaid expansion.

CBO estimates 14 million Americans will lose Medicaid coverage by 2026 under the Republican plan.

In addition to terminating the ACA Medicaid expansion, the ''Pay More Get Less'' plan converts Medicaid to a per capita cap that is not guaranteed to keep pace with health costs starting in 2020.

The combined effect of these policies is to slash $880 billion in federal Medicaid funding over the next decade.

The cuts get deeper with each passing year, reaching 25% of Medicaid spending in 2026.

In short, the Republican ''Pay More Get Less Act'' represents a clear and present danger to the financial and health security of American families, and to the very stability of our nation's health care system overall.

Mr. Speaker, the health care marketplace is complex in how it operates and how it motivates providers, insurers, and consumers.

An effective regulatory framework is needed to shape that complex environment, to help safeguard consumers, help keep costs under control, and help make a full range of health care services available.

But our country's long experience shows that we cannot expect a health care system to run effectively on market competition alone; markets can and do fail when proper regulation is lacking.

A good example is the ACA's provision banning insurance companies from denying coverage of preexisting conditions.

This is a key consumer protection that the free market demonstrated time and again that it would not produce on its own.

And that is where regulation and the antitrust laws come in to protect consumer choice.

It is a per se violation of antitrust law for competing companies to agree to divide markets or to fix prices.

The other sectors in the health care supply chain are already subject to the antitrust laws, and it will be beneficial to the health care marketplace, and to consumers, if the health insurance industry joins them.

For these reasons, I believe the legislation before us does more good than harm and, accordingly, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 372.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, so I reserve the balance of my time until the other side closes.

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

In closing, I want to reiterate my support for this measure, H.R. 372. Now, I don't know what is happening on the other side, but many of its leaders voted against a substantively identical version of this bill in 2010, and that was including Speaker RYAN, Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, Committee on Ways and Means chairman KEVIN BRADY. They voted against a substantively identical version of this bill. I don't want to impugn motives that I don't know about, but maybe if you support H.R. 372, you are going to be making the Affordable Care Act, ACA, better. So I want to thank my friends on the other side for helping us out. This is great. We passed something like this a few years ago, and we were very proud that it was an overwhelming vote.

This is a very important step forward. The Affordable Care Act is not going to be affected in any kind of negative way, and that is why I am eager to join with those who are going to be voting for H.R. 372. I thank my friends on the other side for supporting H.R. 372 as well.

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

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

Our health insurance industry is in a dire situation. Premiums and deductibles are skyrocketing, hundreds of percent in some cases. In the State of the gentleman who is the chief sponsor of this bill, the State of Arizona, there has been a more than 100 percent increase in just the last year.

In 2017, the national State average of insurers participating in Federal exchanges dropped to four, down from six the previous year. Five States will only have one insurer providing plans on their Federal exchanges this year. It is time to reverse this trend. The Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act is an important step in restoring competition to the health insurance industry and will help to set the foundation for additional essential reforms that must follow.

I say to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the ranking member of the committee and my friend, I appreciate very much working with him on this legislation, but I would also say to him that this legislation, as bipartisan as it is, cannot save the Affordable Care Act. It is drowning. It is denying people coverage. Its costs are going up so much that somebody who likes it this year will not be able to afford it next year.

The promise that if you like your health insurance you will be able to keep it was never true, and it is still not true with ObamaCare. The promise that if you like your doctor you can keep your doctor was never true. The promise that health insurance premiums would go down under ObamaCare has been proven to be totally false. Instead, what we have done is we have denied the American people the right to choose for themselves what access to health care that they need and can afford.

We have denied the American people the freedom to decide whether or not they want to purchase a product that is mandated upon them by the Federal Government. That is wrong. It has got to change. That is why we are taking action this week—including the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act, but certainly not only the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act—to return a patient-centered healthcare system to the American people, one that reconnects them with their healthcare providers, one that will make sure that they have the maximum amount of choice and the maximum amount of access to real, affordable health insurance and quality health care in America. I support this bipartisan legislation. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD three letters in support of H.R. 372.

SMALL BUSINESS &
ENTREPRENEURSHIP COUNCIL,
Vienna, VA, February 27, 2017.

Hon. PAUL A. GOSAR,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE GOSAR: The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council (SHE Council) and our nationwide membership of small business owners and entrepreneurs support the ''Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017'' (H.R. 372). Perhaps more than any other group, small business owners understand the need for increased competition in the health insurance marketplace. Indeed, it is the actions of entrepreneurs that bring down costs, enhance innovation, and boost quality in a competitive marketplace. H.R. 372 is a common sense and long-overdue step to repeal special-interest exemptions to federal antitrust laws for health insurance companies.

These exemptions have existed for more than 70 years, and were initially instituted to help newly formed insurance companies deal with data sharing. Given the dramatic changes in the industry over these past many decades, such special-interest treatment is no longer warranted.

Considering the government-imposed distortions within the health care industry as a result of the Affordable Care Act and other regulatory restrictions, full-blown review and reform of health care policies focused on expanding competition, and consumer choice are needed. That includes foundational changes, such as, in the case of H.R. 372, removing special-interest treatment that could reduce or retrain competition.

In order to bring down health insurance costs and utilize the models and technologies of our modern economy to drive value and innovation within this sector, entrepreneurs need a system that allows for such freedom and creativity. Your bill is an important step in bringing down artificial barriers that are preventing much needed innovation and competition. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. Please let SBE Council know how we can help you advance H.R. 372 into law.

Sincerely,

KAREN KERRIGAN,
President & CEO.

AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION®,
Washington, DC, February 24, 2017.

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

Hon. JOHN CONYERS,
Ranking Member, House Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOODLATTE AND RANKING MEMBER CONYERS: The dental professional organizations listed below, as members of the Organized Dentistry Coalition, are writing to express our strong support of H.R. 372, The Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act.

H.R. 372 would authorize the Federal Trade Commission and the Justice Department to enforce the federal antitrust laws against health insurance companies engaged in anticompetitive conduct. It would not interfere with the states' ability to maintain and enforce their own insurance regulations, antitrust statues, and consumer protection laws. Because states vary in their enforcement efforts, the impact of repeal on health insurance companies would differ from state to state. This is no different from the situation faced by other businesses.

The bill is narrowly drawn to apply only to the business of health insurance, including dental insurance, and would not affect the business of life insurance, property or casualty insurance, and many similar insurance areas.

Passage of H.R. 372 would help interject more competition into the insurance marketplace by authorizing greater federal antitrust enforcement in instances where state regulators fail to act. When competition is not robust, consumers are more likely to face higher prices and less likely to and less likely to benefit from innovation and variety in the marketplace.

On behalf of our member dentists and their patients, we urge you to cosponsor H.R. 372, The Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act.

Please contact Ms. Midi Walker with any questions.

Sincerely,

American Dental Association; Academy of General Dentistry; American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology; American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry; American Association of Endodontists; American Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons; American Association of Women Dentists; American Society of Dentist Anesthesiologists.

MARCH 21, 2017.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The undersigned organizations urge your support for H.R. 372, the ''Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017.'' This bill takes an important step in bringing consumers the benefits of competition under the antitrust laws, in the way health insurance is offered, marketed, and sold.

The rules of competition apply to every other part of the health care system, health insurance is an aberration. The antitrust laws are a key to making sure that the free market works for consumers, and the insurance industry should not be left out.

Congress created this antitrust exemption almost by accident, in the midst of the Second World War—when attentions were rightly directed elsewhere—in the wake of a Supreme Court decision clarifying that the antitrust laws did apply to insurance. It started out to be a temporary three-year breathing spell, to allow insurers to familiarize themselves with the antitrust laws and adjust their practices to the accepted rules of competition. Instead, a few poorly-understood words added in conference committee turned the temporary delay into an unintended exemption from those rules.

It is long since time to correct that error. Among other experts who have called for doing so, the Antitrust Modernization Commission, established in 2002 by legislation authored in this Committee, singled out this exemption for particular skepticism as to any justification for it. While we would ultimately like to see this antitrust exemption removed for all insurance, focusing on the health insurance industry now is a logical and important positive step to take at this time.

We note that the proposed manager's amendment would preserve the antitrust exemption in ''safe harbors'' for four described activities—(1) compilation of historical loss data, (2) development of what is known as a ''loss development factor'' to fill holes in the historical data, (3) some actuarial services, and (4) some standardization of policy forms. In our view, the most effective way to remove this exemption is to do so cleanly, without new safe harbors. Further, the kinds of insurance industry activities commonly described as the justification for these particular safe harbors do not raise antitrust issues, as they are described. Nonetheless, we believe these safe harbors, as written, do not significantly risk inadvertently immunizing anticompetitive conduct that would violate the antitrust laws, and therefore that they do not diminish the beneficial purpose and effect of the bill.

There is also another set of ''safe harbor'' antitrust exemptions imbedded in the definition of ''business of health insurance (including the business of dental insurance)'' in the new subsection 2(c)(3)(B)(ii)(I) as added by the bill. They include a number of types of benefits referenced in the Internal Revenue Code as ''excepted benefits.'' While the lead-in to (3)(B)(ii) characterizes these as types of property-casualty insurance, there are three that by their terms in the Internal Revenue Code do not fit within what is considered property-casualty insurance, and that consumers would consider to be types of health insurance.

Among these are hospital indemnity insurance, 26 U.S.C. 9832(c)(3)(B); coverage for a specified disease or illness, 26 U.S.C. 9832(c)(3)(A); and an open-ended ''such other similar, limited benefits as are specified in regulations,'' 26 U.S.C. 9832(c)(2(C). This last one is found in the same Internal Revenue Code provision that lists dental coverage as an excepted benefit, meaning that the ''similar'' benefits that could be potentially excluded by regulation—and thereby get an automatic antitrust exemption—could be anything similar to a category such as dental coverage—which might be any kind of specified benefit.

While there may have been justification for excepting these categories of benefits from federal regulatory requirements such as portability under the Affordable Care Act—which is what 26 U.S.C. 9832(c) is in reference to—that does not mean it makes sense to exempt them from the antitrust laws. The bill recognizes this for dental coverage, and explicitly takes the cross-reference to it out of the safe harbor, to ensure that it is covered by the bill. We hope that, as the bill moves forward, the three new antitrust exemptions in the cross references described above will also be removed, so that these types of health-related insurance coverage will likewise be subject to the antitrust laws.

We remain strong supporters of the Affordable Care Act, which has significantly improved the availability and affordability of health care for many millions of Americans, including millions who previously had no health insurance. We would be very concerned by any move to repeal the Affordable care Act without having an effective new plan already figured out and in place that maintains comparable coverages and comparable consumer choices and protections. Such a move would be a grave threat to the financial and health security of American families, and to the very stability of our nation's health care system overall.

At the same time, we also strongly support bringing the antitrust laws into play in this important sector of the health care marketplace. That marketplace is complex in how it operates and how it motivates providers, insurers, and consumers. An effective regulatory framework is needed to shape that complex environment, to help safeguard consumers, help keep costs under control, and help make a full range of health care services available. Our country's long experience shows you can't expect a health care system to run effectively on competition alone.

But consumers will benefit from also having effective competition, at all levels in the supply chain. Even the best regulatory framework works better where competition, within the bounds of that framework, gives businesses a market-driven incentive to want to improve service while holding down prices and providing better value. Regulation and competition both work best when they can work hand in hand.

As the health care marketplace evolves, having the antitrust laws apply will give health insurers competition-based incentives to improve the way they provide coverage to consumers, with higher quality, better choice, and more affordability. Better competition will help bring insurer incentives better in line with benefiting consumers.

As the Justice Department has explained, where there is effective competition, coupled with transparency, in a consumer-friendly regulatory framework, insurers will be spurred to compete against each other by offering plans with lower premiums, reducing copayments, lowering or eliminating deductibles, lowering annual out-of-pocket maximum costs, managing care, improving drug coverage, offering desirable benefits, and making their provider networks more attractive to potential members.

Competition will be beneficial to consumers in the health insurance marketplace just as it is everywhere else in our economy.

We urge your support for H.R. 372.

Respectfully,

GEORGE P. SLOVER,
Senior Policy Counsel, Consumers Union.

J. ROBERT HUNTER,

Director of Insurance, Consumer Federation of America.
LINDA SHERRY,
Director of National Priorities, Consumer Action.

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

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

Pursuant to House Resolution 209, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

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

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

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentlewoman opposed to the bill?

Ms. ROSEN. I am opposed to the bill in its current form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. Rosen moves to recommit the bill (H.R. 372) to the Committee on the Judiciary, with instructions to report the bill back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

(c) PROTECTING AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR OLDER AMERICANS.—Section 3 of the Act of March 9, 1945 (15 U.S.C. 1013), commonly known as the McCarran-Ferguson Act, is further amended by adding at the end of subsection (c), as added by subsection (a), the following:

''(4) Paragraph (2) shall not apply to an issuer in the business of health insurance (including the business of dental insurance and limited-scope dental benefits) if the issuer varies the premium for any health insurance by age in a manner so that the premium for an individual who is 55 years of age or older is more than 3 times the premium for an individual who is 21 years of age or younger.''.

Ms. ROSEN (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Nevada is recognized for 5 minutes in support of her motion.

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill, which will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, last night, in an effort to secure more votes to pass the so-called American Health Care Act, the GOP made another last-minute attempt to modify its replacement plan for the Affordable Care Act—a replacement that I can only describe as a disastrous piece of legislation—by offering a short-term fix to try and regulate the massive rise in premiums that Americans over the age of 50 are expected to incur under their current plan.

H.R. 372 is a measure that simply ends health insurance antitrust exemption. What is ironic is that the proposed legislation is being messaged by the GOP as a bipartisan bill, a no-brainer. But Republicans have never lifted a finger to end the antitrust exemption. For years, Congressman JOHN CONYERS and the Democrats have advocated ending health insurers' special treatment.

The reality is, while this is an unobjectionable bill on its own, H.R. 372 has nothing to do with reversing the extraordinary damage that the GOP plan will unleash on this country. The fact is this will not help us solve the fundamental issues underlying the GOP's repeal-and-replace bill. Yet, instead of fixing what we know is not working under the current law, the GOP has offered this Band-Aid to help mend a bill that needs major surgery. H.R. 372 is simply a complement to help fix our healthcare system, not an alternative.

One of the worst aspects of the GOP's repeal is the fact that it implements an age tax. Americans over the age of 50 will be forced to pay up to five times more than what young Americans would pay for coverage. In my district alone, we have roughly 89,000 people between the ages of 50 and 64 who would see their premiums and the cost of their insurance rise significantly.

I recently heard from one of my constituents within that age bracket. He is a retired firefighter who served our country for 29 years and is now disabled. So after many years of service, Ted is worried that if the GOP plan becomes the new law, he and his wife would be kicked off their insurance plans simply because their insurance would become unaffordable.

If this is what the GOP has offered to fix their disastrous repeal, then I am sad to say, my friends, you have missed the mark once again. According to the Congressional Budget Office, if the GOP repeal is enacted, 14 million Americans nationwide will be kicked off their insurance coverage by the end of this year alone.

So let me be clear. The problem with the GOP repeal is that as Americans age, they get less and less coverage. We need to protect those Americans who are fast approaching their Medicare-eligible years but who, for now, are still bearing the heaviest cost of private insurance.

My motion to recommit makes this possible by turning this Band-Aid of a bill into something that actually helps drive down costs for older Americans. It does this by allowing insurance companies to take part in the bill's safe harbor protections only if they charge individuals over 55 less than three times as much as younger Americans. Since insurance companies consider these safe harbors critical for their survival, this will reverse one of the worst parts of the Republican health plan, allowing insurance companies to charge older Americans five times or even more for health insurance.

I call on my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to show that they aren't tone deaf and that they haven't lost touch with the needs and wants of their constituents, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the motion to recommit so that we can protect our seniors and the most vulnerable of Americans among us.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I claim the time in opposition to the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, the McCarran-Ferguson Act was originally passed to leave the regulation of the business of insurance with the States and to allow insurers to engage in certain procompetitive collaborative activities.

This legislation limits significant uncertainty and unnecessary litigation that would likely result from a broader McCarran-Ferguson repeal through the use of safe harbors for such historically procompetitive collaborative activities, specifically the collection and distribution of historical loss data, the determination of loss development factors, the performance of actuarial services that do not involve restraints of trade, and the use of common forms that are not coercive.

Absent these safeguards, insurers will likely disengage from certain proconsumer collaborative activities, eliminating or impeding smaller insurers from competing and disincentivizing larger insurers from exploring new products and markets. This will lead to further market consolidation and fewer product choices, the impact of which will eventually be borne by the consumer.

These narrow safe harbors create a presumption that certain procompetitive activities can continue while maintaining regulation and oversight to the extent any activity crosses over into a restraint of trade. As a result, insurers can continue to engage in proconsumer business practices, and will be encouraged to provide a diverse range of offerings at fair and reasonable prices.

There is no reason to make an exception to these safe harbors. Therefore, I oppose the motion. I urge my colleagues to reject this motion to recommit and to support the underlying bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

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

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1612

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) at 4 o'clock and 12 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed. Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 210;

Adopting House Resolution 210, if ordered; and

Suspending the rules and passing H.R. 1297.

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

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1101, SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH FAIRNESS ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 210) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1101) to amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to improve access and choice for entrepreneurs with small businesses with respect to medical care for their employees, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 233, nays 186, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 179]

YEAS—233

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Newhouse
Noem
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—186

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)

NOT VOTING—10

Black
Bridenstine
Deutch
Marchant
Payne
Rush
Sinema
Slaughter
Tsongas
Yarmuth

□ 1637

Messrs. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, SIRES, and NOLAN changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

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

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on rollcall No. 179.

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

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

RECORDED VOTE

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

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 233, noes 186, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 180]

AYES—233

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Coffman
Cole

Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Newhouse
Noem
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—186

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)

NOT VOTING—10

Bridenstine
Deutch
Gaetz
Marchant
Payne
Rush
Sinema
Slaughter
Tsongas
Yarmuth

□ 1645

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. GAETZ. Madam Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 180.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY COMMITTEE ON RULES REGARDING AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR H.R. 1215, PROTECTING ACCESS TO CARE ACT OF 2017, AND H.R. 1304, SELF-INSURANCE PROTECTION ACT

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, the Rules Committee will be issuing announcements outlining the amendment processes for two measures that will likely be before the Rules Committee next week.

An amendment deadline has been set for Monday, March 27, at 10 a.m., for H.R. 1215, the Protecting Access to Care Act of 2017; and H.R. 1304, the Self-Insurance Protection Act.

The text of these measures will be available on the Rules Committee website upon this announcement.

Please feel free to contact me or my staff if you have any questions.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Will the gentleman yield?

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. I appreciate the gentleman informing us about next week, but I am concerned about this week still.

Can the gentleman inform me whether or not we will have a CBO score on the healthcare repeal bill that we are going to be taking up in the Rules Committee tomorrow?

Mr. SESSIONS. I appreciate the gentleman asking this question.

As the gentleman has previously asked at the Rules Committee, I advised the gentleman that tomorrow, at 10 a.m., the Rules Committee will be convening for the purpose of amendment and discussion of the text that will come, and it would be my belief that that would be available in the evening hour, as I assume we will still be in.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Will we have a CBO score before the Rules Committee meets?

Mr. SESSIONS. It is my belief that I will have one.

The gentleman does understand that the CBO, in order to get it correctly processed, we have not pushed them. They have advised us they would anticipate having a score, they believe, tomorrow evening.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I thank the gentleman.

But as I said in the Rules Committee, I just think, under regular order, we ought to have the score and know how many people will lose their health insurance before we consider it in the Rules Committee.

QUADRENNIAL HOMELAND SECURITY REVIEW TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2017

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1297) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make technical corrections to the requirement that the Secretary of Homeland Security submit quadrennial homeland security reviews, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 415, nays 0, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 181]

YEAS—415

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)

Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—14

Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brown (MD)
Deutch
Hudson
Marchant
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Rush
Sinema
Slaughter
Tsongas
Yarmuth

□ 1655

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. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on roll-call no. 181, I was unavoidably detained to cast my vote in time. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

CELEBRATING NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY

(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, today marks the 44th anniversary of National Agriculture Day, which is celebrated in classrooms and communities across the country. This year's theme is ''Agriculture: Food for Life.''

Today marks a nationwide effort to tell the true story of American agriculture and remind citizens that agriculture is a part of all of us. The National Ag Day program encourages every American to understand how food and fiber products are produced; appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant, and affordable products; value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy; and acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food, and fiber industry.

America's next wave of agriculture leaders are also in Washington today: members of the National FFA Organization, 4–H, Agriculture of America, and MANRRS. Their advocacy and leadership is critical to the future of agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, our farmers feed and agriculture plays a critical role in modern society. I would like to thank all Americans who work in this essential industry.

Happy Ag Day.

□ 1700

REPEAL OF THE ACA

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, exactly 7 years after the Affordable Care Act became law, we now anticipate a vote this week on a Republican plan to gut it.

Mr. Speaker, the ACA expanded health coverage to 20 million people and expanded Medicaid to help our most vulnerable populations, changes that resulted in coverage for more than 100,000 Rhode Islanders.

Last week, I joined Democratic colleagues at a hearing to discuss the Republican plan, a hearing Republicans should have organized to assess the impact of their bill, which CBO estimates will result in 14 million additional uninsured by 2018 and 24 million people losing their health insurance by 2026.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican plan is not the solution to strengthen our health system. It ignores the sick, the poor, the disabled, and the elderly. Mr. Speaker, Americans cannot benefit from the systemic changes in care delivery, the breakthrough treatments of tomorrow, or improved access to today's therapies if the Republican plan is passed.

Mr. Speaker, we should be working in a bipartisan way to improve the Affordable Care Act, not gutting it.

TAKING THE INNOCENCE OF A CHILD IS SHAMEFUL

(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, a 14-year-old girl last week was kidnapped off the streets of Houston, Texas. After being held against her will for 5 days, she was taken to a motel, where she met a person named Denise Coronado.

But Coronado was no friend. Instead, she threatened the girl. Coronado ground cigarettes into the girl's body. She threatened everyone that the child loved. She published photographs of the girl on backpage.com, selling her on the marketplace of sex slavery. In a 1-week period, the young girl was forced to have sex with more than 20 men. Finally she escaped.

But, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the victim sometimes never truly escapes. The horrors sometimes live with them forever. We can no longer be ignorant to modern day slavery. My legislation, the Shame Act, gives Federal judges the ability to publish the names and photographs of convicted buyers and sellers of humans.

Those who sell or buy the innocence of children should be shamed for all to see. Put their photographs on backpage.com.

And that is just the way it is.

NATIONAL VITILIGO AWARENESS DAY

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce a bipartisan resolution which designates October 17 as National Vitiligo Awareness Day.

Vitiligo is a chronic medical condition resulting in the loss of skin pigmentation. Studies show that about 50 million people worldwide are diagnosed with vitiligo. In the United States, around 2 to 5 million individuals are affected. Michael Jackson had it.

The American Academy of Dermatology refers to vitiligo as a life-altering disorder that can result in low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. Children with vitiligo are especially vulnerable to being bullied because of their looks. They have a harder time making friends and are more likely to perform poorly at school. We have the power to change this. By naming October 17, 2017, as National Vitiligo Awareness Day, we highlight the importance of providing support to individuals diagnosed with vitiligo in an effort to improve their quality of life.

PUTTING LIVES AT RISK WITH REPEAL

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

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today gravely concerned for the lives put at risk by the Republicans' repeal scheme. Trump has flip-flopped on his promises to the American people.

I recently heard from a person named Nancy who lives in my district. Nancy said: I am not asking for a handout. I have been a gainfully employed taxpayer for close to 40 years.

Nancy was able to pursue her dream of opening her own small business because she could finally afford her own health care.

This bill breaks Trump's promise to Nancy and to millions of Americans. It does not lower deductibles or drug prices, and it doesn't provide better coverage. Instead, they are purposefully taking away the health insurance from 24 million Americans by cutting $170 billion from Medicare and $880 billion from Medicaid.

Why are they doing this?

Simply to give a $600 billion tax cut to millionaires. Let me be very clear. This bill hurts kids, women, families, working people, the disabled, and seniors.

THE INTEGRATED NATURE OF THE U.S.-CANADA RELATIONSHIP

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

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to illustrate the importance of the U.S.-Canada relationship, one that is based on shared values, shared hopes, and shared dreams. The United States and Canada have established strong partnerships to provide leadership on climate change, clean energy, and the environment.

The United States and Canada share deeply connected economies and enjoy the largest bilateral trade and investment relationship in the United States. We trade an average of $1.3 million in goods and services. Nearly 9 million U.S. jobs depend on trade with Canada. In my State of Michigan, over 250,000 jobs depend on the U.S.-Canada trade and investment, making Canada the number one customer for the State of Michigan.

Our two countries share the common goal of creating jobs and protecting workers. I am proud to call Canada a friend, ally, and partner.

CONGRATULATING CCDD ON 51 YEARS OF SERVICE

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

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Centro Cultural y Deportivo Dominicano de New York.

The story of Club Deportivo began 51 years ago in the New York City neighborhood of Washington Heights, where a group of Dominican immigrants bonded over weekly games of the classic board game dominoes and a shared desire to maintain their cultural roots.

Over time, this proud group, inspired by the founding fathers of the Dominican Republic—Juan Pablo Duarte, Francisco del Rosario Sanchez, and Ramon Matias Mella—made the decision to formalize itself in order to protect their own identity and cultural heritage. They officially incorporated on March 23, 1966.

As the years passed, what initially began as a way for friends new and old to stay in touch through the power of sports blossomed into what is now institutionally and athletically one of the most important centers of Dominican Americans and their friends in the 13th Congressional District. Over the past 50 years, they have hosted numerous recreational sports tournaments and have played an integral role in formation of many other civic, cultural, and social organizations.

Club Deportivo also provides its members with many vital forms of community service: ESL, citizenship classes for immigrants, folklore classes, music and arts classes for young and adults. Additionally, the group provides hot meals for the homeless each Thanksgiving and carries out frequent medical fairs.

Mr. Speaker, we are joined today by several members of the Club Deportivo Dominicano. They are celebrating their 51st anniversary. Santiago Cruz, Felix Grant, Jose Monta, Carlos Leerdam, and Jose Rodriguez are here to celebrate.

THE LATEST INCARNATION OF TRUMPCARE

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

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, late last night, in a callous betrayal of the very people who elected them, Republicans hatched up the latest plan to deprive more than 24 million Americans of their health care. Let me say that again. 24 million people. In fact, perhaps more because we have yet to receive the CBO estimates on this latest plan.

This incarnation of TrumpCare would freeze Medicaid expansion in its tracks on top of the $880 billion cut that was already in the bill. In my home State of Washington, this plan would put in jeopardy 600,000 people assisted by Medicaid expansion, people who have gained access to critical treatments for substance abuse, diabetes, and cancer screenings.

Dominic in Seattle has a son who, along with many others who suffer from asthma and other respiratory diseases, will not be able to afford his inhaler anymore. Nursing homes will shut down and throw thousands of grandparents out with no help. New so-called work requirements will add even more obstacles to healthcare coverage for our most vulnerable.

TrumpCare will strip coverage from 24 million. It is past time for my colleagues to reject this pay even more for even less plan.

HISTORIC PARALLELS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it has been an interesting couple of days. We heard from our President, and that was a great privilege this morning to hear from him at our Conference. We were reminded what an amazing victory President Trump had last November. Some said it was so very historic, maybe as historic going back clear to Andrew Jackson's victory in 1828.

That took me back, being a lover of history, being convinced over the years, as I majored in history in college because I knew out of the Army 4 years, when I finished that, I figured I would major in what I loved, and that was history. Although my mother thought I should have majored in math or either been a doctor or a college math professor.

But history I loved, and I continue to learn from history. The old adage is those who refuse to learn from history are destined to repeat it. The corollary that is not as well known is those who

do learn from history will find new ways to screw up.

But the 1828 election that saw Andrew Jackson become our President actually happened after four abysmal years, some would say the least productive 4 years any President has ever had, and it was actually a President who was a hero of mine, John Quincy Adams. He was the first son of a former President to be President. Some have said he was probably the best educated President we have ever had, having been educated at the best Massachusetts had, England had, and France had. He wrote books in German, fluently spoke French.

Of course, if he had had his way, he would have been married to an American, but when his mother, Abigail, was not too pleased with the girl he thought was the love of his life, he ended up being directed to England where he ended up falling in love with Louisa, and she ultimately became his wife; but apparently his mother didn't think she was quite fit. Louisa became the first—used to be able to say the only—First Lady the country has ever had who was not born in the United States. Like I say, if he had had his choice—first choice—then his wife would have been born in the United States. But that is the way things fall. He loved his wife dearly.

He was quite accomplished. He kept the most complete journal of anybody we have ever had who was President. He knew slavery was wrong. He knew slavery was destroying our country, that we could never reach the potential that God had for this country unless we eliminated slavery. He had corresponded to England with a guy by the name of William Wilberforce, who had dedicated his adult life since his twenties to eliminating slavery in the British Isles and British territories.

□ 1715

He ran for President in 1824. No one won with the electoral votes. It was thrown to the House of Representatives. John Quincy Adams garnered the favor of Henry Clay in the House. And when Clay threw his support behind John Quincy Adams, Adams then won the Presidency.

Adams had some friends who were very close to him. They knew his heart, they knew his heart was pure, and his intentions were clearly nothing but the very best for the United States. They knew him to be a man of honor, a man of integrity, a man of his word. He had not made any kind of deal with Henry Clay to make him Secretary of State. But as a man of honor, a man of integrity, he could not understand why he couldn't go ahead, and why he shouldn't go ahead, and appoint Henry Clay to be Secretary of State.

His closest friend said: John, if you appoint Henry Clay to be Secretary of State, you will never, ever be able to convince anybody in Congress—the House or Senate—you will never convince anybody in Washington but your closest friends, those of us that really love you, you will never convince the rest of the world or posterity that you had not cut a deal with Henry Clay that in return for his support for you being President, you would make him Secretary of State. Please, appoint him to anything, but not Secretary of State. It is going to look like you made a deal and bought the Presidency with the appointment.

But there were those who did not love John Quincy Adams, didn't have that much respect for him, and would have been fine if he had not won the election, but he had won the election. And those who didn't care about John Quincy Adams encouraged him: Sure, appoint Henry Clay, it is your choice. You appoint whoever you want.

Those who loved John said: John, it is not a good idea. People are going to brand you improperly. We know you are honest. Those are not really your friends that are telling you to just appoint Henry Clay to be Secretary of State. Go ahead.

He didn't listen to the closest friends who loved him and cared about him. He listened to those who didn't care if he succeeded or failed. So he appointed Henry Clay to be Secretary of State.

Some historians would say he had the least productive 4 years of any President in history. It is always arguable. But there were clearly times throughout his 4 years as President when he backed bills and pushed bills that would have been good for the United States and that should have had the support of both the House and Senate when they couldn't get passed simply because people thought he had bought the office with the appointment of Henry Clay to Secretary of State. And so they went against anything and everything that John Quincy Adams tried to support thereafter.

That may seem kind of a strange story to pull out from history, except I was reminded of it as I thought about today, and I thought about some folks who even in October, they didn't care about Donald Trump getting elected President, they didn't really support him at that point, so they encouraged him: You go ahead and let's do this bill that we are bringing to the floor and just never mind the fact that prices will not come down, unless you want to say 10 percent over 3 years, maybe 10 percent.

After the prices will probably continue to go up after those same 3 years, we may be able to cut 10 percent off at some point. Why? Because we are not stripping the regulation, the regulatory authority, out of ObamaCare. We are only repealing part of it. And we are leaving almost all of the part that has driven costs through the roof. It has driven the price of health insurance through the roof. It has blown the deductibles so high that so many of my constituents and friends know they will never have enough cash to pay for the deductible to even get to a claim that the insurance company would pay.

And I just know that when the prices of health insurance don't come down over the next few years, people are going to say President Trump broke his promise to repeal ObamaCare. He only got part of it, but the monopolies that had begun to grow in the health insurance market grew bigger and fatter. And a man who wanted to do an honorable thing for America and get rid of ObamaCare—that it cost people their insurance, their doctor, their medicine, that it caused so much suffering and heartache as people struggle with their healthcare bills—he promised he would get rid of it, he wanted to deliver on his promise, and he has been told by people who weren't really sure if they cared if he won or lost that: Gee, just pass this, this will be great. Just pass anything. Pass something. We will call it a victory and move on.

But these are the times when it is very important to take an assessment of those who want to see you succeed and those who really don't care. There are those who have felt on the Republican side that if Donald Trump was defeated, that would be the end of the Tea Party movement, that would be the end of any type of populism rising up against the runaway socialism, the runaway assault on religious freedom, the Second Amendment.

The American public rose up, and this is our first chance to really deliver on our promises. I hope that the votes are not all there yet so that we can reach an agreement so that we can include in the bill that comes to the floor, not an amendment we vote on so that it can be voted down, but actually included in the bill so that we take out at least the big hunk of what has caused health insurance prices to skyrocket.

And if we can do that, we can have a win this week, one that we can all feel good about on our side of the aisle, and even my friends on the other side of the aisle. If we do the right thing and make sure that we take action that actually legitimately brings down health insurance costs, then my friends on the other side of the aisle will hear good reports of joyful remarks with gratitude that insurance prices have come down, we can now afford it, our deductible is lower, we are building a health savings account, it is great.

There are some good things that can come out of the votes this week. But if people take advice from those who are not as concerned with their total success, then this could be the start of a Presidency that was as unpleasant as John Quincy Adams' Presidency, which ended up leading to the inevitable result of his defeat in 1828 to Andrew Jackson.

I hope we keep our promise.

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

BRINGING DOWN THE COST OF HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Speaker for this opportunity to continue the discussion. My colleague from Texas really left here a moment ago with a plea about bringing down the cost of health care in America. Actually, it was the cost of premiums in America. That is a plea that I think all 435 of us would echo. It would certainly be our goal, as representatives of the American people, to find some way to accomplish that, some way to bring down the cost of premiums.

I would like just to make a point right at the outset. When discussing health care, there are really two connected, but very separate, parts to the healthcare system.

One part is the delivery of medical services. These are the doctors, some of whom are in organizations of doctors of various specialties. Some are in large practices, such as the Kaiser practice. Some are in hospitals disconnected from doctors. But there is just a plethora of different ways in which medical services are delivered. That is the delivery of medical services. That is one part of it.

The other part of the healthcare system in America, and really anywhere in the world, is the collection of money to pay for the services. Now, in the United States, we have many different ways to collect the money. One of them is through taxes. And this is how we pay for Medicare and Medicaid, what we call MediCal in California. We pay for the veterans' medical services through the collection of taxes, children's health services, and some other programs that are much smaller. So that is one way in which we collect the money to pay for services. You might call those single-payer taxpayer services, taxpayers' money being spent on services delivered by that whole range of providers, some of which happen to be government providers, for example, the Veterans Administration and military medical services.

Now, the other way in which we collect money to pay for services are premiums, health insurance premiums that are charged by health insurance companies. The largest single part of that is from corporations, businesses, that buy health insurance and pay the premiums. And the others are individuals, and this is the individual insurance market. There are some small group markets out there, also. But these two systems, we need to understand that they are different. They are connected, obviously.

Now, if we are going to deal with the cost of premiums, you have to go over and deal with the cost of health care, because the health care drives the premiums and also drives the amount of money that we need to raise to pay for the services that are provided by the various governmental programs.

Now, in the Affordable Care Act, which is now some 7 years old Thursday of this week, the seventh anniversary of the passage of the Affordable Care Act, there are some very powerful mechanisms to reduce the cost of health care—doctors, hospitals, and the rest. Some of these are electronic medical records so that there is a continuity of knowledge as to what happened, what was provided, what services were provided to the individual.

□ 1730

Another one happens to be a penalty assessed on hospitals for hospital readmissions on hospital-acquired infections—profound in driving down the cost; also extremely important for individuals because hospital infection rates dramatically dropped.

There are also ways in which we pay for the services. It is very clear that the utilization of fee-for-service drove up the cost.

Anyway, as we go through this discussion today on the Affordable Care Act, and I see I am being joined by my colleagues here, I just want us to keep in mind that in order to deal with the cost of premiums, you have got to deal with the cost of services that are provided.

Now, in the Affordable Care Act, we actually saw, over the last 5 years as the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, went into effect, a decrease in the rate of increase. We haven't seen a decrease in the cost of medical services, but what we have seen is that the inflation rate has significantly reduced, so much so that the financial security of the Medicare program, which is the single biggest expenditure, has been extended by some 11 years because the inflation rate has declined—not decreased, but the rate of inflation has declined almost 50 percent from what it was before the Affordable Care Act.

That is a direct result of the many reforms that went into the way in which medical services were delivered. That allowed for a lower inflation rate for premiums and an extension of the financial viability of Medicare and other medical programs.

Now, unfortunately, we are now faced with a repeal or a partial repeal of the Affordable Care Act, and the promise has been made by my Republican colleagues that somehow this will reduce the premiums. Well, that is interesting. Now, exactly how are you going to reduce the premiums unless you are dealing with the cost of medical care?

In their reforms, there is—as best I can determine and everybody else—no effective way to reduce the cost of medical services and, in fact, the high probability that the cost of medical services will increase, specifically, because, in their proposed reform, men and women that are 45, 50 to 65 are going to find it virtually impossible to continue to buy insurance. They will drop their insurance. That is part of those 14 million Americans that will lose their insurance next year and part of the 24 million Americans that will not have insurance 9 years from now.

That population, before they get to Medicare, when they begin to get ill, 40, 50, 60, they will not be able to afford insurance. It is something like a $12,000 increase in cost to them. It is what is known as the senior tax.

Now, that will drive up the cost of medical services. Because they will not be able to have continuity of care, their diabetes, their heart issues, their high blood pressure, and on and on will not be treated.

Similarly, in the proposed reform, there is a significant reduction in the number of men and women across this Nation—and we are talking probably in the range of 4 to 6 million in the next 2 years that will not be covered under the Medicaid program. Those people, not having access to continuous medical services, will not seek treatment for those illnesses that can be treated effectively or held in abeyance, such as diabetes, heart disease, and the like. That means that the cost of medical care for them will rise.

Where will they go to get medical care? Not to worry, say our Republican colleagues. They can go to the emergency room. We have been there. We have seen what that means.

The expansion of the Medicaid program is unraveled by the proposed TrumpCare. I am going to come back to this.

I would like to ask my colleague from Texas to carry on here, if you would. I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I am going to take just a moment.

This is an excellent presentation. I think our constituents should be aware, and our colleagues, of your enormous knowledge as the former State insurance administrator in California, years of service to the people of California, and we are grateful for that analysis because you are right on the money, if you will, on the disaster or the questioning that comes about through two points: the existing bill, and then now an amendment which has been called meaningless that will be on the floor on Thursday, meaning that this bill has been amended by those who want to make it worse.

We sat in the Budget Committee on Thursday with Ranking Member YARMUTH most of the day trying to debate these numbers. So I just want to make points about wellness, about some of the criteria that maybe is misrepresented as making the insurance product more expensive.

To the Republicans, 10, 20 years ago, the product you had may not have been worth what you paid. In the product we have now, preexisting condition, stay on your parents insurance until you

are 26, certain criteria that the insurance companies must have, by the nature of the market, premiums go up to take in the idea that there are ''better benefits.'' I would argue that those benefits should have been there, but they are better benefits.

The other thing is that there was a formula which pushed millennials into the market or into the pool of people and persons that will purchase insurance.

Now, let me be very clear. I think we have not seen the end of the story. I believe that 10 years, 15 years, the young population will buy insurance. It is an educational curve. And so as they buy insurance, they will create that cushion.

Now, let me make this other point. Premiums are raised under this Republican bill, really raised, and then there are smoke and mirrors to say, oh, at a certain point it will go down 10 percent. But it goes down on the raised amount.

If you allow the Affordable Care Act to continue, we have a very large piece of wellness. Talk to your doctors. It is working.

Individuals are coming in, taking advantage of the wellness check. So they are not coming in with metastasized cancer, with thyroid conditions. They are not coming in on a stretcher with strokes or a heart attack because they are getting wellness care. When you get wellness care, on the other side of the curve, premiums go down because you get more well people.

I want to finish on this point of Medicaid that we were just debating.

Over and over again, it doesn't seem like there was any understanding that Medicaid is now part of people's insurance. And it is not a situation where I have seen many of my constituents stand on the street corner with a sign, saying, ''Give me Medicaid.'' You get Medicaid either through the expanded Medicaid.

And for our colleagues, that means that you are in a State where your insurance comes through expanded Medicaid; or you are a sick and elderly person in a nursing home or a disabled person; or you are blind; or you are a pregnant woman; or you are a mother with children; or you are on the children's health insurance program, which I was here in 1997 when this miraculous bill came forward and we established the Children's Health Insurance Program, which is a Medicaid-based program that gives millions of children insurance.

But under this bill, all of that will be capped. It will be per capita. So the $880 billion is being cut, my fellow Americans, ladies and gentleman, from your insurance.

Then, finally, this bill could not be more cruel. Besides the ailing that are in nursing homes—and I do want to tell one story of an individual who got into the nursing home, Mr. Speaker, because they didn't have insurance to take their medicine, and it resulted in heart attack and stroke. They are not an old person, but they are totally disabled, and they are in the nursing home on Medicaid now.

But in the Budget Committee, two amendments came up that I was just stunned. You worked very hard on the opioid legislation. Some of it came out of my committee, Judiciary Committee. Many Members have worked hard on this.

They had an amendment saying no able-bodied man or person should get Medicaid. I don't know what that definition is. Are you an addicted young person, wholly addicted on opioids, that needs medical treatment? Are you an able-bodied person because you have all of your faculties and limbs but you are sick and addicted?

And then, don't incentivize Medicaid. I am trying to find out what that means because all of my hospitals—and I think one of the things the Affordable Care Act has done is to question costs and to work hard to bring costs down in hospital care and to have an accountability assessment on that.

But to finish, I have not heard my rural hospitals, I have not heard my public hospitals, I have not heard the Texas Medical Center talk about people being incentivized to get Medicaid. They are sick and they come in for whatever they have.

The last point is someone gave an example that they were able to have a transplant because they were under the Affordable Care Act with expanded Medicaid.

So I want to thank the gentleman for raising these very important points, but it baffles me that there is such a skewing of a very successful legislation, very difficult. It was a very difficult piece of legislation. It took years, the Affordable Care Act, and it is doing what it is supposed to do.

As we have heard before, you can get more insurance companies. We have to do something with the premiums, and that is fixing or improving. But that is not what we are doing here. We are literally cutting people off of insurance.

I will give you the number that I keep using: 2026, 52 million Americans will be uninsured, and that will be our constituents all over the Nation. That is because of the underlying bill, this bill that is coming up now—which there are those who want it to be even worse. I just heard a gentleman say he wants to take away all the mandates. It will be worse on the American people, and I don't want to make America sick again.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I want to thank the gentlewoman from Texas, SHEILA JACKSON LEE, for her consistent and constant caring for men and women in this Nation that are on the outside, that are not among the wealthy, that are struggling with their families to improve their situation. You are always there. And here you are once again this evening laying out the problems that we are going to see with TrumpCare.

Let me just very quickly run through this, and then I would like to turn back to my colleague from Rhode Island, Mr. CICILLINE.

The proposal that is on the floor, we could just lay out five very succinct arguments on why it doesn't work.

I was going through a rather complete explanation of how the healthcare system works because it is kind of a basic understanding, but clearly, under the legislation that is going to be taken up this Thursday, Americans are going to pay more for less. And it is not just a few.

The senior citizens in Medicare are going to see a diminution in their benefits. We are looking at the 40-to 50-years-olds, which I have already discussed. We are looking at other individuals.

Pay more for less, we are looking, over the next 9 years, that 24 million Americans will lose their insurance or their opportunity to get insurance. And just this next year, just 18 months from now—excuse me, not 18 months from now. Nine months from now, we are going to see 14 million people begin to lose their insurance.

I talked earlier about this age tax, which speaks to those people that are 50 to 65 years of age. They are, under this legislation, going to pay up to five times more than someone who is between 20 and 30 years of age.

□ 1745

Present law says they can be charged no more than three times what a 20- to 30-year-old pays, and so this is what is known as an age tax. It simply shifts the cost to those 40-, 50-, 60-year-old people who happen to be the most expensive. And I talked about the $12,000 that they will have to pay in addition to that.

It guts Medicaid. We call it Medi-Cal in California and Medicaid across the Nation. The expansion of Medicaid was an extraordinarily important event that provided insurance not only to men and women who had no income, but to 85 percent of the people on Medicaid across this Nation who are elderly, in nursing homes, or elderly poor, unable to provide sufficient income from just their Social Security—those are called the dual eligible—or children.

Now, in the Affordable Care Act, there was what was known as Medicaid expansion; and those are the working men and women, families, who have less than 138 percent of the poverty rate. So those are the low-income working men and women who are able to get Medicaid, or Medi-Cal insurance in California. It simply guts it in a variety of ways, which we will come back and discuss a little later.

You can bet and you can count on there being less support for the elderly that are in nursing homes. There will be less support for the young families; the single-mother families who are struggling to get along, probably going to school, trying to learn skills; and for

the working families who are at $10 an hour minimum wage.

Finally, this is the one that ought to drive Americans right off the rails. This is a whopping $270 billion tax reduction for the top 1 percent of Americans. It is for 400 families in America, the richest 400, four of which are in the current Trump administration, including the President himself. They will see a $7 million a year decrease in their taxes.

Now, that is great. I am sure the President will enjoy that $7 million tax reduction, along with the $3 million or $4 million he is getting from the taxpayers every year so he can go to his home in Florida.

This is obscene. This is obscene because the way in which this thing works, working men and women and families across America at every income level are going to get less. They are going to pay for more, and yet the superwealthy in America are going to get a whopping tax reduction. This is the income distribution that we should never have, to take from the poor, to take from the middle class, and give to the superwealthy. I will come back and discuss this.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE).

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) for leading this Special Order hour where we can really talk about the impact of what is about to happen if the Republicans get their way and pass TrumpCare.

I think it is important to recognize that this proposal that is currently before the House will substantially hurt the American people, beginning with, as your chart demonstrates, the loss of coverage, when fully implemented, for 24 million Americans who will no longer have access to affordable health care and will be uninsured by 2026. Those are our friends, our neighbors, our family members who no longer will have health coverage.

In addition, it provides an enormous tax break for the wealthiest people in this country. In fact, the total value of these tax breaks over the decade is $600 billion to the richest individuals and the biggest corporations. It is the largest transfer of wealth for working families to the very rich in our Nation's history.

To accommodate this tax break, to give this huge tax benefit to the richest Americans and the largest corporations, they achieve this by stealing health care from millions of families all across this country and by cutting billions of dollars from Medicaid and Medicare. As the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) said, the 400 richest families will each enjoy a $7 million tax cut; and the way they paid for that is they take away health care from millions of Americans.

There is also the impact on our economy. There is a new analysis from the Center for American Progress, and they conclude that TrumpCare will destroy 1.8 million jobs.

We are all focused on: How do we get people back to work? How do we create good-paying jobs?

This is a job killer. TrumpCare will cost 1.8 million jobs, a loss of an ability to provide for yourself, for your family, and for your future.

As you said, people will be paying more money for less quality care. Deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses will skyrocket, leaving sick people unable to afford the care they need.

Particularly, as you mentioned, there will be an age tax because older Americans will pay more. Their premiums will go up at an even faster pace because they are allowed to charge even more based on their age.

Young people are also hurt. Young people are hit with a millennial tax. They put a 30 percent premium surcharge on those reenrolling after a lapse in coverage, which is often the case, particularly with young people where people may have lost a job and be out of work. So they are going to be penalized with a 30 percent premium.

The impact of the Republican proposal, this TrumpCare proposal, on women is devastating. In addition to new restrictions on comprehensive health care for women, this Republican bill, TrumpCare, defunds Planned Parenthood and will make it much more difficult for women to access essential preventative care and affordable contraception.

As I mentioned, the middle-aged American—the age tax—will pay more. For example, a 64-year-old individual with an income of $26,000 in the individual market will pay $12,900 more in their premiums each year. That is almost half their income under the Republican plan. So it is going to really get those who are above 55 but haven't yet hit the age to receive Medicare especially hard.

Also, TrumpCare hurts our seniors by weakening Medicaid and Medicare. It shortens the life of the Medicare trust fund by 3 years. It steals $880 billion from Medicaid, which, as you mentioned, is the principal source of long-term care for seniors.

Also, it does damage to the protection for people who have preexisting conditions, because someone who has a lapse in coverage will be subjected to a 30 percent premium on top of their base premium. So there is another penalty for people who have preexisting conditions.

If you take all of this together, it is worse coverage, worse care, higher costs, huge tax cut for the richest people in this country—for drug companies, for insurance companies, CEOs. To pay for their tax cut, we take away insurance from the most vulnerable and working people in this country.

We have all received both emails and phone calls and had conversations with those whom we have the privilege of representing, and they have shared with us these heart-wrenching stories of what it would mean to lose their health care.

In my State, I am proud to say that, with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, we have the highest rate of coverage that we have ever had in our State's history. Ninety-seven percent of Rhode Islanders have access to quality, affordable health care. It is great. It makes a difference in the lives and quality of the lives of everyone.

I want to share with the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) an email that I got from a constituent, just recently, from Lincoln, Rhode Island. Brenda said:

> If all goes well, I am literally going into surgery for hip replacement on March 16 of this year. Though hip replacement is seen as elective, the pain I deal with now interferes with my quality of life. Without it, I will end up in a wheelchair in a few years once I can't handle the persistent pain.
>
> Without the ACA, I would not be able to have this operation. I do not own a home for collateral and have a 19-year-old car. I work full-time in a hotel for $12 an hour. I have not had a raise in 4 years. We have no benefits at all, including health care. We have no paid time off at all for sick days, personal days, or vacation.
>
> I am not confident enough to move to another job with my current physical limitations, which have reached a point where it interferes with every activity, including sleeping.
>
> My doctors, who are aware that I get my medical through the ACA, have been helpful and diligent about getting me in soon, knowing there is a major threat for those whose only way for medical coverage is through the ACA. My condition may not be life-threatening, but left untreated, it would limit where I can live, if and where I can work, and, most likely, leave me on permanent disability or Social Security, which most people can't live on.
>
> I am only 52. I still have several functional, productive years ahead of me, and I receive a subsidy to help make my coverage affordable.

Brenda is just one example of someone whose life is literally being preserved. Her quality of life is being protected because she has access to health care. She can have the surgery she needs. She can eliminate the pain she is suffering and lead a productive life.

There are millions and millions of Americans who have the same kinds of stories, who have benefited from the Affordable Care Act, who will be deeply harmed when that insurance is ripped away if Republicans get their way and pass TrumpCare.

I want to end by just saying thank you again to the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) and to also mention that he referenced, in his remarks, the process that has produced this very, very troubling piece of legislation, unlike the process that produced the Affordable Care Act that occurred over many, many months and many hearings, where 121 Republican amendments were accepted into the bill and it still didn't earn a single Republican vote. Yet, through TrumpCare, over 100 Democratic amendments were offered in three committees of jurisdiction and not a single Democratic amendment was accepted.

So even efforts to try to improve a terrible bill were rejected in the committee process, and that is because they are intent on making sure they deliver this big tax cut to the special interests who sent them here to Washington, and they are going to try to do it on the backs of the hardworking people of this country. We have to continue to stand up and fight and do everything we can to prevent it from happening.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, there is no better fighter than the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) in the representation that he gives to the people of Rhode Island and beyond. The gentleman couldn't be more accurate about all that he said.

I was listening carefully to the story the gentleman from Rhode Island told of the individual who wrote him an email. I, too, have received many, many emails.

I was thinking, as he was describing the situation, of a woman who runs her own small farm near Marysville, California, in my district. For years, she could not afford insurance. She had a small orchard farm. She couldn't afford insurance. When she got sick, she went to the emergency room. She was able to get along.

But she knew that, as she approached 50 years of age, she would be facing a bad medical situation, and she did. She had cancer. She couldn't get a policy prior to the Affordable Care Act because she had a preexisting condition: she had cancer. Emergency rooms are not treating that. She wasn't able to get on a program, and she was going to die.

About that time, we established, in California, a covered California program that is an exchange based upon the Affordable Care Act. She, because of her income, was able to get a comprehensive insurance policy and a subsidy for her premium. She then had quality insurance, and she was able to get the cancer treatment because her insurance had no preexisting conditions and she was able to afford it. She had to pay a little bit, but she had a subsidy that made up the difference.

She is now looking at a situation, because she is in that age 50 to 65, where she will not be able to afford a $12,000- or $14,000-a-year premium because the subsidies were taken out and because of this age tax, the 1-to-5 ratio rather than the 1-to-3 ratio. It is horrific. She knows what she is facing. She is facing the loss of her insurance and, quite possibly, the loss of her life.

This is wrong. This is wrong.

I thank the gentleman from Rhode Island for joining us tonight. I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE).

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, there are so many people that I have heard from in my own district, and I know colleagues have heard the same thing when we talk about these numbers: 24 million people will lose their insurance and billions of dollars in tax breaks for the richest people in this country. Behind every one of these numbers is a real person whose life will be destroyed or devastated because they don't have access to quality, affordable health care.

This is the richest, most powerful country in the world. We are well on the way to having a system in which everyone can afford and have access to quality, affordable health care. We made huge progress in the Affordable Care Act. It is not perfect. We have always been willing to say: How do we make it better? How do we build on the success of it?

The notion, in the midst of this progress, that we would deprive or pass a piece of legislation, this TrumpCare, that will take away insurance from 24 million people, that will raise premiums, raise out-of-pocket costs, undermine Medicaid and Medicare, and also give a big tax cut to the richest people in this country is just so wrong.

□ 1800

I just think it is very important, as we speak about this, to remember, behind every one of these numbers is a story of a real person, a real family, just like the woman you described, just like Brenda in Lincoln, Rhode Island, whose lives are going to be really hurt and who are going to face devastating consequences because they don't have access to basic quality health care, which is a right in this country every American should have access to.

This sets us back so far it is difficult to imagine what our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are thinking.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I see that my colleague from the great State of Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) has arrived. Often we have shared time on the floor. Ms. KAPTUR, if you would care to share with us your thoughts on the Affordable Care Act as it exists. I know in your area it is a very important attribute in an area that has been known as the Rust Belt, and the effect of TrumpCare, RyanCare, on your citizens.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. I thank the gentleman so very much for taking the time, after formal votes have occurred today, to help us enlighten the American people on what is really at stake here.

I have to say, President Trump carried the State of Ohio by about 450,000 votes out of all the votes that were cast. And there was this slim hope, I think, on behalf of some of the people who voted for him, that though he was a billionaire, that there was perhaps a kind heart that would minister to the people of our country, helping them get more jobs, helping them deal with their everyday challenges, including health care.

Unfortunately, this bill is cruel, and it is dangerous. It helps the billionaire class. Why in heaven's name, of the people that are drafting this bill on the Republican side of the aisle, would they be giving billions and billions and billions of tax giveaways to the wealthiest people in our country; to those that, frankly, if you take away a couple of million, they wouldn't miss it anyway. You know, when you have that much money, normal life is kind of distant from your world.

But what TrumpCare is giving to the rank and file, people are going to have to pay more for less coverage, and millions and millions of people are going to lose their coverage completely.

Now, you know, 75 percent of the people who go bankrupt in this country go bankrupt because of health bills that they can't pay for. And so when you start tinkering around with people's health insurance and their coverage, you are playing with wildfire, and that is what is happening on the Republican side of the aisle.

Now, it used to be that most Americans received their health insurance through employment, just like in Germany. We had an employment-based health insurance system. I like that system. I like for workers to share in the profits of the companies that they help make money for.

But what has been happening over the years, with so much outsourcing that Wall Street is more than happy to finance, right, companies are plucked up from Ohio and put in Mexico, put in China, put in all these other places around the world. People lose their health insurance. They lose everything. They are lucky if they can hang on to their houses.

Then what happens? What happens to them? Well, if they are lucky, they might get a job that pays a third of what they earned before in a company that doesn't pay health insurance.

Take Walmart, the biggest employer in the country. Go take a look at their employees and what happens. What is happening is the corporations are throwing on to the back of the public sector, the Federal Government, the responsibility to pay for health insurance. So all the profits that Walmart makes, it doesn't benefit the workers there with any health insurance. The companies have ceded their responsibility to provide health insurance as a condition of employment, and they have transferred that to, guess what, the taxpayer. So what is going on here is a big shift in responsibility.

The Congressional Budget Office, which is nonpartisan, and the head of it is a Republican, I might say, but it is the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office reports that with TrumpCare, next year alone, 14 million fewer Americans will have health insurance.

Some of those currently on the Affordable Care will drop off, and I am very worried about the 900,000 Ohioans who were finally able to get insurance, some of whom work for Walmart, some of whom work for small employers who couldn't afford health insurance, some of them who worked for big corporations that spit them out when they moved and outsourced their jobs, that

they are going to be among these numbers.

We are told by 2020, 21 million people will lose their coverage in the country; 24 million by 2026, and perhaps the total number of uninsured Americans rising to reach 52 million. That is going backwards.

In this bill, they expect 70 million people who are currently on Medicaid—all right, guess what? They are in nursing homes.

The Republican Party always says they are the pro-life party. Baloney. This is an anti-life bill. This is going to cost illness and death across this country.

Here is a story already in my district in Ohio. A man named Joseph is self-employed, and he used to get his insurance from his wife's employer. Thank God she had employer-provided health insurance. She retired, and now the family faced a choice, forced upon them by the Republican leaders in Congress and President Trump.

They faced the threat of no health coverage, so Joseph heard all this debate here. He wasn't sure what was going to happen to him in this fiscal year of 2017, so his choice was to go on the healthcare exchange and risk losing coverage if the Republicans repeal the Affordable Care Act and pull the rug out from under him; or he could opt for the guarantee of 18 months of expensive COBRA insurance. So he opted for the expensive choice of COBRA, which cost him and his family hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of dollars in additional costs per month, and he is putting off a knee replacement because of the uncertainty even consideration of this bill is causing.

Don't tell me that this isn't cruel and dangerous. And this family isn't the only one in America that is facing that kind of terrible health choice.

The TrumpCare proposal in States like Ohio, where we have a lot of rural counties, we are going to have hundreds of thousands of people out of work, nurses, long-term care aides.

I just had people from Hospice in my office this afternoon, and we were talking about home-health care for Hospice patients versus institutional care, the rising numbers of Vietnam veterans coming into Hospice facilities.

Well, guess what? Who is going to pay for all of that in the TrumpCare? These people will be dropped. They will say to the States: well, we will give you a little bit of money, but we will cap the money, you know.

And then what happens after 2020? Hey, it is like dropping you out of an airplane with no parachute. Good luck.

We can't do this. This is a death bill. This is a death knell for the American people. We can't allow the American people to be treated in this manner. So we ought to be repairing and fixing and looking in the windshield, not the rear-view mirror of where we need to take health insurance in this country, but not put so many millions, ten and tens of millions of Americans at risk, and doling out—Congressman GARAMENDI, maybe you could repeat those numbers—over $600 billion in tax giveaways to the richest people in this country, many of whom caused the financial crash of 2008. They owe the Republic. They owe the people of this Republic for what they did.

I have families in my district still underwater on their mortgages, if they were able to hang on to their homes at all.

The wealthy of this country, starting with Wall Street, owe the American people a lot. And all those employers who abandoned their responsibilities and pushed the cost of health insurance on the public sector because they didn't have the decency to help ensure their own workers, well, shame on you. Shame on you.

For all the small businesses that finally got health insurance through this program, thank you for respecting your workers. Thank you for respecting the Affordable Care Act.

We can do a whole lot better than TrumpCare. And I really feel sorry that this new President, for whom many of the people in Ohio voted, doled up this kind of a flawed piece of legislation that is cruel and, honestly, will result in so many more illnesses across this country, because people worry about health insurance. They worry about the affordability of health insurance.

Congressman GARAMENDI, thank you so very much for having this Special Order this evening and for inviting me to participate. It has been a great privilege.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I thank the gentlewoman so very much for joining us. She asked a little bit about the health care. I am going to do this very quickly, then I want to turn to my colleague from the State of Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN).

Under TrumpCare, or Ryan-TrumpCare, as I would like to call it, these huge tax cuts for millions of families, let's just focus on that for a second. It is the largest shift of wealth from the working men and women of America, poor and up through the middle class, to the wealthiest that has ever occurred in any tax break. The Reagan taxes, you name the taxes, including the Bush W. taxes, this is the largest single shift of wealth. It is well over $300 billion in the next 9 years.

As I have said before, the 400 wealthiest families, as I said, four of whom are now the President and three in the Trump cabinet, will get over $7 million a year in reductions in their taxes. In addition to that, the top one-tenth of 1 percent will receive over—well, nearly a $200,000 reduction in their taxes. That is the top one-tenth of 1 percent.

Beyond that, $300 billion will go to the wealthy. The top 20 percent of Americans will get 75 percent of the tax breaks. The remaining 80 percent of Americans will then share the remaining very small percentage.

So it is part of this enormous shift of wealth, and this does not take into account the fact that Americans are going to pay a whole lot more for their insurance. So, in addition to the tax cuts, there is also this issue of having higher rates, less benefits going forward.

So just to repeat again, the top one-tenth of 1 percent will receive nearly $200,000 a year in tax breaks. The top 1 percent will get 57 percent. The top 20 percent get 75 percent of the 300-plus billion dollar tax cut, and everybody else, in this case, the lower 90 percent, will then share in the remaining 43 percent. Different ways of looking at these numbers.

The fact of the matter is, it is a tax cut that guts the money necessary for Medicare expansion and for the tax subsidies that people count on in order to survive. It is obscene.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. Congressman GARAMENDI, may I just inject, and I won't take up much time. But, you know, in this job, you meet everybody. I come from a working class family. We had to work for everything we ever had.

I thank the people of my district for allowing me to serve and kind of learn a whole lot more about our country and the world. And one of the things I have learned is that when you are that wealthy, these billionaires, they purchase their own doctors, they purchase their own nurses. They have special houses where they put them in on their property.

So, you know, it isn't just the tax cut that goes to the wealthiest among us, but the imbalance between those who have much and those who eke out a living is growing greater and greater and greater in our society.

Now, I think everybody should have good health care. But, honestly, when you can do that, you are not living in the real world that the vast majority of Americans live in. I thank the gentleman for allowing me to put that on the RECORD.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I thank the gentlewoman for bringing us the view from Ohio. Let's now talk about the view from Arizona. Mr. O'HALLERAN, this being your first year in Congress, welcome. I am delighted to have you join us on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN).

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of a young boy who lives in my district named Cameron. Cameron was born with a congenital heart defect, but a successful surgery at 5 weeks of age has given him a shot at a vibrant life.

He is like most 8-year-olds, fearless, curious, and full of life, but Cameron will live with this for the rest of his life.

His parents shared this story with me recently and expressed their concerns, not just about Cameron, but about the children of America who are under this type of a process. They have affordable

coverage under the Affordable Care Act, despite Cameron's preexisting conditions.

But, Mr. Speaker, they are concerned that future coverage will be unaffordable and unattainable as he grows up under the American Health Care Act, also known as TrumpCare.

I share these concerns. I cannot support legislation that will drastically raise premiums for families like Cameron's and disproportionately impact rural communities in my district.

□ 1815

It is my hope that, moving forward, Congress can work on a bipartisan solution to improve the health and well-being of Americans and their children and protect those who need it most. We cannot continue to play partisan politics with the lives of our constituents, our children, our small businesses, and the people of America.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN) so very much. The stories from the gentleman's constituents echoed across all of our constituencies, all across America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA), who is from the Central Valley.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) very much not only for the focus and the passion that he shows for this very important issue of trying to ensure that we have health care for all Americans, but also for the leadership he has demonstrated over the years. He and I have worked together in California on so many different issues.

The Affordable Care Act, as we know, has provided health care for over 20 million Americans. Since its implementation over 6 years ago, the ACA in my district, which is Fresno, Madera, and Merced Counties, located in the San Joaquin Valley, has decreased the uninsured rate from 22 percent to 11 percent. It is cut in half.

I have a marvelous, wonderful district that I take great pride in representing. It is one of the largest agricultural areas in the country. It has significant wealth, but, sadly, it has significant poverty. It is the combination of those two that make it a place where immigrants have come for decades—immigrants past and immigrants present—to make a better life for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, 19,000 individuals in my district have received financial assistance and have been able to purchase coverage through the Covered California marketplace, and 121,000 individuals in my district are now covered by the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion.

The cuts that are proposed in this Republican proposal would devastate those individuals not only in my district, but in Congressman GARAMENDI's district and throughout the valley. My Republican colleagues, the five of us from Modesto down to Bakersfield, almost 500,000 people today have insurance coverage that did not have it 6 years ago.

Let me give you some real examples. Tom lives in Fresno, California. He is 57 years old. In 2015, due to a major heart attack, he had to leave his job of 29 years. Tom's health insurance, though, did not lapse because, as a result of the Affordable Care Act, he gained affordable health coverage insurance through the Covered California marketplace. In addition, his family wrote to my office saying that they cannot envision his recovery being a success had it not been for the ACA.

Another one of my constituents, John, who lives in Fresno, told my office that without the ACA, he and his wife would not have been able to afford cancer surgery for his wife. She is now cancer-free. And we know how expensive that can be.

Austin, one of those Americans who volunteered to serve his Nation, a Vietnam veteran who lives in my district, told my office that his wife was paying $830 a month before the Affordable Care Act. Now she can afford health care at $400 a month—cut in half.

Not every story with the ACA is a success story. It is not perfect. There are problems with the act. We should be working on it.

I remember, Congressman GARAMENDI, when you were the insurance commissioner of California, and one of the areas that you developed a lot of expertise and experience on was how to deal with the insurance industry. Certainly there are improvements that can be made. There are small-business owners in my district who say that the ACA raises costs and does not provide enough insurance options for themselves or their employees. So we need to work together to fix the provisions in the law that drive up the costs and weaken the insurance marketplace.

This month, the American Health Care Act was introduced to repeal and replace the ACA by our Republican colleagues. I do not believe the American Health Care Act is a serious solution to fixing the problems we have in the ACA. The legislation we know would provide less financial help to low-income families and seniors whom we both represent. The American Health Care Act would dramatically change the way we finance Medicaid by shifting from an open-ended reimbursement system to a person allotment or block grant which will cap the amount of money in California that receive Medicaid, and that is dramatic and devastating.

This would force California to choose how to allocate increasingly a smaller number of Medicaid dollars and would decrease the care available to Medicaid beneficiaries which Congressman GARAMENDI and I care deeply about. Thousands of individuals in the San Joaquin Valley would be impacted.

Additionally, the legislation will not mandate individuals to purchase health insurance. Instead, insurers would be able to attach a 30 percent surcharge—think about that—on individuals who have a lapse in coverage. I don't think that is going to play well in Peoria or in California. So this will provide a disincentive for young and healthy people to buy insurance. It is important to note that in order for the insurance marketplace to work, there needs to be healthy people in the system to help pay for sick people. When the Speaker said that healthy people are subsidizing sick people, well, I am not an insurance expert, but isn't that the way insurance works? Good drivers pay for poor drivers, right? If you don't have a pool, a balanced pool, it doesn't work.

One last point I want to make: passing the Affordable Care Act, I was here in 2010, and it wasn't pretty. It took 1 year, dozens of committee hearings in several committees, multiple versions of the bill in the House and the Senate, and various revisions of it. We tried to get the Republicans involved. We tried to get them to participate, and we took amendments that they gave. But at some point, they decided that, no, they were going to go it alone or force us to go it alone. I think they are making the same mistake that possibly we made 6 years ago. I think that is sad because I think the American public wants us to work together.

Less than 1 month after introducing their repeal-and-replace bill, which will be before us this week—and, clearly, the replace is still a work in progress—the House is going to pass a bill on a party line vote on Thursday maybe without an updated CBO score. I thought we were going to have transparency, the light of day, know what taxpayers are paying, what they are getting, and what they are not getting. I guess not on Thursday. The CBO scores are how Congress and the public analyzes how legislation would impact States and citizens. But we are not working to get that vital information.

This last week I hosted a healthcare workshop to hear from all of my hospitals, healthcare providers, clinics, doctors, and nurses to ask what they thought of the Affordable Care Act and what we can do to fix the law. What they told me is there are a lot of things we can do to fix the current law to make it better. But they said the healthcare act that is being offered as a repeal and replace is not a solution to providing the much-needed health care we need in the San Joaquin Valley, that we need in California, and that we need in our country.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, we know that working together is how you get things done. On a bipartisan basis, we can make a difference, but not the way we are going. So I think that the gentleman from California's efforts and my efforts as we continue to try to urge common sense to prevail is what we need to do. I will, unfortunately, not be able to vote for this measure on Thursday because it really

is going to negatively impact hundreds and thousands of people in the San Joaquin Valley that will lose their coverage as a result of this repeal and replace.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his passion and his efforts.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) very much for his excellent presentation. The gentleman covered many of the issues.

I want to wrap up with just a couple of thoughts.

One of my Republican friends came up to me earlier today. He said: I don't understand. I don't understand what our team is doing. All we are doing is changing the name and hurting people.

I thought about that for a few moments, and, yes, it is Ryan or TrumpCare, but people are going to be hurt all across this Nation.

One more story, and I think we will probably wrap up here, and that is of my wife's hairstylist. She is a young lady, married, private businessowner, trying to get along, and not enough money to buy insurance. The Affordable Care Act goes into place. She looks at the exchange, and she is able to get comprehensive insurance, maternity care, and at an affordable price because of the subsidies that are built into it. She was so happy when she talked to my wife.

She said: I have insurance. For the first time in my life, I am able to buy insurance, and I am going to get pregnant. I am going to have the baby that my husband and I have always wanted because now we have insurance—not just for myself, but for my child and my husband.

The next visit, she is asking: They are not going to take it away, are they? They are not going to take it away, are they?

Well, yes, for 14 million Americans—next year, 2018, 9 months from now, 14 million Americans will begin to lose their insurance. I am not sure if this young lady will be among them or the farm lady that I talked about earlier, but they are at risk all across America—14 million people in less than 1 year, and then, beyond that, over the ensuing years, 24 million Americans.

It has been argued that the Affordable Care Act is in a death spiral. I was an insurance commissioner in California for 8 years, and that is not true. It is an alternate fact. The fact of the matter is that the Affordable Care Act is working—not without some problems here and there, but it is working. It is not in a death spiral.

That is probably a good place to leave it, except this TrumpCare—RyanCare—is a problem. You are going to pay more and you are going to get less—24 million people, an age tax on seniors, and a huge tax break for the superwealthy in America.

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 27 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, March 22, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

866. A letter from the Director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs — Specific Administrative Provisions for the Veterinary Services Grants Program (RIN: 0524-AA70) received March 20, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

867. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Open Licensing Requirement for Competitive Grant Programs [Docket ID.: ED-2015-OS-0105] (RIN: 1894-AA07) March 20, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

868. A letter from the Associate Bureau Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Connect America Fund [WC Docket No.: 10-90]; ETC Annual Reports and Certifications [WC Docket No.: 14-58] received March 20, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

869. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser, Office of Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report 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(a); Public Law 92-403, Sec. 1(a) (as amended by Public Law 108-458, Sec. 7121(b)); (118 Stat. 3807); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

870. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting the Air Force's proposed Letter of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of the United Kingdom, Transmittal No. 17-02, pursuant to Sec. 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

871. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a notification of a determination that, by reason of the statutory debt limit, the Secretary is unable to comply with the investment requirements of the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 8348(l)(2); Public Law 89-554, Sec. 8348(l)(2) (as added by Public Law 99-509, Sec. 6002(c)); (100 Stat. 1933) and 5 U.S.C. 8438(h)(2); Public Law 99-335, Sec. 101(a) (as amended by Public Law 101-335, Sec. 3(a)(7)); (104 Stat. 320); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. WALDEN: Committee on Energy and Commerce. House Resolution 154. Resolution of inquiry requesting the President of the United States and directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to transmit certain information to the House of Representatives relating to plans to repeal or replace the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the health-related measures of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010; adversely (Rept. 115–54). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. ROYCE of California (for himself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. YOHO, and Mr. SHERMAN):

H.R. 1644. A bill to enhance sanctions with respect to transactions relating to North Korea, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Financial Services, Transportation and Infrastructure, Oversight and Government Reform, 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 Ms. SINEMA (for herself and Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH):

H.R. 1645. A bill to amend the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 to provide a temporary exemption for low-revenue issuers from certain auditor attestation requirements; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. WALBERG (for himself, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. HUDSON, and Mr. ROKITA):

H.R. 1646. A bill to amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to exclude the application of such title to employment practices that are in compliance with Federal regulations, and State laws, in certain areas; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself and Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee):

H.R. 1647. A bill to establish a Water Infrastructure Trust Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. CLARKE of New York (for herself and Mr. MEEHAN):

H.R. 1648. A bill to provide for further comprehensive research at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke on unruptured intracranial aneurysms; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. DINGELL:

H.R. 1649. A bill to assist entrepreneurs, support development of the creative economy, and encourage international cultural exchange, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Small Business, Transportation and Infrastructure, the Judiciary, Education and the Workforce, Financial Services, and Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HUFFMAN (for himself, Mr. RUSSELL, and Ms. BASS):

H.R. 1650. A bill to establish a national, research-based, and comprehensive home study assessment process for the evaluation of prospective foster parents and adoptive parents and provide funding to States and Indian tribes to adopt such process; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (for herself, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. TONKO, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. LANCE, Mr. SCHRADER, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. HARPER, Mr. MCKINLEY, and Mr. CRAMER):

H.R. 1651. A bill to designate the same individual serving as the Chief Nurse Officer of the Public Health Service as the National Nurse for Public Health; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

H.R. 1652. A bill to provide for the regulation of over-the-counter hearing aids; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. LATTA (for himself and Mr. MCKINLEY):

H.R. 1653. A bill to amend certain provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MCCLINTOCK (for himself, Ms. CHENEY, Mr. COOK, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. ISSA, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. ROHRABACHER, and Mr. TIPTON):

H.R. 1654. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate Federal and State permitting processes related to the construction of new surface water storage projects on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to designate the Bureau of Reclamation as the lead agency for permit processing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MEEHAN (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. BABIN, and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut):

H.R. 1655. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for facilities using a qualified methane conversion technology to provide transportation fuels and chemicals; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MEEHAN (for himself, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. HURD, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. REICHERT):

H.R. 1656. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide incentives for employers to establish student loan repayment programs and to make contributions to qualified tuition programs on behalf of children of employees; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. NOLAN:

H.R. 1657. A bill to amend the Trade Act of 1974 to authorize a State to reimburse certain costs incurred by the State in providing training to workers after a petition for certification of eligibility for trade adjustment assistance has been filed, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 1658. A bill to extend to the Mayor of the District of Columbia the same authority over the National Guard of the District of Columbia as the Governors of the several States exercise over the National Guard of those States with respect to administration of the National Guard and its use to respond to natural disasters and other civil disturbances, while ensuring that the President retains control of the National Guard of the District of Columbia to respond to homeland defense emergencies; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROSKAM (for himself, Mr. KIND, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, and Ms. BONAMICI):

H.R. 1659. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide an exclusion from income for student loan forgiveness for students who have died or become disabled; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SIRES (for himself, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. KEATING, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. DONOVAN, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey):

H.R. 1660. A bill to direct the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit to Congress a report on the development and use of global health innovations in the programs, projects, and activities of the Agency; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. TIBERI (for himself, Mr. NEAL, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. FASO, Mr. KATKO, Mr. PASCRELL, and Mr. RENACCI):

H.R. 1661. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform the low-income housing credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WENSTRUP:

H.R. 1662. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit smoking in any facility of the Veterans Health Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. WITTMAN (for himself, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. GRIFFITH):

H.R. 1663. A bill to amend the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 to reauthorize grants for and require applied water supply research regarding the water resources research and technology institutes established under that Act; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia (for himself, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia):

H. Res. 213. A resolution expressing support for designation of October 17, 2017, as the ''National Vitiligo Awareness Day''; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. SÁNCHEZ (for herself, Mr. COOK, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. RUSH, and Mr. GALLAGHER):

H. Res. 214. A resolution expressing support for designation of a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS (for himself and Mr. MAST):

H. Res. 215. A resolution expressing the fact that the House of Representatives supports the system for prescription drug coverage provided under part D of the Medicare program and believes that changes to such system should not be part of the American Health Care Act of 2017; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BUCSHON:

H. Res. 216. A resolution congratulating the Plastics Industry Association on its 80th anniversary; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Science, Space, and Technology, 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. LEE (for herself, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. NADLER, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. MEEKS, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER):

H. Res. 217. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Social Work Month and World Social Work Day; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California (for himself, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. MARINO, Ms. MOORE, Mr. NADLER, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. QUIGLEY, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. ROSKAM, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. YOHO, Mr. ROKITA, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, and Ms. MENG):

H. Res. 218. A resolution recognizing the importance of the United States-Israel economic relationship and encouraging new areas of cooperation; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. WALKER:

H. Res. 219. A resolution establishing a Select Committee on POW and MIA Affairs; to the Committee on Rules.

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. ROYCE of California:

H.R. 1644.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Ms. SINEMA:

H.R. 1645.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I. Section 8.

By Mr. WALBERG:

H.R. 1646.

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. BLUMENAUER:
H.R. 1647.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 1
By Ms. CLARKE of New York:
H.R. 1648.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and it subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.
By Mrs. DINGELL:
H.R. 1649.
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.
By Mr. HUFFMAN:
H.R. 1650.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
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 of Officer thereof''
By Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas:
H.R. 1651.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Mr. KENNEDY:
H.R. 1652.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8—to provide for the general welfare and to regulate commerce among the states.
By Mr. LATTA:
H.R. 1653.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
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. McCLINTOCK:
H.R. 1654.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 4, Section 3, Clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution, which confers on Congress the power to make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the property belonging to the United States.
By Mr. MEEHAN:
H.R. 1655.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution which gives Congress the power to ''regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several states and within the Indian Tribes.''
By Mr. MEEHAN:
H.R. 1656.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to: Article I, Section 8, Clause I
By Mr. NOLAN:
H.R. 1657.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 18
By Ms. NORTON:
H.R. 1658.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
clause 17 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.
By Mr. ROSKAM:
H.R. 1659.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8 states that, ''The Congress should have Power To lay and collect Taxes,'' and Article I, Section 7 states ''All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Represenatives.''
By Mr. SIRES:
H.R. 1660.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Pursuant to clause 3(d)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds the authority for this legislation in article I, section 8 of the Constitution.
By Mr. TIBERI:
H.R. 1661.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 1
By Mr. WENSTRUP:
H.R. 1662.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.
By Mr. WITTMAN:
H.R. 1663.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause I of the United States Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 38: Mr. DENT.
H.R. 103: Mr. PERLMUTTER.
H.R. 104: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 179: Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. CLAY, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 233: Mr. YARMUTH.
H.R. 299: Mr. ISSA, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, and Mr. PERRY.
H.R. 303: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa and Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS.
H.R. 314: Mr. LATTA, Mr. HUIZENGA, and Mr. WILLIAMS.
H.R. 421: Mr. GARRETT.
H.R. 474: Mr. RICE of South Carolina and Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 488: Mr. BARR.
H.R. 520: Mr. COLE.
H.R. 530: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 539: Mr. LANCE.
H.R. 548: Mr. POE of Texas.
H.R. 564: Mr. BOST, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. HUIZENGA, and Mr. RENACCI.
H.R. 613: Mr. ARRINGTON and Mr. BARR.
H.R. 669: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H.R. 695: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
H.R. 721: Mr. DUFFY.
H.R. 747: Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. POCAN, and Mrs. DINGELL.
H.R. 754: Mr. ISSA, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Mr. RASKIN.
H.R. 757: Mr. KILDEE.
H.R. 761: Mr. LAHOOD and Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 770: Ms. SINEMA and Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.
H.R. 772: Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota.
H.R. 795: Mr. MEEHAN.
H.R. 800: Mr. ELLISON.
H.R. 804: Mr. WALZ and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 807: Mr. TONKO.
H.R. 812: Mr. RENACCI.
H.R. 816:'Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 919: Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Mr. BUTTERFIELD.
H.R. 942: Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 949: Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 984: Mr. MCEACHIN.
H.R. 986: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia and Mr. MOOLENAAR.
H.R. 1005: Mr. HUDSON, Mr. ESPAILLAT, and Mr. COLLINS of New York.
H.R. 1017: Mr. POCAN, Mr. HARPER, and Mr. POLIS.
H.R. 1057: Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. COLE, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 1066: Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. RENACCI, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, and Miss RICE of New York.
H.R. 1090: Mr. ROSS.
H.R. 1116: Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. HARPER, and Mr. KELLY of Mississippi.
H.R. 1120: Mr. FASO, Mr. NOLAN, and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.
H.R. 1141: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. DAVIS of California, and Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 1163: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
H.R. 1206: Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 1231: Mr. POE of Texas.
H.R. 1243: Mr. TAKANO.
H.R. 1251: Mr. GOHMERT.
H.R. 1267: Ms. BONAMICI and Mr. HIGGINS of New York.
H.R. 1289: Mr. POCAN, Mr. EVANS, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. PLASKETT, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 1290: Mr. SOTO, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. KILMER, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. PLASKETT, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 1299: Mr. NOLAN and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 1346: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 1363: Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 1377: Mr. SWALWELL of California, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Ms. KAPTUR, and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.
H.R. 1378: Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. SOTO, Mr. LOEBSACK, and Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 1384: Ms. STEFANIK, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. COLE and Mrs. ROBY.
H.R. 1393: Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. ROKITA, and Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
H.R. 1435: Ms. JUDY CHU of California.
H.R. 1444: Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.
H.R. 1456: Mr. YODER and Mr. CUELLAR.
H.R. 1463: Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.
H.R. 1464: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 1473: Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. WELCH, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. KHANNA, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.
H.R. 1515: Mr. NADLER, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 1526: Mr. JONES.
H.R. 1532: Mr. COLE.
H.R. 1538: Mr. GOODLATTE.
H.R. 1552: Mr. MASSIE and Mr. WALKER.
H.R. 1556: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 1562: Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 1566: Mr. POLIS, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. COHEN, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 1569: Mr. RUSH, Mr. SWALWELL of California, and Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 1588: Ms. BROWNLEY of California.
H.R. 1594: Mr. COLE.
H.R. 1608: Mr. SMITH of Washington and Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 1614: Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 1624: Mr. HUDSON.

H.R. 1626: Mr. O'HALLERAN.

H.R. 1627: Mr. MEEHAN, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. STEWART, and Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 1632: Mr. COLE.

H.J. Res. 7: Mr. GALLAGHER.

H.J. Res. 59: Mr. EMMER, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, and Mr. ALLEN.

H.J. Res. 89: Mr. BACON.

H. Con. Res. 10: Mr. FOSTER.

H. Con. Res. 27: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. HUFFMAN, and Ms. TSONGAS.

H. Res. 28: Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. SHERMAN, and Mr. RENACCI.

H. Res. 31: Mr. CLEAVER and Mr. NORCROSS.

H. Res. 54: Mr. SOTO, Mrs. TORRES, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H. Res. 140: Mr. HIGGINS of New York.

H. Res. 162: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania and Ms. HANABUSA.

H. Res. 164: Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. LOFGREN, and Mr. YARMUTH.

H. Res. 181: Mr. GROTHMAN.

H. Res. 184: Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. TONKO, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, and Mr. SERRANO.

H. Res. 186: Ms. PINGREE.

H. Res. 196: Mr. RUSH.

H. Res. 206: Mrs. BUSTOS, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. MAST, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mrs. DAVIS of California.

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Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2017 No. 49

Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable DAVID PERDUE, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, empower us today to trust You more fully and to accept our responsibility to bring peace to our Nation. Let that peace begin in our individual lives, creating an oasis of concord in an arid and truculent world.

May our Senators bring the music of Your unity to their work, finding creative solutions to intractable problems. Lord, whisper to them words of instruction to help them find wisdom for these challenging days. May they shoulder the responsibilities that come with the privilege of freedom.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 21, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVID PERDUE, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. PERDUE thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

REPEALING AND REPLACING OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last night in my home State of Kentucky, the President called for an end to ObamaCare as Congress continues working to repeal this disastrous law and replace it with patient-centered solutions.

In Kentucky, just like across the country, costs are spiking, choices are dwindling, and insurance markets are edging closer and closer to collapse. Listen to this wife and small business owner who lives in Shelby County. She wrote to my office about her problems with ObamaCare. Here is what she said:

I have seen little or no success where ObamaCare is concerned. [T]he current insurance available is causing working class Americans to choose between paying their bills and getting needed medical care. . . . We need help.

Kentuckians deserve better than ObamaCare. The American people deserve relief from ObamaCare. The law is failing right in front of us. It will continue to get worse unless we act. So we have to act. This week the House will continue working to advance ObamaCare repeal-and-replace legislation. The House has already done some great work on the bill, and I look forward to taking it up in the Senate soon. We will have an amendment process here in the Senate. At the end of that process, we will send a bill to the one person who can sign it into law, and that is the President of the United States.

But the legislation before the House isn't our only tool to help stabilize the healthcare marketplace. It is one prong of a three-part strategy.

The second prong is the administration continuing to use its broad authority to bring relief. Officials like the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tom Price, and the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Seema Verma, are already working to bring relief to stabilize health markets that ObamaCare has rattled.

The third prong is further legislation to reform the healthcare market and make it more competitive for consumers. Taken together, these three prongs aim to restore power to the States and move more healthcare decisions out of Washington and back to the States. They also represent the best way to bring relief to Americans who continue to suffer under ObamaCare. The American people deserve better than this failing law. We promised we would repeal and replace it for four straight elections. We are working to fulfill that commitment right now.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. MCCONNELL. On another matter, Mr. President, yesterday Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch came before the Judiciary Committee for the first day of his confirmation hearing. In his opening statement, Judge Gorsuch showed why so many lawyers and judges strongly support his nomination as a thoughtful and fairminded judge who understands the particular role of the Federal courts in our Republic and who has discharged his judicial office accordingly.

Last week, two of his former colleagues on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals added their voices to this growing chorus. The endorsement of him was published in the Washington Post. Judge Gorsuch's hearing continues today with Senators on the committee asking him questions. As they

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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do, we should keep in mind the counsel of his former Tenth Circuit colleagues—both as to their experience with Judge Gorsuch on the bench and their view of our role in questioning him now that he is before the Senate. Judges Deanell Reece Tacha and Robert Henry both served with Judge Gorsuch on the Tenth Circuit. Both were chief judges of that court, in fact, and both have gone on to careers in academia: Judge Tacha as dean of the Pepperdine University School of Law and Judge Henry as president and chief executive of Oklahoma City University. Judge Tacha was appointed to the circuit court by President Reagan while Judge Henry was appointed to the circuit court by President Clinton. They describe themselves as a lifelong Republican and Democrat, respectively.

They write that ''predictions abound as to how Judge Neil Gorsuch—if confirmed—would lean or even vote on this or that case. . . . But these essentially political discussions tend to distort the role of judges in our government.'' They remind us that the '' 'independence of the judges' is a most sacred tradition in U.S. constitutional law, requiring all judges to have no obligations to those who nominated or confirmed them.'' Let me repeat that. They note that the principle of judicial independence requires judges not to have obligations to those who nominate them or those who confirm them.

In that regard, Judges Tacha and Henry remind us that ''[d]etailed discussions during the confirmation process on issues that might come before a judge are not proper; in fact, they would in all likelihood require recusals from the cases discussed.'' They point out how the judicial process is different from the confirmation process. They observe that ''controversies that go before the court often bring unique and complicated facts that could completely change a judge's sincerely espoused view.'' Legal research is ''[a]nother critically important input into judicial decisions.'' Legal research might reveal precedent that overrides a judge's ''previously held views or even logical interpretations of legal text.'' They emphasize that the judicial process is the collection of ''[t]hese factors—tradition, independence, precedent and unique facts,'' and that these factors ''often combine to lead judicial nominees to change their views when confronted with specific cases.''

By contrast, these factors are not present in the confirmation process. So it is not realistic or fair to expect a judicial nominee to state or imply under oath how he or she might rule as a judge. That is why Justice Ginsburg could not give any hints, forecasts, or previews of her possible rulings during her Supreme Court nomination hearing.

But we don't have to guess how Judge Gorsuch would conduct himself as a Justice. We have a 10-year record of his judicial decisions, and we have the professional experience of those who practiced before him and those who have served with him. As for the latter, Judges Tacha and Henry give him the highest marks.

Judge Gorsuch was, they say, ''like most good judges, assiduously attentive to the facts and the law in each case.'' If he were confirmed to the Supreme Court, they say that ''other important traits of Gorsuch that are not likely to change'' are things like ''his fair consideration of opposing views, his remarkable intelligence, his wonderful judicial temperament expressed to litigants and his collegiality toward colleagues.''

They conclude by saying that ''[i]f we seek to confirm to the Supreme Court a noted intellect, a collegial colleague, and a gifted and eloquent writer—as well as a person of exhibited judicial temperament—Gorsuch fits that bill. He represents the best of the judicial tradition in our country.''

Their endorsement tracks with so many others we have heard, and I am confident Judge Gorsuch will show the country today and tomorrow why so many people are so proud to support him to be our next Supreme Court Justice.

NOMINATION OF DANNY REEVES

Mr. MCCONNELL. As to another well-qualified judge whose nomination is currently being considered by the Senate, today, we will consider the nomination of U.S. District Court Judge Danny Reeves to serve on the U.S. Sentencing Commission. He is a great choice to serve on the Commission, and I look forward to the Senate confirming him.

Among its responsibilities, the Commission is tasked with setting sentencing policy in our Federal judicial system. While I don't always agree with the policy outcomes, I appreciate the important role it plays in trying to ensure fairness in our Federal courts. Judge Reeves is well prepared for the task ahead. I am confident he will do great work on the Commission.

His legal career began in Northern Kentucky University's Salmon P. Chase College of Law, where he graduated with honors in 1981. After graduation, he clerked with Judge Eugene Siler, then a district court judge in the Eastern and Western Districts of Kentucky. Upon finishing his clerkship, Judge Reeves entered private practice at what was then known as Greenebaum Doll & McDonald. He became a partner there in 1988.

In 2001, I had the first of many in-depth discussions with Judge Reeves. I was so impressed by him that I recommended him to then-President George W. Bush and that he appoint Judge Reeves as a Federal district court judge in Kentucky. The Senate confirmed him without a dissenting vote, and he served with distinction on the Federal bench.

Judge Reeves has been lauded for his steady devotion to the rule of law, for his commitment to fair rulings predicated on the facts and law—rather than his own political beliefs—and for his evenhanded approach to all who enter his courtroom. Because of his demonstrated appreciation for these precepts, Judge Reeves will be a significant asset to the Commission and an advocate for sound and sober decision-making.

As many of you know, the Commission has been operating, to the extent it can, without a quorum. Not only does Judge Reeves' appointment stand as validation of his distinguished career as a respected jurist, but, along with the reappointment of U.S. District Court Judge Charles Breyer, it represents a return to an operational agency. Now the Commission can get back to the business for which it was designed, establishing uniform sentencing practices and policies that will be utilized in Federal courts all across the country.

So I look forward to supporting and congratulating Judge Danny Reeves, as well as his wife Cindy and their sons Adam and Joe and their families, on his confirmation to the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on one final matter, over the past several weeks, the Senate has been working to bring much needed relief from the regulatory onslaught of the last 8 years. Using the Congressional Review Act, or CRA, we have already taken action to end regulations that threaten jobs, weaken our economy, and undermine States' authority. Today we will continue to move forward with our efforts to block more unnecessary regulations that hold our country back in a number of ways. The CRA resolution that we will consider today will end regulation that undercuts Alaska's ability to manage its fish and wildlife resources. As a coalition of hunters, fishing enthusiasts, and conservationists recently wrote me, ''Congress promised that the citizens of Alaska, working through their Department of Fish and Game would be able to manage their own fish and wildlife, as do the other 49 states.''

Passing this CRA resolution will roll back the administration's overreach and restore the State-Federal balance that Congress originally intended. Our colleagues from Alaska, Senator MURKOWSKI and Senator SULLIVAN, are the sponsors of this resolution we will consider today. They know the damage this regulation would do to their home State. They have been working to do something about it.

They have also been quick to point out the concerning precedent this rule would mean for the rest of the States. I appreciate their leadership on this issue and look forward to joining them in overturning this harmful Obama administration regulation as soon as possible.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, President Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court, Judge Neil Gorsuch, was introduced in the Judiciary Committee for opening statements. We all look forward to today's round of questioning, during which I hope the nominee will be more forthcoming than he was with me. I am very sympathetic to the fact that judges should not offer opinions on cases that could come before the Court lest they bias themselves. Every Senator is aware of that. We know to ask general questions or questions about cases previously decided to get a sense of a judge's philosophy.

In our meeting, Judge Gorsuch refused to even answer those questions. For instance, I asked him a very simple question. I said forget about the case that was then pending in the Ninth Circuit on the Executive order. I said: Let's say Congress passed a law: No Muslim could enter the United States. Would that be unconstitutional?

He even refused to answer that question. So I hope he will be more willing to answer questions in the Judiciary Committee today, particularly about his views of important Supreme Court cases of the past and his own ideology. This idea that judges judge regardless of ideology is totally belied by the fact that there is a coalition right now—four judges on one side, four judges on the other. Four appointed by Democratic Presidents who generally rule one way, four appointed by Republican Presidents who generally rule the other.

If it was just interpreting the law without any input from a person's life and thoughts and ideology, we would not have that stark breakdown, but we do. In my view, the hard right, in trying to populate the bench with people way over, has adopted this philosophy, starting with Miguel Estrada: Don't answer the questions because if the American people knew how you really felt, they would not want you on the bench.

Let's take the case of President Trump. Of course President Trump considered ideology when he selected Judge Gorsuch off a list culled by the far-right Heritage Foundation and Federalist Society. He did not pick the judges himself. He went to these extreme groups and said: You make a list. I promise I will pick people from that list.

Do you think organizations—these organizations—dedicated to a certain ideological viewpoint, did not consider ideology when building their list of possible Supreme Court picks? Of course they did.

President Trump said himself, he wanted to appoint a Justice who would overturn Roe v. Wade. The idea that he selected a judicious, neutral judge is belied by the selection process, totally and amazingly. That is how the President considered these judges. So it is not unreasonable for Senators to consider and question the ideology of a nominee in committee. President Trump sure did when he came up with a list. The only way for the Judiciary Committee to do that is if the nominee is willing to answer specific questions. If he is not willing to answer specific questions, what is the purpose of even holding a 4-day hearing?

Before I move on to another topic, I would like to point out that it is the height of irony that Republicans held this Supreme Court seat open for nearly a calendar year while President Obama was in office but are now rushing to fill the seat for a President whose campaign is under investigation by the FBI.

Even Representative NUNES, the Republican chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, said the investigation, confirmed yesterday by FBI Director Comey, puts a ''big gray cloud'' over this administration. You can bet if the shoe were on the other foot and a Democratic President was under investigation by the FBI, the Republicans would be howling at the Moon about filling a Supreme Court seat in such circumstances.

After all, they stopped the President who was not under investigation from filling a seat with nearly a year left in his Presidency. It is unseemly to be moving forward so fast on confirming a Supreme Court Justice with a lifetime appointment while this ''big gray cloud'' of an FBI investigation hangs over the Presidency.

TRUMPCARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the Republicans plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. Their bill is such a mess and is proving so deeply unpopular that Republicans are playing a game of hot potato with it. Speaker RYAN does not want to call it RyanCare. The administration does not want to call it TrumpCare. They are pointing at each other and hoping the other one takes responsibility and blame.

President Trump, who has tried to put his name on nearly everything in his career—ties, steaks, water—does not want his name on this bill. Well, the President himself is here on the Hill today to sell the bill to House Republicans. Make no mistake, this is TrumpCare, the President's bill. Every American should know that if Republicans ultimately pass this bill, President Trump is behind it, and Republicans will have helped him every step of the way.

So voters, particularly Trump supporters, who would be hurt most by this TrumpCare should remember that when your premiums start going up, President Trump did that. When your insurance does not cover all the things it used to, President Trump did that. If you are older and insurance companies are now charging you exorbitant premiums, several times what you used to pay, President Trump did that. When 24 million fewer Americans have health insurance while the wealthiest Americans get a huge tax break, you can be sure President Trump did that too.

Even now, the changes House Republicans are making to buy off different factions of their caucus are making the bill more harsh. Some of these changes will further weaken Medicaid and result in even fewer Americans with healthcare coverage. Though Republicans claim they are fixing the bill's unfair tax on older Americans, they are not. The truth is, the Republican age tax is still in the bill. People in their fifties and sixties still stand to lose big time.

The larger truth is, Republicans are not trying to make this bill better. They are just trying to make it pass with all their various factions pulling them in different directions. There is no better evidence of that than the new ''Senate slush fund,'' a $75 billion earmark the House is giving the Senate to buy off Republican Senators who don't want to vote for this bill.

What happened to our fiscal conservative friends in the House—no unnecessary expenditures. A $75 billion slush fund. It doesn't even say what it does. Wow. Unbelievable. Many Republican Senators don't want to vote on the House bill because it is going to crush older Americans with a new age tax, but make no mistake about it, the Senate slush fund is not going to fix that problem at all.

Here is the biggest problem. The consequences of TrumpCare are so bad for working Americans and older Americans that my friend the majority leader may rush it through the Chamber after we get it from the House. He has already said TrumpCare is going to bypass committees and go right to the floor. There is even talk that Republican Senators, under his leadership, are negotiating a substitute bill behind closed doors that would take its place and also go straight to the floor.

That is not how we should do business here on something as important as healthcare. That is not just my view, that is the majority leader's view. Listen to what the distinguished majority leader—then-minority leader—said

about healthcare reform in 2009, when the Affordable Care Act was being debated. He said—these are MITCH MCCONNELL's words:

> We shouldn't try to do it in the dark. And whatever final bill is produced should be available to the American public and to Members of the Senate for enough time to come to grips with it. There should be and must be a CBO score.

Let me repeat that. ''There should be and must be a CBO score.'' I would ask our leader, are we going to have one before he rushes this bill to the floor? I hope so. ''We are going to insist,'' he said, ''that it be done in a transparent and fair and open way.''

Well, the majority leader delights in pointing out instances when Democrats seemed to go back on something they said. So I certainly hope he follows his own advice from 2009 now that he is majority leader. We hope to see a published bill, with Senators given time to review, and a CBO score before anything moves forward—a fair, open, and transparent process, as he said.

I know why he wants to move so quickly. The majority leader knows how bad the bill actually is. In fact, the consequences of TrumpCare are so bad that Republicans are talking about other phases of the plan, promising a second and third prong that will somehow make this bill better for American people down the road. They say to their colleagues: Well, this bill is bad, but we will change it in the second and third prongs.

Well, that is a diversion. If Republicans can't live with this bill, they should shelve it because those other prongs are either not going to happen or will make it worse.

I can speak with some authority on the third prong. It is going to require 60 votes. That is what will be needed for the Republican legislation to make more changes to our healthcare system—60 votes, which means at least 8 Democratic votes.

I warn my Republican colleagues: Once you repeal ACA in this fashion—just ripping it out, having nothing good to put in its place—our healthcare system is going to be too messed up to resuscitate it with piecemeal legislation down the road. Even my Republican friends, Senators on the other side of the aisle, said as much. My friend, the junior Senator from Texas, Senator CRUZ, said: ''Anything placed in so-called bucket three won't pass.'' You are right, TED. If we want to pass real reforms, we have to do it now and on budget reconciliation. Senator CRUZ is right again.

My friend, the junior Senator from Arkansas, Senator COTTON, freely admits that ''there is no three-phase process. There is no three-phase plan. That is just political talk. It's just politicians engaging in spin.'' Senator COTTON, I couldn't have said it better myself.

All Republicans in the House and Senate should hear this: Democrats will not help Republicans repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act—in one phase, two phases, or three phases. This TrumpCare bill would cause such immense damage to our country, its citizens, average working families who are going to be paying more and getting less, we are not going to be complicit. But we will work with our Republican colleagues to improve the existing law.

If the President and the majority leader say ''All right, we are not going to repeal; let's work on some changes,'' we will do it with them. Of course we will listen. But they have to drop repeal first.

Again, I urge my friends on the other side of the aisle to drop their repeal efforts, drop TrumpCare—non-negotiated, not a drop of bipartisanship in it—and come negotiate with Democrats on improvements to the Affordable Care Act. Turn back before it is too late—too late for the American people who will be hurt and too late for all of you who will also be hurt as you try to defend TrumpCare in the next few years.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, equally divided, with Senators permitted to speak therein, with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the final half.

The Senator from Missouri.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I am here today to discuss the nomination of Neil Gorsuch to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. So far this year, we have heard that it is too early to do everything, that the process of putting the President's Cabinet in place, which took longer than any administration since George Washington and is still not completed, was somehow too early. We heard that every single nominee was being handled too quickly, even though every previous President since the first President has managed to have a Cabinet confirmed by the Senate quicker than this one.

Clearly the process going on right now—hours of questioning beginning today for Judge Gorsuch, who has a 10-year record as an appeals judge on the Tenth Circuit, where all of the other judges in the district courts under the Tenth Circuit's jurisdiction see their cases go to be appealed.

The Supreme Court is ''distinctly American in concept and function,'' according to Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, and there is, frankly, nothing quite like it in any other constitutional government. It is a Court that was supposed to be part of this very unique at the time idea of a government that was so finely balanced that it would run itself, a machine that was so finely balanced that it didn't take a King, it didn't take the intervention of somebody to decide who would be the one person who would run the country.

The Supreme Court—the only Court mentioned in the Constitution—is a uniquely American court. In the history of the country, only 112 people have had the honor to serve on the Supreme Court. On the last day of January, President Trump nominated Judge Neil Gorsuch of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit to be one of those unique individuals who get to serve on this Court, to be an Associate Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Since his nomination, he has visited individually with a significant majority of Members of the Senate. I think he has had 70 visits with Members of the Senate in their offices. Many of my colleagues on the other side—several of whom I will mention in a minute—voted for Judge Gorsuch to have the job he currently has. Many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle left their meetings with Judge Gorsuch impressed by his character, by his intellect. Here is what just a couple of our colleagues on the other side said:

''He did a very good job in the meeting with me. He presents himself very well.''

Another one of our colleagues said: ''He's a very caring person, and he's obviously legally very smart. . . . I think we are dealing with someone who is impressive.''

Another one of our colleagues said they ''had a thorough conversation about the importance of the rule of law and of a judiciary that is independent of the executive and legislative branches of government.''

As more Senators had a chance to meet Judge Gorsuch, they came to see him as an independent-minded judge who has a deep appreciation for the law and a real understanding of what a judge should do.

It was mentioned earlier that the judge should be required to talk about how he would rule on individual cases. Of course not. In fact, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who is on the Court now, was very strident before the committee in pointing out that it would be wrong for a judge to explain how they would judge an individual case. She said that if a judge did that, a judge would actually have to recuse themselves, in her opinion, from the case, and others on the Court today have all said similar things when asked the kinds of questions that the minority leader just said that Judge Gorsuch would have to answer if he was going to be confirmed to the Court. If that was the test, there would be nobody on the Court today, and if that was the test, none of the 112 people who have served on the Court

would have, in all likelihood, passed that test.

When I had a chance to visit with Judge Gorsuch, it was clear that he understood the proper role of a judge. The role of a judge—the job is to adhere to the Constitution, to apply the rule of law, and not to legislate from the bench.

When he was nominated by President Trump, Judge Gorsuch said:

> It is for Congress and not the courts to write new laws. It is the role of judges to apply, not alter, the work of the people's representatives. A judge who likes every outcome he reaches is very likely a bad judge, stretching for results he prefers, rather than those the law demands.

What does that mean? How would a person reach a conclusion they didn't like and that is what makes them a good judge? Well, a good judge reads the law, reads the Constitution, and applies the law. A good judge doesn't try to determine what the Constitution and the law should say but only has the job of determining what the Constitution and the law do say.

Justice Scalia—the vacancy Judge Gorsuch will fill—according to Justice Scalia, setting aside personal views is ''one of the primary qualifications for a judge''—not determining what you would like to happen but determining what the law and the Constitution say has to happen. I think Judge Gorsuch understands that.

He comes to the Court very well prepared. He is a graduate of Columbia University, Harvard Law School, and Oxford University. His academic credentials are unrivalled in preparation for this job. He served his country admirably as a Supreme Court Justice clerk for Justice Byron White, who was appointed to the Court by President Kennedy and confirmed by the Senate, and Justice Anthony Kennedy, who was appointed to the Court by President Reagan. Judge Gorsuch served as the Principal Deputy Associate Attorney General, and then in 2006, President George W. Bush nominated him to serve on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Senate confirmed his nomination unanimously by a voice vote. There are 12 Democrats currently serving in the Senate who were then in office and supported Judge Gorsuch's nomination 10 years ago to the job he has today.

In the decade Judge Gorsuch has served as a circuit court judge, reviewing the work of other Federal judges on appeal, he has demonstrated the integrity, professional qualifications, and judicial temperament to serve on the Nation's highest Court.

Judge Gorsuch said recently that judges are not politicians in robes. It is not the job of a judge to determine what the law is or should be; it is the job of a judge to determine what the law is. The job of a judge is to determine what the Framers intended the Constitution to say.

Judge Gorsuch received high praise from legal experts across party lines. He has gotten the highest level of recommendation from the American Bar Association, unanimously rating him as ''well qualified,'' its highest rating. He is respected by people who know him in his community. He has really dedicated himself to a lifetime of service that prepares him for this job.

The Supreme Court is one of the foundational institutions of our country. It is designed to protect our democracy and is designed to really understand and apply the Constitution and the law so that the rule of law is uniquely dependable in the United States of America.

If you are a citizen and you read the law and you understand what the law says, that should get you a long way toward success before the courts and ensures that in this country, the rule of law matters. The ultimate determiner of what the law says is the Supreme Court.

I think Judge Gorsuch will serve well and I hope long on the Court. I believe that in the next couple of weeks, he will join the Justices, one of whom he clerked for. If that happens, he will be the first person in the history of the country to be sitting as an Associate Justice with another Associate Justice who decades earlier he was the law clerk for when he and Associate Justice Kennedy had an opportunity to serve together.

With that, I notice my colleague from Iowa is here, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I rise today to praise President Trump for selecting an eminently qualified nominee in Judge Neil Gorsuch to be an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. No one can dispute the academic credentials and intellectual rigor of Judge Gorsuch. In fact, even a former Acting Solicitor General under President Obama, Neal Katyal, called Judge Gorsuch ''one of the most thoughtful and brilliant judges to have served our Nation over the last century.'' Just yesterday, he joined the Republican and Democratic Senators from Colorado in introducing Judge Gorsuch at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Judge Gorsuch graduated with honors from Columbia University and then Harvard Law School. He later earned a doctorate in legal philosophy from the University of Oxford. Prior to becoming a judge, Neil Gorsuch was Principal Deputy to the Associate Attorney General and Acting Associate Attorney General at the Department of Justice, worked as a litigator in private practice, and served as a law clerk to Supreme Court Justices Byron White and Anthony Kennedy. Moreover, earlier this month, the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary rated Judge Gorsuch ''well qualified,'' its highest rating.

One of my constituents who went to high school with Judge Gorsuch took the time to send me a note in support of his character, calling him ''the most reasonable, smart, principled, kind, and humble person I know.'' Even at a young age, he made a positive impression on his colleagues—something he has continued to do today.

During the course of Judge Gorsuch's 10-year judicial career, his opinions have reflected not only his outstanding legal acumen but also his respect for the Constitution and his Scalia-like ability to explain his decisions.

Judge Gorsuch was nominated to his current position on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit by President George W. Bush in 2006. As a testament to Judge Gorsuch's exceptional credentials, the Senate confirmed him by unanimous voice vote. Several current Members of the Senate from both parties, including Minority Leader Schumer, supported Judge Gorsuch's confirmation. The people spoke last November, and our new President has put forward a well-respected nominee whom the Senate has previously confirmed with unanimous support. It is time for Washington to work together as our constituents expect us to do, to help protect and defend our coequal branches of government and the rule of law. If confirmed, Judge Gorsuch's dedication to interpreting the text of the Constitution and statutes as they are written rather than attempting to legislate from the bench will help to do just that.

As Judge Gorsuch himself has stated in one of his opinions: ''A judge who likes every result he reaches is very likely a bad judge, reaching for results he prefers rather than those the law compels.''

I have had the great honor of meeting with Judge Gorsuch to learn more about his judicial philosophy, and over the next few days, the American people will also get to learn more about Judge Gorsuch through his confirmation hearing. I am confident they will also determine he is qualified to serve on our Nation's highest Court. I look forward to moving ahead to fill the Supreme Court vacancy with this eminently qualified nominee, and I thank him for his willingness to serve his country in this critically important role.

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 legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REPUBLICAN HEALTHCARE BILL

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, it was 7 years ago that Democrats in Congress passed ObamaCare. They promised lower healthcare costs. What they delivered was a Washington mandate

for expensive insurance that many people found actually wasn't insurance they could use, even though they were forced to buy it. For 7 years, Americans have suffered under the consequences of that decision by this body and by the former President.

Less than 7 weeks into the Trump administration, Republicans introduced a plan to give Americans real healthcare reform. The American people know that ObamaCare has been a disaster, one broken promise after another. I hear about this every weekend when I am home in Wyoming. I heard about it this past weekend. There is now only one insurance company that is willing to offer ObamaCare coverage in my entire State. There are 1,000 counties all across the country in the same situation—only one option. This is not a marketplace; it is a monopoly.

As a doctor who has practiced medicine for 25 years, I can tell you that when it comes to healthcare, the last thing patients want to hear is that they don't have a choice: It is this or nothing. That is why Republicans promised we were going to repeal the restrictions in ObamaCare that limit people's choices. We promised to give people options, not mandates. The healthcare bill we are debating now is the first step to keeping that promise.

The bill starts to give people more choices so they can pick what is right for them and for their families. I want to talk about three ways that it does this.

First, the bill removes the mandates. It ends both the individual and the employer mandates. It eliminates the penalties that hard-working families have to pay if they decide that overpriced ObamaCare insurance isn't right for them. This was one of the most outrageous and unfair parts of the healthcare law. These mandates will be gone.

Second, the bill that the House is considering cuts taxes. It gets rid of the ObamaCare tax on prescription drugs. It gets rid of the ObamaCare tax on health insurance. It gets rid of the taxes on artificial appliances, such as pacemakers and artificial joints. Overall, the bill eliminates 15 different taxes. These taxes are obviously passed on to consumers; repealing them helps to bring down the cost of care.

Third, the repeal bill creates options for people and for States. It encourages people to find creative ways to help make healthcare costs more affordable for them. It expands how people can use health savings accounts, which is a great option for many people. It helps States do innovative things, such as create high risk pools to bring down costs for everybody. It gives States more flexibility when it comes to Medicaid Programs.

Let's face it: Medicaid is broken, and ObamaCare just threw more people onto this second-class health insurance. Just last week, we got evidence of how badly Medicaid is harming patients. The chief executive at the Mayo Clinic said in his speech that his hospital is going to give precedence to people with private insurance over people on Medicaid. The supporters of ObamaCare said that their biggest success is the number of people who got coverage by being put into Medicaid. Well, it is clear that many of these people are being harmed by being in Medicaid, a system that has been broken for decades. It is alarming and it is also appalling.

We have to fundamentally reform the Medicaid Program. To do that, we have to give States more options for coming up with the reforms that work for them and for the people who live in those States. Every State is different, and a one-size-fits-all mandate from Washington will never work for all of the States all across the country. Democrats tried it, and it failed dramatically.

ObamaCare is collapsing all around us. We have to do something, and we have to start now. In the next couple of months, insurance companies are going to start making decisions about what they are going to do for next year, 2018. They will be figuring out how much they want to charge and whether they want to be involved in the ObamaCare exchanges at all. People have been losing their coverage and losing choices ever since the Democrats wrote the healthcare law and the President signed it 7 years ago. I believe it is going to get worse every day that we delay.

There are Democrats who don't really seem to care much about any of that. They would rather set the whole healthcare system on a path to fall apart completely before they will ever admit that they were wrong. Hard-working Americans and families across the country don't have that luxury. There are still 25 million Americans without insurance even 7 years after ObamaCare has been in place. Every year, people have gotten letters in the mail telling them that their plans have been canceled. That is the reality of ObamaCare. Democrats want to pretend that everything is fine, but that is absolutely not true.

That is why it is so important that President Trump jumped in right away to take important steps to help stabilize the marketplace. He recognized what Democrats won't admit—that these ObamaCare markets are falling apart. So the President has already started doing what he can to stabilize the markets, to make sure people keep their options for health coverage. The Department of Health and Human Services has taken steps to preserve programs that ObamaCare tried to eliminate. These are plans that people already had and they liked and the law tried to say they could no longer exist. The Trump administration has said people can continue on those plans. The administration also tightened up some of the rules to make sure people actually pay the premiums for this year's insurance before they are allowed to sign up for next year. The administration is taking commonsense steps that will make it harder for people to game the system and that will lower the cost for everyone else. These are important steps. The administration is going to be doing a lot more to protect families and to create more options.

This repeal bill isn't perfect; nobody says it is. Still, it is a monumental shift away from ObamaCare. The American people will be better off with this repeal plan. They will be better off with the additional reforms that we will continue to push after this bill.

I hope that Democrats will join us and offer their own ideas about what these additional reforms will look like. I hope they realize that families are better off when they have more choices, not fewer. We are better off when people can decide what is better for them and their families, not when government tells them what to do. We are better off when healthcare decisions are left to patients and doctors, not to Washington bureaucrats and insurance companies. We are better off when people have freedom and options, not mandates and penalties.

America needs healthcare reform. What we had before ObamaCare wasn't working; I saw that as a doctor. What we have now isn't working, either. It is time for everyone to admit that and to take this opportunity to start repairing the damage, start creating real reform. As Ronald Reagan said: It is better to get 80 percent of what you want rather than go over the cliff with a flag flying. The American people are asking for our help, and we cannot turn our backs on them now.

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. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Charles R. Breyer, of California, to be a Member of the United States Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2021; and Danny C. Reeves, of Kentucky, to be a

Member of the United States Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2019.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today the Senate will vote on two nominees to the U.S. Sentencing Commission who should have been confirmed last year. Judge Danny Reeves was nominated more than 1 year ago, and he was unanimously reported by the Judiciary Committee; yet Senate Republicans refused to approve him before the end of last year. Judge Charles Breyer was nominated last September for a reappointment, and despite overwhelming support, Republicans blocked him as well. These are not controversial nominees, and there is no good reason they were blocked last year. In fact, in ordinary times, these nominees would be unanimously confirmed during wrap-up on the Senate floor.

RICHARD BOULWARE

Mr. President, one nominee we are not considering today is Judge Richard Boulware, whom President Obama nominated in 2015 to fill a seat on the Sentencing Commission previously held by Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson. Judge Boulware was confirmed to serve as a district judge in June 2014, becoming the first African-American man to serve on the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada. His nomination to the Sentencing Commission had the strong support of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, which said that Judge Boulware would ''bring a much needed and valuable perspective to the work of the Commission because of his experience.'' Judge Boulware clerked in the Southern District of New York, served as a Federal public defender, and represented the Las Vegas branch of the NAACP on a range of issues, including voting rights, police cameras, and solitary confinement.

Despite his clear qualifications, Senate Republicans blocked Judge Boulware, and his nomination was returned to the White House at the end of last year. President Trump renominated Judge Reeves and Judge Breyer, but I am disappointed that he failed to do the same for Judge Boulware. The Sentencing Commission does not have a single person of Color serving as a commissioner; yet its work on criminal justice issues has a significant effect on communities of color. Judge Boulware should have been confirmed last year, along with Judge Reeves and Judge Breyer. While I support the two nominees before us today, I want the RECORD to note my deep disappointment and concern that Judge Boulware is not among them.

For nearly a decade, I have worked with Senators from both parties on bipartisan legislation to reform our criminal justice system. The Sentencing Commission has also studied the issue and brought about needed change to the sentencing guidelines. The Bureau of Prisons continues to consume nearly a quarter of the Justice Department's budget, even as violent crime rates have gone down; but instead of taking meaningful steps to reduce these costs, the Trump-Sessions Justice Department has signaled it intends to more aggressively charge low-level offenders with crimes carrying mandatory minimums. The Attorney General also lifted restrictions on the use of private prisons that serve only the interest of wealthy corporations. This is deeply troubling on moral grounds. Incarceration should not be a for-profit business. It is also troubling to me in my role as vice chairman of the Appropriations Committee. Instead of wasting taxpayer dollars on private prisons, we should be directing our limited resources to train and protect officers on the streets and to reduce recidivism and crime.

The Sentencing Commission has brought much-needed fairness to the Guidelines in the past, and I hope it will continue to do so once its new members are confirmed, Although we should also be voting today on Judge Boulware's nomination to the commission—rather, we should have voted on it last year—I will support the nominations of Judge Breyer and Judge Reeves.

BREYER NOMINATION

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of Judge Charles Breyer's reappointment to the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

Judge Breyer earned his bachelor's degree cum laude from Harvard University in 1963 and his law degree from the University of California, Berkeley Law School in 1966.

In 1997, Judge Breyer was nominated by President Clinton to a seat on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. Judge Breyer was confirmed by the U.S. Senate that same year by voice vote.

On the bench, Judge Breyer has served with distinction. He has done the hard work of sentencing individuals to prison terms. He has also focused on sentencing issues outside the courtroom, testifying before the Sentencing Commission in 2009 and serving as chair of a Ninth Circuit Committee evaluating the impact of the Supreme Court's decisions in Blakely v. Washington, 2004, and United States v. Booker, 2005, on sentencing.

In 2011, Judge Breyer took senior status, and the following year, he was nominated by President Obama to serve on the Sentencing Commission. Judge Breyer became the commission's vice chair in 2013.

The Sentencing Commission is an independent agency charged with establishing sentencing guidelines for the Federal court system. The commission's work is important. It is responsible for advising and assisting Congress and the Executive branch in the development of effective and efficient crime policy. The commission also collects, analyzes, researches, and distributes a broad array of information on Federal crime and sentencing issues and serves as a resource for Congress, the Executive branch, the Judiciary, practitioners, academics, and the public.

Since the start of the 115th Congress, the Sentencing Commission has been unable to do its work because it has been with only two commissioners. By statute, the commission requires a quorum of at least four commissioners.

For this reason, it is vitally important that Judge Breyer is confirmed once again to serve on the commission. Judge Breyer is a man of distinction and integrity. He has a long history of dedicated service to this country and an impeccable record of fairness. The commission really needs his continued leadership.

Today I urge my colleagues to support Judge Breyer's nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12 noon having arrived, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Breyer and Reeves nominations en bloc?

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: The Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 98, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 91 Ex.]

YEAS—98

Alexander	Flake	Nelson
Baldwin	Franken	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Bennet	Gillibrand	Peters
Blumenthal	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Reed
Booker	Harris	Risch
Boozman	Hassan	Roberts
Brown	Hatch	Rounds
Burr	Heinrich	Rubio
Cantwell	Heitkamp	Sanders
Capito	Heller	Sasse
Cardin	Hirono	Schatz
Carper	Hoeven	Schumer
Casey	Johnson	Scott
Cassidy	Kaine	Shaheen
Cochran	Kennedy	Shelby
Collins	King	Stabenow
Coons	Klobuchar	Strange
Corker	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Manchin	Tillis
Crapo	Markey	Toomey
Cruz	McCain	Udall
Daines	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McConnell	Warner
Duckworth	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Wyden
Feinstein	Murphy	Young
Fischer	Murray	

NOT VOTING—2

Inhofe	Isakson

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Kansas.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and then recess until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly conference meetings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:37 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to H.J. Res. 69.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to H.J. Res. 69, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Department of the Interior relating to ''Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 69) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Department of the Interior relating to ''Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I rise to encourage my colleagues to rescind a recently promulgated regulation by the Obama administration and to support the corresponding resolution of disapproval that the majority leader just brought up and that we unanimously moved forward to debate, H.J. Res. 69.

There are few, if any, people in the world who love their lands and wildlife more than Alaskans. In Alaska, our land is the lifeblood that sustains us, that feeds our bodies, our families, and our souls. It is a deep and enduring part of our culture.

Our hunting traditions are very much alive in Alaska. Alaskans hunt for food for cultural reasons and even for survival. There are people in my State whose families have called our beautiful and rugged lands home for thousands of years, living side-by-side with more recent arrivals. Alaska has also the well-earned reputation of having one of the best managed, most sustainable fish and game populations anywhere in America or anywhere in the world, for that matter. We have an abundance of wildlife that most States and most countries can only dream of. We do this year after year, generation after generation, through rigorous scientific processes that allow and encourage public participation through our Board of Game, Board of Fisheries, and our Fish and Game Department to make sure we manage our fish and game for sustainability, as required by the Alaska constitution, and that we take into account the needs of our citizens—the needs of Alaskans. It is not an easy process. It can be contentious, but all Alaskans take this very seriously.

In Alaska, we respect the land and everything in it. That special connection and our ability to manage our own lands and resources was explicitly recognized in Federal law when Alaska became a State. The Alaska Statehood Act passed in this body in 1958, specifically granting Alaska the authority to manage fish and wildlife on not only State lands but on Federal lands, unless Congress passes a law to the contrary. By the way, that is the same authority granted to all States. It is granted to Ohio, New Mexico—all States in America have this authority.

Further, in 1980, this body, the Congress of the United States, passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, designating 100 million acres of land, in my great State, as Federal conservation units, including over 70 million acres—I believe larger than the State of New Mexico—as wildlife refuges in one State.

Many Alaskans didn't like this bill. Several saw this as a massive Federal usurpation of our land, but our congressional delegation fought to include explicit provisions in this Federal law that made it abundantly clear that the State of Alaska still had primacy in managing fish and game throughout the entire State—State lands and Federal lands.

When that act was passed, it explicitly stated: ''Nothing in this act is intended to enlarge or diminish the responsibility and authority of the State of Alaska for the management of fish and wildlife on public lands. . . .''

That is pretty clear language, and it is very important language to Alaskans. ANILCA is the statute we are talking about, and that is what we call it in Alaska. That Federal law that passed in 1980 made numerous other commitments to Alaskans about how the Federal Government would not usurp the power of the State or our citizens to live the life we have in Alaska. How quickly the Feds forget. How quickly the Feds forget what this law requires.

On August 5, 2016, the Obama administration's Fish and Wildlife Service finalized a rule that, No. 1, restricted certain State-approved fish and game management practices; No. 2, limited public input in the wildlife management process; and, No. 3, expanded closure procedures on refuges in Alaska, making it easier to keep people shut out of these Federal lands in our State.

This rule is not based on sound science. Thousands of Alaskans and other Americans opposed it, tried to work with the Feds to get them to moderate it or rescind it, to no avail. It is not based on established wildlife management principles, and it is certainly not based on Federal law. The Fish and Wildlife Service didn't take this action because Alaska's sustainable and abundant populations of fish and game or their habitats were being threatened; it took this action because it wanted to control Alaska's fish and wildlife and because it subjectively disapproved of the way Alaska's game was being managed by our Department of Fish and Game and by the Alaska Board of Game, but the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service does not have this authority.

To make this clear, we are proceeding today with this resolution of disapproval under the Congressional Review Act, H.J. Res. 69, to rescind that August 5 Obama Fish and Wildlife Service rule.

The House has already passed this measure under Congressman DON YOUNG's leadership. So I want to encourage all of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, to vote in favor of this resolution. It is backed by the force of law, the principles of federalism, and respect for the Alaskan Native people who have been hunting and fishing, subsisting off the land in Alaska for generations. It is also supported by millions of Americans across the country and wildlife professionals in every State in the Union who are committed to the conservation of the abundant species of wildlife in my home State and in theirs.

Why should my colleagues support rescinding this Fish and Wildlife Service regulation? Well, first and foremost, as I have already mentioned, it clearly usurps power from the States

and it ignores Federal law. Unfortunately, faced with a Federal law it disagreed with, the Fish and Wildlife Service took the route other Federal agencies have been taking over the years by simply writing a reg to bypass the will of Congress and the American people, by simply moving forward with their preferred policy preference via regulation and ignoring the law. That is an issue every Member of this body, whether you are a Democrat or Republican, should be concerned about and vigilant to reverse.

It is not a partisan issue. It is a federalism issue. It is a States' rights issue. That is why my State of Alaska, led by a Governor who is an Independent and a Lieutenant Governor who is a Democrat, sued to overturn the Obama administration's litigation. This litigation that my State brought against the Federal Government cites Federal laws like ANILCA, which declares that the State of Alaska ''has jurisdiction over the management of fish and wildlife on public lands throughout the State.'' That is the Federal law.

The law is clear, and of course it makes sense from a management perspective. Alaska is a patch of many different ownerships of our land—State, Federal, and Native lands. The moose and bear in our great State don't know these borders. One agency needs to be in charge, and that is the State agency.

While it might be true that this Obama administration regulation, as written, only applies and impacts Alaska, it is a precedent that should trouble every Member of this body and every State in the Union because if it can be done in Alaska, it can be done anywhere. That is why the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, State agencies charged with managing wildlife in all 50 States and territories from California, New Mexico, to New Jersey all support this resolution. They all support overturning the Obama administration's Fish and Wildlife reg. All 50 States, the people who know these issues, support what we are doing on the Senate floor right now.

A second and related reason for the broad bipartisan support not only in Alaska but across the country for rescinding this Fish and Wildlife regulation is because it significantly reduces the public participation in managing lands and wildlife in Alaska. Before this rule came out, the harvest of fish and wildlife on Alaska refuges was governed by Alaska's Board of Game and Board of Fish, and the process was highly sensible. I have been to Board of Game meetings. It is open to the public and responsive to the public, but this new regulation gives the Federal Government a veto over State regulations issued by the boards, with no public process and no public input.

The rule also makes closures of Federal lands subject more to the whims of Federal officials than to the input of the people they serve. It shuts down the public process, which is critical to the successful stable management of fish and game in my State.

This Federal regulation also undermines subsistence. In Alaska, ''subsistence'' isn't just a word, a catch phrase, or a slogan. It is not what people do for the benefit of tourism. It is critical. The public participation element is critical to the healthy management of fish and game, and it also enables the professionals to learn from the people—particularly the Native people in my State—what we call traditional knowledge in Alaska. As I mentioned, ''subsistence'' in my State isn't just a catch phrase or a slogan. Subsistence encompasses the customary and traditional use of fish, wildlife, plant resources, preserving cultural traditions, supplying basic necessities such as food, firewood, and clothing. It provides for barter, trade, and income for subsistence in the cash-based rural economy. It is serious business in my State. Subsistence in Alaska is life, literally, and it has been so for thousands of years. In so many of my State's villages, there is no grocery store, there is no Costco, there is no Whole Foods market. If one doesn't get a moose in the fall or have enough salmon in the summer that someone catches, they might have trouble surviving in the winter. This is serious business.

In other places in Alaska, where we do have small grocery stores, the costs are often more than twice to four times the national average for basic necessities. President Obama, when he visited Alaska in 2015, went out to the rural communities, and once he saw it, he understood this. When he came to Alaska, he said, ''You're looking at prices that are double, in some cases, or even higher for basic necessities like milk, like orange juice, like other produce. . . . That's part of the reason why the subsistence economy [in Alaska] is so important.''

This is the former President of the United States making this comment.

One wonders why this Fish and Wildlife Service then issued a reg that attacked subsistence. But to be honest, most Americans and certainly most Senators do not fully understand this. Again, due to the tenacity of Alaska's congressional delegation—former Senators, such as Ted Stevens, and current Members, such as DON YOUNG in the House—Federal law recognizes the importance of subsistence in Alaska.

The protection of subsistence rights in ANILCA and other Federal legislation is listed throughout our Federal laws. Specifically, ANILCA states:

> The opportunity for rural residents engaged in a subsistence way of life must continue to be so.

It further goes on to state that the Federal Government's actions in Alaska should have ''the least adverse impact possible on rural residents who depend on subsistence uses of the resources of such lands.''

This issue of subsistence is important to thousands of my constituents. It is not a theoretical issue, it is critical, but it is now more important to the Alaska Native populations in my State, which is close to 20 percent of my State.

In 2014, the Alaska Federation of Natives ratified a resolution that criticized a proposal from the Federal Government that was similar to the one we are debating today, and they stated the following in their resolution:

> Alaska Natives have served as the stewards of their traditional lands and resources, maintaining healthy and productive ecosystems for thousands of years, and maintain the belief that human beings are an integral part of naturally functioning ecosystems, not separate from them.

That is what all Alaskans believe. Yet, despite Federal laws that emphasize the importance of subsistence to all Alaskans and pleas and letters from hundreds of Alaska Natives who ask the Federal Government not to negatively impact their subsistence way of life and opportunities with this new Fish and Wildlife Service regulation, the Fish and Wildlife Service persisted. They promulgated this regulation in the face of opposing voices in Alaska and Federal law that says they do not have the authority to do this.

You know it is targeted for subsistence because in the Fish and Wildlife Service's initial rule, that rule stated that the law and the policy had to ''take into consideration the fact that humans are dependent on wildlife refuge subsistence resources.'' That was the original draft rule. Subsistence matters. That was in there, a nod to Federal law. Guess what happened with the final rule? That entire section on subsistence was removed by the Federal Government, which showed that this law is an anti-subsistence law, which violates Federal law. They did not want Alaskans to subsist off their lands as required by Federal law.

Alaska's attorney general, Jahna Lindemuth, who was appointed by an Independent Governor from my State, said:

> These federal regulations are not about . . . protecting the State's wildlife numbers. These regulations are about the federal government trying to control Alaskans' way of life.

Hunting is a way of life in Alaska. The Presiding Officer is a hunter and understands that it is cultural and that it provides subsistence and even protection for our citizens.

Let's be clear. The Fish and Wildlife regulation at issue today, which we are debating, is an anti-hunting rule, pure and simple. That this is the case became very clear when the former Fish and Wildlife Service Director, Dan Ashe, who promulgated this regulation, questioned the ethics of our hunters in Alaska in a Huffington Post column. He said that some of Alaska's practices are ''wholly at odds with America's long tradition of ethical, sportsmanlike, fair-chase hunting.'' That is from the former Fish and Wildlife Service Director. One knows where he is coming from on this.

Along these lines, I anticipate some of my colleagues on the other side of

the aisle—I see one of them down here already—are going to come down and start touting this parade of horribles, spurred on by anti-hunting groups to convince our colleagues to vote against this resolution of disapproval—what we want to have passed. You might hear phrases from them like Alaska's practices constitute a ''war on wolves'' or a ''black eye for ethical hunters,'' with the implication that my constituents are not ethical hunters. One might even see my colleagues repeat the false and misleading claims that have been run on TV by certain groups about alleged unethical hunting and game management practices in Alaska. I would like to make a suggestion or two to my colleagues who are coming down here to speak against this resolution of disapproval.

First, please let them try to do so with a sense of humility and a sense of history. Yes, one or two of them may have been accomplished hunters in their own right or are still accomplished hunters in their own right. I respect that. I love to hunt. But that does not mean one has as much or any knowledge or understanding of my State's long history and distinguished record of fish and game management. One might prefer his meat wrapped in cellophane at the grocery store. That is fine, but I ask that one doesn't criticize the thousands of Alaskans who have to hunt for their food and who value hunting as a deep part of their culture.

I would also caution one from making claims that Alaska's wildlife officials allow for unethical hunting and management practices that require the Federal Government to intervene in my State's long history of distinguished fish and game management. Such an argument would be at odds with the consistent and numerous awards the State of Alaska has received for its outstanding management of fish and game year after year after year—American Fishery Society awards, awards from the Department of the Interior, the Wildlife Society, and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Those who manage wildlife in Alaska are the best in their field. It is not just Alaskans who take issue or who will take issue with such statements that I am sure we are going to hear on the floor.

Let me read a list of hunting and conservation groups that support this resolution of disapproval, groups that, in other words, support the overturning of the Fish and Wildlife rule at issue today. It is a very long list, and it is actually longer than this: Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, Boone and Crockett Club, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, Delta Waterfowl Foundation, Alaska Outdoor Council, Alaska Professional Hunters Association, American Outfitter and Guide Association, Territorial Sportsmen, National Rifle Association, Safari Club International. The list goes on and on.

These groups represent millions of hunters, conservationists, wildlife enthusiasts, and wildlife scientists who represent millions of Americans who are focused on the model of conservation that we all are supportive of, and they are the backbone of habitat and species conservation in our country. These groups—every one of them—are supportive of what we are trying to do on the Senate floor today. These groups certainly do not consider themselves unethical hunters. To the contrary, they care deeply about conservation and abundant wildlife populations not only for themselves but for the generations of Americans to come, and they have dedicated their lives to this. They represent Americans from across the 50 States—Montana, West Virginia, New Mexico, New Jersey. Their values, like the values held by Alaskans with regard to conservation and hunting, should not be doubted and I certainly hope are not going to be attacked on the Senate floor.

In closing, I believe in respectful and informed debate. Sometimes it certainly requires reaching beyond one's own experience to listen to others with opposing views. I took the opportunity to do that just the other day. I had a conversation with the president and CEO of the Humane Society about the issue and resolutions we are discussing today. I know that he and others are leading the opposition to this, but we had a very respectful conversation. We heard each other's views, and although we likely will not agree on this issue, I hope he felt that I talked to him with respect and listened to him because that is what I did.

Perhaps my colleagues who are going to speak against this resolution today should do the same. I would hope that those who come down to the floor to oppose overturning this rule would have picked up the phone and maybe called Alaska's Department of Fish and Game, or talked to a biologist there, or maybe talked to the chairman of the Board of Game and asked if he is an ethical hunter, or maybe called a store in remote Alaska to ask about food prices, or made some inquiries about the lack of stores in dozens of villages that rely on subsistence, or called an Alaska Native leader to see how important subsistence is to his life and his culture.

Maybe my colleagues would have called one of my constituents who wrote in opposing this rule. He is an Alaska Native who lives in rural Alaska and whose grandfather taught him to hunt and fish. Here is what he wrote to us:

> Please do not pass these types of regulations that will change my future. These lands are dear to Alaska Natives, and I feel that some of the Fish and Wildlife workers are biased as well as listening to the wrong people. By the ''wrong people,'' I mean Fish and Wildlife officials who do not understand my subsistence rights, who do not work in the villages, who want to take away my right to hunt.

This is about the rule of law, primacy, federalism, and it is about much more than that; it is about real people—people like my constituents.

I urge my colleagues to support our resolution of disapproval and rescind this regulation that violates the law, undermines subsistence in Alaska, and will do harm to my State and other States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I come to the floor to oppose this effort by my good colleague from Alaska and by congressional Republicans to, in my view, turn back the clock 100 years on the management of our native wildlife on our national wildlife refuges in Alaska.

Since 2002, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has embraced what some have called a politically driven and even unscientific regime of intensive predator control. I think it is helpful to look at the views of a former Governor of Alaska, Tony Knowles, who recently commented in High Country News:

> The most disappointing thing is that the balance of the views on the Board of Game has disappeared. I tried to work with a balanced board that reflected subsistence hunters, sport hunters, guides and conservationists, but now the board is made up of people who want to make hunting ungulates the priority for wildlife management.
>
> There's been a focused effort to dramatically reduce populations of wolves, coyotes, and bears, and the methods and means they've used are both unscientific and unethical.

That is not my quote, but that of former Governor Tony Knowles of Alaska.

In addition, in the past decade, the Alaska Board of Game and the department have turned their back, I think, on a long history of not only working together between Federal and State agencies but embracing ethics as central to wildlife management—not just to maintain the viability of that management but to maintain the support of the public for that management.

This relatively new approach that actively seeks to eschew the long history of embracing sporting ethics can best be summed up by a quote from Doug Vincent-Land, the former director of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Wildlife Conservation. He said: ''The professionals at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game did not feel it was our role to judge the ethics of these practices.''

The result of this ethics-free approach is now glaringly obvious, when considering some of the methods of take that have been approved over time for native predators in Alaska. Shooting mother grizzlies with cubs, aerial gunning of wolves, killing wolf pups in their dens, using spotlights at bear dens, baiting of bears, and allowing the wanton waste of black bear meat are a few of the practices that Alaska's Board of Game has approved.

Aldo Leopold, the father of modern wildlife conservation, once said: ''Ethical behavior is doing the right thing

when no one else is watching—even when doing the wrong thing is legal.''

Now, I know it has become fashionable in some hunting circles recently to ignore the importance of ethics to our way of life. Yet, if our greatest leaders are any indication, that is, at best, a slippery slope to irrelevance.

This cartoon is a good reminder. It is from the early 20th century, at a time when President Teddy Roosevelt was invited down to Mississippi for a black bear hunt. When he wasn't successful, they tied a black bear to a tree. I think that cartoon from that period is a good reminder of how T.R. viewed the importance of sportsmanship and ethics in hunting as central to what maintains our credibility. Today, politicians jump at the chance to embrace his reputation, but too often they have not followed his example. So while shooting down grizzlies with cubs may be legal, I suspect the public will never view it as ethical. I have to wonder what good old T.R. would have to say about recent decisions to allow things like unlimited bag limits on black bear cubs or baiting of bears and shooting female grizzlies with cubs.

So why does all of this ethics stuff matter so much to hunters? Why does it matter to me? It matters because hunters like me are a small minority of the population in this country. We are less than 5 percent, by most counts, and we are able to carry on this great tradition because the vast majority—the nonhunting public, which is 95 percent of the population—sees us as effective and ethical stewards of our country's native wildlife. We have embraced the North American model of wildlife conservation that has literally brought elk, deer, wild turkey, and species we think of as common today—Canada geese, for example—back from the brink of extinction, and that public shares in that success when they enjoy wildlife. That is true, even if they never hunt, never pick up a fishing poll. We as hunters also have the trust and the respect of the public because we are willing to literally spend billions of dollars of our own money to protect, conserve, and manage those resources with the best available science.

The Alaska Game Board's decision to ignore the latest science on the importance of predators to healthy prey populations is indicative of a desire to effectively turn caribou and moose populations into livestock and to manage for maximum numbers and maximum tag revenue.

Now, ironically, that approach has certainly been ineffective at boosting and maintaining historically high caribou and moose numbers.

This is an example of a graph of moose population over time. We can see back in 2002, when these sorts of intensive take measures went into place: intensive predator control, preintensive management, and postintensive management. If you can discern a consistent correlation of an outcome of higher moose numbers there, you are doing better than I.

This would all be fine if this was just happening on State lands in Alaska, perchance. But, unfortunately, the Alaska Game Board now seeks to suppress healthy predator populations on our national wildlife refuges—the very places set aside to protect and preserve our native wildlife—even predators, even black bears and grizzlies and wolves. Let that sink in for a moment.

This is about embracing unscientific wildlife management on the very refuges that belong to each and every American citizen—not Alaska State land but our national wildlife refuges.

People save up for years—sometimes decades—to travel thousands of miles to go to places like the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge so they can see a grizzly bear fish for salmon. Does it make sense to allow these kinds of extreme measures of take to allow for grizzlies with cubs to be killed in those refuges? Will these policies actually benefit the hunting public? I would argue that they do not.

Not one of my colleagues can deny how much I love to hunt and fish. Many of my life's best memories have been forged around the campfire with my friends and family at elk camp. Just this past Christmas break, both of my boys joined me for what would be my son Carter's very first elk hunt. This is the picture of us in the Continental Divide Wilderness Study Area.

After days of hard hunting, hiking miles through the rough and tumble backcountry of the Continental Divide WSA, my son Carter harvested his first elk.

He soon learned that the real work starts after you pull the trigger. He labored long and hard to make sure that every scrap of meat from that animal made its way from the wilderness to our freezer. Anything less would be unethical and disrespectful to that magnificent animal. My son takes great pride in the meals that elk provides for our family and our friends. He also knows that hunting is conservation and that we have a responsibility to hand these wildlife resources off to the next generation unimpaired. I am proud that even at 13 he takes that responsibility very seriously.

Some of my son's classmates in school are vegetarians. Too many of those who do eat meat think that it is created, as my colleague from Alaska said, on a Styrofoam platter wrapped in cellophane. Carter knows better. As someone who hunts and fully embraces the ideas of sustainability and ethics, the next generation of sports men and women couldn't have a better ambassador to this new generation of millennials for why hunting is actually critical to the future of wildlife.

That, my friends, is what this CRA before us, in my view, puts at risk.

When you vote to put the Federal stamp of approval on methods of take that the public views as objectionable—even unethical—when you allow that ideologically driven style of game management to even permeate the sanctity of our national wildlife refuges, I don't think that is standing up for hunters. I fear that it is endangering the future of something that is critical to culture and way of life.

As I said before, the number of active hunters in the United States today sits, I think, at around 5 percent, or maybe a little lower—I hope not. By voting for this CRA, we are risking the confidence of the general public in our ability as hunters to be the best stewards of our wildlife resources. That is a risk that I am not willing to take.

So I would urge all of my colleagues to stand up for our Nation's wildlife, to stand up for our national wildlife refuges, and to vote no on this proposal.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, there have now been two speakers on the floor this afternoon speaking to H.J. Res. 69, which is the disapproval resolution on Alaska fish and wildlife refuge rule. I have come today to speak in strong support of this resolution, which will effectively overturn a rule imposed by the previous administration related to fish and wildlife management on millions of acres of refuge land in the State of Alaska.

I would like to start my comments by acknowledging Senator SULLIVAN, for his lead on this initiative, and Congressman YOUNG, as he moved this measure through the House just a couple of weeks ago. What we saw in the House measure and the final vote was a bipartisan vote that secured passage through the House, and I thank Congressman YOUNG for his able leadership there.

I also want to thank Senator SULLIVAN for his comments and for really doing an excellent job in outlining and explaining why this Fish and Wildlife Service rule is bad for Alaska, bad for hunters, bad for our Native peoples, and bad for America.

Like my friend and colleague, I am here to encourage Members of the Senate to see this rule for what it really is. It is a clear departure from Federal law. It is unwarranted regulatory overreach, and, from all accounts, it is a direct attack on States' rights.

Now, we will have discussion back and forth on the floor about various hunting practices, and we will see beautiful shots of wildlife and suggestions that, somehow or other, this is about a specific hunting practice. This is bigger than wildlife refuges in the State of Alaska. This is an issue that is not just isolated or contained in the State of Alaska. This resolution is specific to Alaska, but I would suggest to

my colleagues that for all of those of us who care about States' rights, who care about the promises made to our States about how they operate and how they manage activities in their States, this is something that we must all pay attention to because this is a direct attack on States' rights.

I look at this and suggest that this rule is a solution in search of a problem. Again, there are those who would say: Why is the Senate spending 10 hours to debate practices within a refuge in the State of Alaska? Is this not just so parochial an issue that it ought not take our time? However, I would contend that this foreshadows what is in store for the rest of the country if we are not adamant in ensuring that this rule be repealed by Congress.

Now, for those who may not be familiar with Alaska or gaming management laws within our State or within our national wildlife refuges in general, I think it is important to cover some basic facts and perhaps a little bit of history here to illustrate why this rule is so flawed. Alaska, like every other State in the Nation, holds primary legal authority to manage its fish and its wildlife, including on Federal refuge lands.

So let's not get confused here and think that because we have Federal lands, somehow or other the States do not have primacy when it comes to management of fish and wildlife. Alaska holds legal authority to manage the fish and wildlife within its borders. This is clear. This is unambiguous. Congress explicitly provided that authority specifically to our State in not one, not two, but three separate laws. The first of these is the Alaska Statehood Act; then the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act—ANILCA; and the third authority was through the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act. In three separate authorities, Congress made it clear: Alaska, you are to manage the fish and wildlife within your borders.

Our Statehood Act gave Alaska the right to manage its fish and its wildlife as soon as the State could assemble a department of fish and game, which we actually did in our first year of Statehood. Then, in 1980, ANILCA, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, affirmed twice that nothing within its text was ''intended to enlarge or diminish the authority of the State of Alaska for management of fish and wildlife on the public lands.''

Again, it is very clear, not only within the Statehood Act, but within ANILCA, that management would be left with the State. The authority to manage our fish and our wildlife—through decisions based on sound science and that make sense for our local communities—is something that we in Alaska take very, very seriously. For us, State management of fish and wildlife is practically sacrosanct. I cannot emphasize that enough. It is one of the key reasons the State of Alaska voted to join the Union, so we have pretty good reason for the emotion and the passion that come with this authority to manage our fish and our wildlife.

I am proud to acknowledge that not only am I the first Senator to serve in the Senate who was born in Alaska; I was actually born in the territory. My parents and my grandparents were engaged in the battle for Statehood. Some think it was about the land. For most of the discussion that I recall from my family, it was all about fish. It was all about the salmon. One of the reasons we fought for Statehood was management of our fisheries. The Federal management of Alaska salmon fisheries prior to Statehood was absolutely appalling, with salmon stocks falling from 113 million in 1934 to just 25 million in 1959. We saw the management from the Federal side, and that experience left Alaskans absolutely committed to State management and the preservation of both fish and game, so we negotiated that for ourselves. We put it into law; we enshrined it into law in several different places. And we expect our Federal agencies to abide by that.

Those were the terms of the deal when we entered the Union as a State: Alaska is to manage the fish and wildlife within our borders. It is our right and our responsibility, and we take that responsibility very seriously. We have an entire department of fish and game dedicated to it and, as Senator SULLIVAN rightly noted, a department that has been recognized for the good work they do, the strong science they utilize. We are proud of the efforts they make to ensure that this management is done for sustained yield, the principle we stand by in our State's constitution. For decades now, we have done just that, until the National Park Service in 2015 and the Fish and Wildlife Service in 2016 took it upon themselves to propose regulations to take control away from Alaska, despite what was contained in our Statehood agreement, in ANILCA, and in the National Wildlife Refuge Administration Act.

The National Park Service's rule is outside the reach of the Congressional Review Act. So while, in my view, that also deserves repeal, it is not the focus of our debate today. Instead, the resolution we are discussing focuses on the Fish and Wildlife Service rule that was finalized over the protests of Alaskans in August of last year. The rule itself was packaged perhaps innocently enough. The Fish and Wildlife Service spoke of clarifying ''existing mandates'' for conservation and biological diversity, and the agency claimed it was outlawing a few methods of predator control, couched its rule as a victory for public participation, and then promised us that it did not change Federal subsistence regulations or impose new regulations on subsistence users.

On the face of it all, it sounded as though it was going to be not so bad—if you take the agency's description at face value. Many who are outside of Alaska are looking at this and saying: Why are you making such a big deal about all of this? The Department of the Interior is just clarifying some hunting rules, so it can't be that big of a deal.

But the answer on that is: Wrong. This is a big deal.

Some of our opponents will allege the repeal of this rule will legalize brutal predator-control practices. What the Senate should know is that it is already illegal for hunters to use certain practices—gas against wolves, traps to harvest bears. You cannot do this on national wildlife refuges in Alaska. So those arguments are false and, unfortunately, serve mostly to distract from what this rule is really about. As I mentioned at the outset of my comments, what this is really about are the States' rights, States' authorities, and, effectively, States' control.

First and foremost, I am here to defend the rights of my home State and all of the States to manage fish and game within their boundaries. The game management rule severely erodes the authority of Alaska to make these decisions, and I think it sets a terrible precedent for the other 49 States. If you think, this rule is just about Alaska, that this is not something you need not worry yourself about—well you really actually ought to be worried. Especially so if you have Federal lands within your State. Your State could be the next one where Fish and Wildlife Service comes in and says: No, it's not going to be you, State, that has this management authority. We're going to come in and tell you what can and cannot be done.

The Fish and Wildlife Service freely admits its rule will impact 54 million acres of refuge land inside the State of Alaska. This is an area 10 times larger than the size of the State of Massachusetts. This is not insignificant. Really, this is truly the camel's nose under the tent.

If Congress allows this rule to stand, it will effectively override U.S. Supreme Court rulings from 1896 and 1979, which held that the States have the power to ''protect and conserve wild animal life within their borders.'' The States' power in this area is subject only to specific Federal authorities articulated by Congress, such as the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The precedent being set for Alaska—and every other State—should be sufficient reason for us to oppose this rule. But I also need to speak to some of the particulars included within it, especially the Obama administration's claim that it would not change or restrict subsistence uses.

This regulation made significant and substantive changes to regulations related to the hunting of bears. While I realize that not everyone may agree with hunting, I urge you to listen to what my colleague from the State of Alaska said in his comments and what

he outlined in terms of subsistence to Alaska Natives, subsistence to those who are in areas so remote that ''rural'' is not even the right way to describe it. We call it Bush Alaska. There are no stores, there is no Safeway, there is no Whole Foods, and there is no Stop-N-Go. There is no place where you can go to get your meat, to get your fish. In many areas there just isn't even a store, much less a store where you can buy Hamburger Helper or whatever it is that you are going to provide for your family. That model just does not exist in certain parts of our State, so what the people who live there do is hunt. That is how they provide for their families. They hunt and they fish and they gather. That is subsistence. That subsistence is not only nutritional sustenance, but for many, it is also their cultural identity, whether you are the ''People of the Caribou,'' the ''People of the Whale,'' or the ''Salmon People.'' The Native people who have been part of this corner of the world for millennia relate to their food source, making sure that not only their traditional diets can continue, but how they are able to practice this subsistence lifestyle matters greatly.

The regulation we are talking about today jeopardizes the ability of many of those Alaskans to sustainably harvest wildlife, to hunt, to feed themselves and their families. So when we think about the Alaska model of management and how it works to achieve healthy populations, this rule we are dealing with right now upsets that balance. It makes significant changes to the types of activities allowed when hunting bears without the support of the State or the traditional user groups. In updating regulations governing public notice and participation, the rule eliminates tools and obligations necessary for meaningful engagement with affected Alaskans. It curtails the use of local knowledge and insights for refuge management. It relies on an arbitrary and unscientific interpretation of the agency's national biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health policy.

The sustainability of Alaska's ecosystem depends on good, sound management—expert management—of fish and game populations. But under this regulation, well-established best practices employed by wildlife management professionals are more vulnerable to what could be unscientific or certainly bureaucratic second-guessing. That has sweeping implications for wildlife populations and for those who depend on them. If left in place, this rule will be applied to the entire refuge system either unilaterally or through litigation, placing our Nation's fishing and hunting traditions at even greater risk.

Those who actively participate in the sustainable management of our Nation's fish and wildlife populations understand the dangers presented by this rule, and they are overwhelmingly opposed to it. Senator SULLIVAN mentioned a list of the organizations that have voiced their support. I will not repeat many of the names, but it includes the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, which represents all 50 States. It includes subsistence users, guides, outfitters, tourists, hunters, anglers throughout the country, and dozens of conservation groups, from the Alaska Outdoor Council and the Alaska Professional Hunters Association to Ducks Unlimited, Safari Club International, the National Rifle Association, and the Boone and Crockett Club. When you have a coalition that is this strong, that is this broad and yet united against a Federal rule, you know something went terribly awry with the regulation.

I would encourage the Senate to see through some of what I consider to be misleading arguments that some of the outside groups are making against us and to really see this rule for what it is—that this Fish and Wildlife Service game management rule for Alaska refuges is the very definition of Federal overreach. It defies the will of Alaskans, while disregarding sound scientific game management principles. It will result in less stable populations of fish and wildlife within our State. It will harm our subsistence users who hunt, not for sport but for their literal cultural sustenance, their nutritional sustenance, and, again, so much of their identity.

I again want to thank those that have been leading on this issue. This is a bad rule that deserves repeal. I would encourage all of my colleagues to look carefully at this. Look carefully at this, not just as a rule that is parochial and limited to just Alaska alone, but look to it within the context of what this does and what it says when it comes to States' rights and States' ability to manage fish and wildlife within their own State borders.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last Thursday the Trump administration submitted its first budget blueprint to Congress. The President called it ''America First, A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again.'' The title would seem like a ''Saturday Night Live'' skit if the topic were not so serious. Like some of the President's tweets, his budget is a hasty list of appallingly unbalanced, shortsighted, and, I believe, politically driven priorities.

He proposes to eliminate or drastically cut programs that benefit the middle class and safeguard its most vulnerable citizens, programs that protect our environment, programs that promote our interests overseas but also security at home. Instead, he wants to spend billions upon billions of taxpayer dollars on a misguided wall along our southern border and increased spending for the Pentagon.

He says his proposal causes ''strength, security and resolve.'' He couldn't be more wrong. You don't want to make America ''great again'' at the expense of middle-class families and the most vulnerable among us. We are not a ''great'' nation if we abandon our shared desire to cure cancer, the desire to bring an end to Alzheimer's disease or diabetes. We don't do that by slashing billions for the National Institutes of Health. You can't switch complex and promising medical research off and then say: Well, maybe someday later we will just turn it back on again.

We are not a great nation if we eliminate heating assistance for the 6 million vulnerable households that receive LIHEAP. Some 21,000 of those households just had to dig themselves out from a historic snowstorm in my State of Vermont. And we are not a ''great'' nation if we don't protect the air we breathe and the water we drink.

You don't make America stronger by eliminating the very programs that strengthen our alliances around the world and make our Nation more secure. We are not a strong nation if we simply pour more money into the Pentagon but then renege on commitments to international peacekeeping and security alliances or slash funding to respond to humanitarian crises or cut our diplomatic presence around the world. Interesting enough, when the other body spent millions of tax dollars to investigate a lack of security in Benghazi and came up with nothing, this budget slashes huge amounts that could be spent on security in our embassies, just as they voted to cut out hundreds of millions of dollars from a Senate budget that would have improved our security.

The President says he prefers hard power to soft power, but it is not either/or. The notion that soft power is weak or wasteful is mindless. If you are cutting programs that feed millions or prevent AIDS or treat tuberculosis and malaria, well, that doesn't help. It makes the world less stable, less secure.

I am afraid the budget proposal is divorced from reality. It has a lot of partisan campaign promises. He promises infrastructure investment—and all of us would agree with that—but then it cuts critical Federal funds for proven successful State transportation projects. He claims it will save rural America, but he cuts those Federal programs that spur rural economic development. That is not a budget with vision.

We need a serious budget proposal—a proposal that acknowledges the devastating effects the Budget Control Act and sequestration have had in our country and a budget that charts a path forward, rather than doubling down on further cuts on programs for the middle class. We need a budget proposal investing in our citizens and in our military, not a proposal that pays for one at the expense of the other.

We have a lot of work to do. I am the vice chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. I would say we have

to finish the fiscal year 2017 appropriations bills and then get to work on fiscal year 2018. Anybody who has been a Governor of their State would recognize that because they know they have to do it in their State. We should do it for the United States. To accomplish that, we need a budget framework that respects the principles in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, including parity between the defense and nondefense spending and that, even though they might be politically popular, doesn't have poison pill riders. We need relief from sequestration, not more misguided cuts.

This budget proposal takes us backward, not forward. But we can remind ourselves that it is Congress that holds the power of the purse, not the President. I have said that, whether we had Democratic or Republican Presidents. I take the responsibility seriously. I look forward to working across the aisle with colleagues both on and off the Appropriations Committee. I want to craft a responsible budget, a thoughtful budget, a serious budget—one that truly makes us a better and safer Nation and reflects the values we share as Americans.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise to speak in opposition to the resolution which uses the Congressional Review Act process to overturn a Fish and Wildlife Service resolution prohibiting certain inhumane methods of killing bears and wolves within the 16 national wildlife refuges in Alaska, which cover about 20 percent of the State of Alaska.

I understand the opponents of the Fish and Wildlife Service rule argue that States' rights issues are at hand, and they are responsible for the management of fish and wildlife in the State. That is certainly true within the State, but on Federal national wildlife refuge land, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is in charge—just like at Mount Rainier or Olympic National Park, where the National Park Service is in charge. I am sure there are times when Pierce County or even Seattle would like to make rules related to Mount Rainier, but they are not allowed because it is part of our National Park System. Similarly, the Fish and Wildlife Service manages our national wildlife refuge system.

The rules in this proposal only apply to those national wildlife refuge lands in Alaska. They don't cover any other lands in the State. So this isn't about States' rights. It is about how we can manage these wildlife refuges to the degree that agencies believe are necessary for the preservation of the wildlife.

Managing these national wildlife refuges—the 16 Federal refuges in Alaska—is about ensuring the management policies are consistent with the purpose of the wildlife refuge. It is not about prohibiting hunting. In fact, hunting has been allowed, and will continue to be allowed within these refuges in Alaska, as is the case with most national wildlife refuges throughout the United States.

As the Senator from New Mexico pointed out earlier, this is about what people want to see when they go to a national wildlife refuge. Do they want to see the inhumane killing of bear cubs in their den or would they like to see the bears and the other fish and wildlife activity that exists in so many of these beautiful areas?

Another argument that has been raised is that this rule will stop Alaskans from hunting for subsistence purposes—Native Alaskans who depend on subsistence hunting. The rule says nothing about this. It does not affect subsistence hunting. This rule is only about prohibiting certain methods of predator control in our wildlife refuges. Some people think this is contrary to responsible wildlife management practices in other States. But this rule only applies to national wildlife refuges in the State of Alaska.

The actions that Alaska has authorized on their State lands are so aggressive, that permitting them on Federal wildlife refuge land would be counter to the purposes of these national wildlife refuges. I know one of my colleagues was here citing what they think is already prohibited under state law, but the Alaska Administrative Code does allow for carbon monoxide cartridges to be used in humane euthanizing in these wolf dens and the killing of young animals.

Mr. President, let me read from the relevant provision of the Alaska Code, which is 5 AAC 92.110, Control of Predation by wolves. Subsection (h) states that ''carbon monoxide cartridges may be used to humanely euthanize wolf young in the den in areas under a predation control implementation plan.''

The next subsection, subsection (i) states that ''the killing of wolf young in the den, commonly known as 'denning,' is prohibited unless the commission authorizes the killing of wolf young in the den in areas under a predation control implementation plan.''

That is in the Alaska Administrative Code today, and it is something that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does not want to see happen in national wildlife refuges. The killing methods authorized by the State of Alaska include killing bear cubs or mothers with cubs, killing brown bears, including grizzly bears, using bait, killing brown bears using traps or snares, killing wolves or coyotes and their pups during the denning season, and shooting bears or wolves from aircraft or helicopters, using the aircraft to track down the bears or wolves, then landing and shooting them.

When you see the list of prohibited actions, you have to wonder why anybody would oppose this rule. Who is advocating for the slaughtering of wolf pups or bear cubs in their dens, shooting them from aircraft or using snares to catch them by their necks and kill them? I think my colleague from New Mexico had a picture of such an event. Who is advocating for this kind of method?

This is why the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service policy makes sure that if predator controls used, that they are based on science and not these inhumane actions. The wildlife rule is not a case of regulating sportsmen for traditional hunting practices, but it is making sure that they are doing so in a humane way.

The law requires that the Alaska wildlife refuges be managed to conserve fish and wildlife populations in their natural diversity, but Alaska's predator control practices are not consistent with that management requirement. They are directly opposite to conserving the natural diversity and are instead promoting the wholesale killing of predator species. So that is why we oppose this override of the regulation. I hope my colleagues will turn it down.

If we want to make improvements to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule, we can do so by legislation, or by working to change the rule. But by overturning this rule, you are also prohibiting the agency from fulfilling their job of protecting the wildlife refuge.

I want to make sure that all our colleagues understand that this is about protecting wildlife refuges in a humane way, allowing hunting practices, but doing so in a way that preserves the species.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I oppose this outrageous resolution, which would overturn a Fish and Wildlife Service ecosystem management rule for the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge. This resolution is a cruel measure that has horrified many of my constituents, and I share their strong opposition.

The purpose of our National Wildlife Refuge System is to protect wildlife across the country. It does so by maintaining sustainable populations and balanced ecosystems. The Alaska National Wildlife Refuge is a stunning habitat that attracts hikers, fishers, hunters, and photographers to take in the beauty of the landscape and enjoy the wildlife there.

The Fish and Wildlife Service rule simply codifies scientifically based wildlife management practices. It does not affect subsistence hunting by rural and Native Alaskans.

By overturning this rule, Congress would permit extreme and cruel hunting practices that include killing wolves and pups in their dens and trapping, baiting, and using airplanes to

scout and shoot bears and cubs. This so-called predator control is unnecessary and indefensible. Most Alaskans oppose these extreme practices. The resolution of disapproval would impede the Federal Government's ability to manage 76 million acres of public lands that Congress set aside for all Americans.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is charged with balancing multiple needs in wildlife refuges and conserving natural diversity. Overturning its rules to allow a small minority of hunters to use cruel and inhumane practices in a wildlife refuge is wrong. I oppose this resolution.

Ms. CANTWELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold her suggestion regarding the absence of a quorum?

Ms. CANTWELL. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Washington State for delaying the quorum call.

I appreciate the opportunity to visit with you today and to share some of the conversations I had yesterday before the Judiciary Committee in regard to the confirmation of a Coloradan, Judge Neil Gorsuch, who now serves on the Tenth Circuit Court, which is housed in Denver, CO.

Yesterday began his confirmation hearing before the Senate—the first step in a process which will ultimately end in his confirmation as a Justice to the U.S. Supreme Court. It was a great honor to be able to introduce Judge Gorsuch to the committee. It is a tradition that Members of the Senate from the home State of the judge nominated to serve on the High Court be allowed to introduce the nominee—in this case, a judge of the Tenth Circuit Court. I joined my Democratic colleague MICHAEL BENNET from Colorado in this tradition and am very excited to express my support for Judge Neil Gorsuch.

I thought this afternoon I would share some of the comments I gave yesterday before the committee. I will start by talking about Confluence Park in Denver, CO.

In downtown Denver, if you look at Cherry Creek and the South Platte River, they join together. That is where the Colorado Gold Rush began. When it was first discovered, it started bringing people out to the West, out to Colorado, to a place now known as Confluence Park, where the two rivers come together.

At Confluence Park in Denver, if you look, there is a plaque on one of the walls there that has a poem written on it from Colorado poet laureate Thomas Hornsby Ferril. It is a poem known as ''Two Rivers'' describing the settlement of the West. The poem ends with this:

I wasn't here, yet I remember them.
That first night long ago, those wagon people
Who pushed aside enough of the cottonwoods
To build our city where the blueness rested.

''Where the optimistic blueness of our Colorado skies rests against the mountains and the plains'' is a good description of our great State. We are reminded about how incredibly diverse our great Nation is, its people and its geography. Judge Gorsuch's nomination to the Supreme Court helps recognize the diversity in geography, the diversity of our country, and it helps to recognize that indeed there are highly qualified jurists who reside west of the Mississippi River.

Judge Gorsuch is a fourth-generation Coloradan. He is a skier. He is a fly-fisherman. He serves on a court that represents 20 percent of our Nation's landmass.

Once confirmed, Judge Gorsuch will be only the second Coloradan to have ever served on the Nation's highest Court. The first Coloradan to serve on the High Court was Justice Byron White. Justice Byron White also led the NFL in rushing, which is something Neil Gorsuch won't be able to claim when he is confirmed but is certainly something that makes his confirmation as the second Coloradan unique in our history. Should he be confirmed, Judge Gorsuch will also make history as he represents the first Generation X Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, the emerging generation of American leadership.

Judge Gorsuch was confirmed to the Tenth Circuit Court unanimously by voice vote in this Chamber in 2006. In fact, 12 current Democratic Senators did not oppose his confirmation, including three distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. Ranking Member FEINSTEIN, Senator LEAHY, and Senator DURBIN are all members of the Judiciary Committee who supported, through voice vote, his nomination. Eleven years ago, Senator GRAHAM presided over an empty committee dais as Neil Gorsuch faced his confirmation in 2006. No one showed up. What a difference a court can make. The level of bipartisan support for his 2006 nomination is almost unheard of in today's political climate, but when you look at his record, his writings, and his statements, it is easy to see why Judge Gorsuch has such overwhelming support.

Judge Gorsuch is not an ideologue. He is a mainstream jurist who follows the law as written and doesn't try to supplant it with his own personal policy preferences. As he said, ''Personal politics or policy preferences have no useful role in judging; regular and healthy doses of self-skepticism and humility about one's own abilities and conclusions always do.''

Judge Gorsuch is not an activist judge but, rather, a faithful adherent to and ardent defender of our Constitution. Judge Gorsuch said that judges have a ''foundational duty'' to ''do more than merely consider [the Constitution]. . . . They take an oath to uphold it.''

The judge recognizes that the judiciary is not the place for social or constitutional experimentation and that efforts to engage in such experimentation delegitimize the Court. As he said, ''This overweening addiction to the courtroom as the place to debate social policy is bad for the country and bad for the judiciary. . . . As a society, we lose the benefit of the give-and-take of the political process and the flexibility of social experimentation that only the elected branches can provide.''

Judge Gorsuch has a deep appreciation and respect for the constitutional principle of federalism and the separation of powers prescribed by our Founding Fathers. As he stated, ''A firm and independent judiciary is critical to a well-functioning democracy.''

Judge Gorsuch understands the advantage of democratic institutions and the special authority and legitimacy that come from the consent of the governed. As he said, ''Judges must allow the elected branches of government to flourish and citizens, through their elected representatives, to make laws appropriate to the facts and circumstances of the day.''

Judge Gorsuch appreciates the rule of law and respects the considered judgment of those who came before him. As he said, ''A good judge will seek to honor precedent and strive to avoid its disparagement or displacement.''

It is this appropriate temperament, this fidelity to the Constitution, this remarkable humility that has made Judge Gorsuch such a consensus pick among Colorado's diverse legal and legislative communities.

Former Colorado Senator, Democrat Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior under Barack Obama, in praising Judge Gorsuch's temperament, said during his circuit court confirmation:

> [A] judicial nominee should have a demonstrated dedication to fairness, impartiality, precedent, and the avoidance of judicial activism—from both the left and the right. I believe that Mr. Gorsuch meets this very high test.

A very prominent Colorado lawyer and former adviser to President Bill Clinton said:

> Judge Gorsuch's intellect, energy, and deep regard for the Constitution are well known to those of us who have worked with him and have seen firsthand his commitment to basic principles. Above all, this independence, fairness, and impartiality are the hallmarks of his career and his well-earned reputation.

Hundreds of prominent liberal and conservative Colorado attorneys support Judge Gorsuch, writing this bipartisan letter of support praising the judge:

> We hold a diverse set of political views as Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. Many of us have been critical of actions taken by President Trump. Nonetheless, we all agree that Judge Gorsuch is exceptionally well qualified to join the Supreme Court. He deserves an up-or-down vote.

The people who know him best in Colorado—they have worked with him

in the Tenth Circuit Court, and they have worked with him in private practice—believe that he deserves an up-or-down vote, believe that he is exceptionally well qualified to join the Supreme Court.

One of the individuals, one of the lawyers, one of the Democrats who signed that very letter, who wrote this phrase, was a Democrat who was the cochairman of the host committee for the Democratic National Convention in Denver in 2008 that saw the nomination of then-Senator Barack Obama to be the Democratic candidate for the 2008 ticket.

Colorado's former Democratic Governor Bill Ritter and former Republican Attorney General John Suthers jointly said:

> It is time to use this confirmation process to examine and exalt the characteristics of a judge who demonstrates that he or she is scholarly, compassionate, committed to the law, and will function as part of a truly independent, apolitical judiciary. Judge Gorsuch fits that bill.

Judge Gorsuch has a consistent record of applying the law fairly, and his reputation among his peers and lawmakers is evidence of it.

According to the Denver Post, Marcy Glenn, a Denver attorney and Democrat, recalls two cases before Gorsuch in which she represented underdogs, and she said: ''He issued a decision that most certainly focused on the little guy.''

That same article cited another example. ''Judge Gorsuch can't be pigeonholed as either pro-prosecution or pro-defense,'' said Peter Krumholz, a Denver appellate attorney who reviewed the nominee's criminal law record. ''He is very independent and will not hesitate to rule in favor of a criminal defendant's rights when he thinks it's warranted by the Constitution.''

For all these reasons cited today and the many reasons that have been cited over the past several weeks, I am certain Judge Gorsuch will make Colorado proud and that his opinions will have a positive impact on this country for generations to come.

I look forward to Judge Gorsuch receiving a fair hearing today, tomorrow, and after that, to working with my distinguished colleagues on both sides of the aisle to expeditiously confirm his nomination.

Thomas Hornsby Ferril, a great poet laureate, wrote another poem. This one is memorialized on a mural painted in the rotunda of the Colorado capitol. It ends with these words: ''Beyond the sundown is tomorrow's wisdom. Today is going to be long, long ago.''

The wisdom of Neil Gorsuch, guardian of the Constitution, will serve our Nation well for generations to come.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

REMEMBERING WARREN D. BLAYLOCK

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Warren Blaylock, a friend and true public servant who was a lifelong resident of Crawford County, AR. Warren was a World War II veteran and someone I admired greatly for the vital role he played in his community for decades.

Born in 1921, Warren grew up near Alma, AR, and knew the harsh realities that many Americans encountered during the Great Depression. He graduated from Alma High School and went on to join the Army during World War II. During the war, he served as a combat medic with the 67th Evacuation Hospital. His unit landed at Normandy just days after the Allied forces stormed the beaches on D-day and went on to follow the Allies as they marched through Europe. Warren was promoted to first sergeant while serving in Europe, and he received several awards and commendations, including two Bronze Stars, the Superior Unit Award, and the Combat Medical Badge.

I am so thankful for his service alongside so many others in the ''greatest generation'' as they risked their lives in the defense of freedom.

Even after he left the service, Warren spent the rest of his life giving back to his community and advocating for causes he believed in.

After returning home from the war, he attended the University of Arkansas and earned a bachelor's degree in business. In his professional life, he was vice president and general manager of the Derrel Thomas Company in Van Buren, AR. Still, Warren found time to participate in numerous civic organizations within the community. He was an active member of the Alma United Methodist Church for decades and served on the Methodist Health and Rehabilitation Board for 41 years. Additionally, Warren served on various other boards and organizations and was a pillar in the community. Perhaps most notably, he was a member of the Rotary Club—first in Van Buren and then in Fort Smith—for 54 years and maintained perfect attendance. This is just one example of Warren's dedication to serving and giving back to Arkansas.

While Warren never sought recognition for the work he did on behalf of his community, his contributions were noticed and recognized by the city of Alma, as well as on the regional and State levels. He was inducted into the Arkansas Senior Hall of Fame in 2013. In 2015, I had the honor of participating in the ceremony where Warren was inducted into the Arkansas Military Hall of Fame on the basis of his honorable military service and exceptional State and community service. This was yet another reminder of how loved and valued Warren was by so many people whose lives he touched.

As active as he was, Warren always enjoyed spending time on his ranch tending to his livestock. In fact, he was also a talented auctioneer who would lend his skills to various charitable auctions and events.

A devoted follower of Christ, a wonderful father and family man, a respected humanitarian, and a rock within his community, Warren will be greatly missed by many. We wish his family, friends, and loved ones comfort as we all mourn his loss, but we also take great joy in knowing just how profound an impact Warren had on the lives of so many others. He leaves behind an incredible legacy of love, devotion, and service that will last for many years to come.

I very much appreciate Warren's service and even more his friendship, encouragement, and the amazing example he set. I will miss him and the vital role he played in his community and in Arkansas. He leaves a huge void that will be hard to fill, but I hope all those who witnessed his committed service to his fellow man will join me in resolving to live and love more like Warren as a way to honor him and his legacy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

TRUMPCARE

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, we have seen TV clips about various Members and Senators around the country having townhall meetings. For example, three of our colleagues this past weekend—Indiana was one of them—had tremendous townhall meetings with a good exchange of information.

With this looming House of Representatives healthcare bill, which I refer to as TrumpCare, since the President has endorsed it, I wanted to see a particular group in our society who is extremely vulnerable and those are the older Americans who are not 65—not old enough to be eligible for Medicare. Now, be careful because there are people lurking in these halls and the administration who would like to raise Medicare eligibility from age 65 to 67. But that is not what is confronting the House of Representatives; it is what is going to happen to those people below the age of 65 for their healthcare. Under current law, once they hit 65, they are eligible for Medicare.

I reached out to a particular group of Floridians. These are folks whom I did not know that our offices in Florida had become aware of because they had written about the healthcare debate that is going on and, in many cases, had described their circumstances.

Yesterday, the group of 8 or 10 whom we had in my Orlando office were all in the age range of 50 to 64. I want to tell the Senate about this group of people because, if approved in its current form, the House healthcare bill, TrumpCare, would dramatically increase healthcare costs for folks in that age group, 50 to 64. Those are folks who either get their healthcare through expanded Medicaid or they get their health insurance through healthcare.gov, which is the exchange, whether it be on the State exchange or the Federal exchange because the State does not participate. According to the Congressional Budget Office, a 64-year-old making $26,500 could see their

healthcare costs go from $1,700 a year, which they pay now under the Affordable Care Act, all the way up to $14,600 a year under the House plan, TrumpCare. That is a dramatic jump, obviously. Do we think that is really too much of an extreme example?

I want to tell you what these people said. If you look at what the House is proposing, the dramatic rise in cost is due in large part to two provisions contained in the House bill, one that would allow insurers to charge older Americans up to five times as much as younger people; the second one caps the Federal tax credits meant to help seniors pay for the rising cost of health insurance. Federal tax credits is a fancy way of saying ''subsidy.'' So if you are a senior and you are above 138 percent of poverty, which for a single individual is approximately $16,000 a year—by the way, who making $16,000 a year can afford health insurance? That is why we need the remaining 19 States, my State of Florida included, to expand Medicaid up to that 138 percent of poverty. But if someone is between that level and all the way up to 400 percent of the poverty level, which for a single individual is about $46,000, $47,000 a year—in that zone of 138 percent of poverty up to 400 percent of poverty, there are these tax credits or subsidies. The one with the lower income gets more of a subsidy in order to buy private health insurance on the private marketplace through the exchange. As they get up to 400 percent, a person making $46,000 or $47,000 a year—can they really afford health insurance? Not the real cost, unless it is some huge deductible plan that doesn't give them much. That is why these folks need some assistance. That is in place. That is the law. That is the Affordable Care Act, which has been so maligned over the last several years.

Aside from health insurance, there is the expansion of Medicaid that has helped a lot of people. There are still 4 million people in this country who would benefit if those 19 remaining States would expand Medicaid up to 138 percent. They are left in the cold. They are not getting health insurance; they are not getting healthcare. They are eligible to have it, and the Federal money is there to draw down to enable them to have that Medicaid, but 19 States, including my State of Florida, have decided not to expand it.

With all of that as background, I asked these folks to come in. According to the AARP, there are millions of Floridians in that age group of 50 to 64 who currently receive Medicaid or tax credits to help them pay for the insurance through healthcare.gov; there are millions who are eligible. So the group came in, and here's what I learned. I am going to give you some personal vignettes.

Marshall Stern is a 61-year-old heart transplant survivor who lives in Kissimmee, FL. Marshall has had a serious heart condition since he was a young man. Three years ago, his condition worsened, and it resulted in several hospitalizations, after which he was told he would need a heart transplant. Since he is on full disability, he was told that he had to enroll in Medicaid or he would not be eligible for the transplant. Just the medication for the posttransplant operation costs around $100,000 a year, which, obviously, Marshall would not be able to afford without Medicaid coverage. He also is going to have to take this medication for the rest of his life if he is going to live. He worries that the House TrumpCare bill will turn Medicaid into a block grant program, which is a fancy way of saying: We are going to cut it off, and you are not going to get any more money, and you are going to have to finance it from your own State resources. Governors and State legislatures are going to have to share more of the burden of healthcare costs. He is worried that if that House bill passes and Medicaid is threatened as we know it, he is not going to be able to have the medications he needs to stay alive. This is what Marshall told me, and it was very dramatic. He said: ''It is as good as saying that I die.''

For the rest of us who are not facing that, imagine having a fellow tell you that. This is serious business.

Let me tell you about Susanna Perkins. She is a 62-year-old living in Altamonte Springs. Susanna's husband lost his job in 2009, and she lost her employer-provided health plan during the recession. The couple blew through their IRA, and they ended up selling nearly everything they had.

They eventually moved out of the country to save money, but in 2014, they decided to move back. Why? Because the Affordable Care Act passed, and the ACA made it possible for them to afford health insurance again. This is what Susanna said:

> If they shred [the ACA] like they're [threatening] to, we're going to be hightailing it out of here, because dealing with the health care [costs] and insurance makes you sick. We're getting by, but if the ACA goes away, and if they make these changes they're talking about, we'll be uninsured again.

I was going to show you a picture. These are the folks whom I met with yesterday. I will not point out the individuals, and I am going to talk about some of the others, but you can see almost everybody. There is one person who is outside the photograph. But we sat down for an hour's conversation, and I heard their stories.

I wish every Senator and every Member of Congress would go out and talk to people who are real people with real problems and understand how petrified they are. These folks look like our neighbors and our friends. They look like the people whom we go to church with. They look like the people who have children or grandchildren whom we play with, and they are petrified. They are scared to death that they are not going to have healthcare.

So let me tell you about another one of these ladies. Terri Falbo is a 59-year-old living in the Orlando area. She moved to Florida back in 2012 to take care of her elderly mother and disabled sister. For 25 years she had good health insurance through her employer where she lived up north, and she rarely used health insurance. After losing her job in 2006, as we went into the beginnings of the recession, she purchased an individual insurance policy that cost her $500 to $650 a month. Prior to the ACA, she had to make withdrawals from her retirement account. She had to max out her credit cards to pay for the premiums. As a result, she depleted all of her reserves and all of her retirement funds. Since the Affordable Care Act was implemented, she has had an affordable policy because she qualifies for the monthly subsidy of over $600, bringing her premium payments to $70 a month with a zero deductible. She could have gotten a policy with a $5,000 deductible for $3 a month. At her age, she needed assurance that she would be able to have the healthcare she needed, so she paid $70 a month because of the subsidy. Yet that is not what is protecting her in the House TrumpCare bill.

Under that proposed healthcare plan, her maximum subsidy would be less than $300 a month, which means she would end up paying $4,000 more per year—an amount that she simply cannot afford. That is what she told me: ''I cannot afford it.'' She said she would have to go without health insurance instead. Before the ACA, she was desperately trying to have health insurance, and she depleted all of her retirement funds.

There is another lady who is sitting around that table in the picture I showed, Nancy Walker. She is a 51-year-old self-employed actor who is living in Kissimmee. She is active. She is healthy. She chose to pursue a career in the arts. The unstable nature of her profession has often left her unable to afford health insurance. So she has gone without it most of her adult life as an artist, as a performer.

Since the ACA took effect, however, she has, finally, been able to afford health insurance, thanks to the subsidies. She told me that it has been a relief for her to be able to go to the doctor not only for checkups but, actually, when she has a problem, to fix it.

If Congress passes the House TrumpCare bill, her premiums are going to go up. She has no doubt that she will, once again, be unable to afford health insurance and healthcare. She told me that she fears simple health issues will fester, becoming serious, chronic, and expensive to treat. Remember, I said they were petrified—that they were scared to death. There is an example. Finally, she has health insurance after all of these years of going without because she did not have an employer who paid for her.

Let's take another one. Marilyn Word is a 63-year-old retiree living in Orlando. Marilyn lives mainly off of Social Security payments but is not

old enough to qualify for Medicare. She is under that magic year of age 65, at which one is eligible.

After retiring, Marilyn enrolled in an insurance plan through the ACA exchange, and she is eligible for annual tax credits to help her pay for her insurance. Marilyn told me that she was extremely worried about the increased premiums that she would likely have to pay under the House TrumpCare plan.

I will give you another example of a lady who is sitting around that table. Sharon Brown is a 58-year-old widow. She lives in the Orlando area. Since her husband's death, Sharon has been dealing with several medical issues and pulling money out of her retirement account to pay for her current plan. She has a nest egg from her husband's life insurance money, but due to her health condition, she will likely need long-term medical care. This is what she told me:

> My premium's pretty high because I've got multiple medical conditions that make it so I cannot work. I've done a lot of reading on this . . . and the cost of my healthcare [under the TrumpCare plan] will amount to double what I make right now in income.

She looked at me with this pained expression on her face and said: ''It's very scary, and the anxiety that goes along with this happening right now is making it worse.''

Sharon told me that she is a lifelong registered Republican—she volunteered this—and she said that the bill being considered now is forcing her to reconsider her party. She said:

> I'm changing my political affiliation to independent. I want to vote my conscience.

When one puts faces to these stories—to these people about whom I have just talked and about whom we just talked yesterday—the House TrumpCare plan ends Medicaid as we know it because it cuts off the amount going to the States.

I understand that in the House, in trying to fix up some things just last night, they filed an amendment in an attempt to address some of the problems. One of the things they were trying to fix would allow States to choose between capping or block-granting the Medicaid Program. Under either proposal, the Federal Government is going to be contributing less to the States, and that means more money will have to be picked up—the tab—by the States. Just ask the Governors how much more they can pick up.

I urge our House and Senate colleagues to join all of these people whom I have talked about and vote as Sharon said—with their consciences on what they are going to do to folks like them. Gutting Medicaid and forcing struggling, older Americans to pay more for health insurance is simply not the right thing to do. For a change, we ought to be trying to do the right thing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). The majority whip.

REPEALING AND REPLACING OBAMACARE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I came to speak on the nomination of Neil Gorsuch as Associate Justice for the United States Supreme Court, but in listening to my colleague from Florida, I feel like I am missing something because he has described the Affordable Care Act in a way that I do not recognize, and he has talked about a bill that has not even passed the House of Representatives as a fait accompli.

ObamaCare was sold under false pretenses. The President himself said: If you like what you have, you can keep it. If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. Oh, yes, by the way, a family of four will see a reduction of its premiums by $2,500. None of those have proven to be true. So we are going to repeal and replace ObamaCare.

I have to tell my friend from Florida to please join us. If he does not like the product that is working its way through Congress, please join us and help us make it better because, right now, all I see from our Democratic friends is sort of like a Pontius Pilate moment—a washing of their hands and letting the Republicans alone do the heavy lifting. We invite them to work with us in a bipartisan way, which is something that did not happen, by the way, in ObamaCare, which was passed on a purely party-line vote, and I think it has proven to be a terrible mistake.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, will the Senator yield since he has invoked my name?

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I will yield for a question, but I will not yield the floor.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I do not intend for the Senator to yield the floor, and he is my friend.

The Senator started out by saying he was missing something. Yes, he missed the first part of my speech, during which I talked about these folks in the age category of 50 to 64, who are not eligible for Medicare.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I will yield for a question but not for a speech.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I am about to ask the question.

I want to introduce the Senator to these people in that age group of 50 to 64. In fact, they told me stories that had them scared to death.

Would the Senator believe that they believe that they are going to lose coverage?

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I say to my friend from Florida that I think there has been a lot of false advertising and scaremongering taking place around the country in trying to convince people that, somehow, they are going to lose their coverage, which is not the case.

We believe we can do better than ObamaCare, which has created a one-size-fits-all healthcare package and has basically denied people the right to choose the kind of coverage that suits them best at a price they can afford.

In Texas alone, a person making about $25,000 a year could spend up to 30 percent of his gross income under ObamaCare. That is a young person, and it is no surprise that many of them have opted out of ObamaCare and simply decided either to pay the penalty or to just become noncompliant because it is unaffordable.

I am sympathetic, certainly, to the genuine concerns of anybody in one's getting appropriate healthcare coverage, but I sure hope people do not succumb to the scaremongering taking place in parts of the country that tells people they are going to be left high and dry.

For example, my friend and colleague said that Medicare was going to be gutted under the House bill. That is not true. Right now, Medicaid is an uncapped entitlement. It is one of the fastest growing sources of Federal Government spending. The bill in the House proposes not to cut it but to restrain its rate of growth. Right now, it is the third largest budget item in the Texas budget. My friends in the Texas Legislature tell me that it crowds out all other spending, including education, law enforcement, and other things—that it just eats up so much money because it is uncapped. What we would propose to do is to leave Medicaid at the current levels but then make sure that it grows according to the Consumer Price Index—and a rather generous one—in medical inflation.

I will say what I said earlier, which is that I do not recognize the bill that my friend from Florida has described. If the House did not pass a bill and if the Senate did not pass a bill, we would still be here, talking about the meltdown of the Affordable Care Act because many insurance companies have simply pulled out of the marketplace. Many people do not have choices. They are forced to deal with, perhaps, the one remaining health insurance company, and in some places they are going to have all insurance companies pull out of the individual market.

I yield for one more question, and then I really need to get to my speech.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Texas, and he knows my affection for him.

The Senator has stated that he would like, in a bipartisan way, to fix the current law. Would the Senator believe, if there were a genuine, bipartisan attempt to fix what needs fixing instead of repealing and replacing it with something that has people petrified, that he could find that bipartisan consensus?

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would welcome that any day and every day. The only way we get things done around here in any sort of durable fashion is on a bipartisan basis. But so far, I have seen zero indication from our friends across the aisle that they are interested in working with us. I hope that is a misunderstanding on my part, and I hope going forward we will be able to come up with some bipartisan bills.

The truth is that, given the constraints of the budget process, we are not going to be able to do everything we want to do in this bill that is going to pass the House on Thursday and which we will take up here in the Senate next week. So there is going to be a necessity to do some more, and I hope we can do that on a bipartisan basis.

We also know that the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. Tom Price, is working from a regulatory standpoint to try to do everything he can to stabilize the insurance market and to make sure that people continue to have some choices.

I think this is fundamentally a test of our principles regarding whether we actually believe in more choices and competition, and my firm conviction is choices and competition improve the quality of a service and the quality of a product. That is really one of the foundational principles upon which our economy is based. I think it also works in healthcare, but we haven't had that since ObamaCare passed.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. President, I want to speak a little bit about the important hearing on the judicial nomination of Judge Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court that is taking place in the Senate Judiciary Committee even as we speak.

We know that President Trump nominated Judge Gorsuch at the end of January to a seat left vacant by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. Justice Scalia was a lion of American law. He was bigger than life. His intellect, his writing, and his wit inspired a lot of young lawyers and not-so-young lawyers and judges and law students over the past decades, and reminded us that judges have a distinct and special and important role in our system of government, but it is decidedly not to be a legislator or a policymaker because they are ill-suited for doing that.

First of all, Federal judges are appointed for life. Judges are not supposed to take public opinion polls to figure out how to rule in a case.

I asked Judge Gorsuch today: Is it proper for a judge to decide in a case in front of him or her who he or she thinks should win and then try to work backward to justify it in a judge's decision?

He said: Well, it is actually just the opposite. What you try to do is to take the facts and the law and you apply them and you respect the outcome, even if sometimes it is not an outcome you would prefer if it were a matter of your personal preference.

What he described, really, is called the rule of law, which has distinguished the United States of America from most of the rest of the world and which has given us our competitive advantage. When people know that we are going to have a legal system that doesn't depend on personalities, doesn't depend on politics, but rather on a written law or Constitution, then people can take confidence in their investments, in their plans, and our economy has been the winner.

There is a Peruvian economist who wrote a book called ''The Mystery of Capital.'' I will just summarize, briefly. I was intrigued by the book and by his thesis. Basically, his argument is the United States is no more entrepreneurial than other parts of the world, but what distinguishes us from much of the rest of the world is what I just said a moment ago: It is the rule of law. For example, if you buy a house and get a title to that house, then you have a legal right to it, and you can defend it against all other claimants or people who might try to say: No, that is really my house. I know that sounds so basic, and we take it for granted, but it really does distinguish our country from others, where the law is really not about law, but it is about politics. It is about who is in power. Well, our laws are designed to protect people who are not in power, including people in political minorities.

I think the greatest legacy of Justice Scalia was a strong belief that the words in the Constitution and laws passed by the Congress matter. He believed judges should apply those texts and not just pronounce their policy preferences in deciding cases. He understood, as I do, that a careful adherence to text ultimately protects our democracy, which is the intention of our Founding Fathers.

I have spent time, like many of my colleagues, talking about the type of judge we need to fill this vacancy—someone who understands the lessons that Justice Scalia taught us—and will apply them faithfully, without regard to persons or personalities or politics. I believe there is no question that Judge Gorsuch is the man for the task. I am confident that the hearings this week will make that clear to the rest of America.

It is interesting to listen to some of my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee who want to talk about everything other than Judge Gorsuch and his qualifications. They want to talk about President Trump. They want to talk about abortion. They want to talk about same-sex marriage. They want to try to get Judge Gorsuch to prejudge some future case that may come before the U.S. Supreme Court. Well, no judge worthy of that title will tell anybody: Well, if you confirm me as a judge, I promise you this outcome. That is a violation of the most fundamental ethics of a judge, because a judge is not, again, a policymaker, a judge is not a politician; judges aren't about outcomes, but rather a commitment to the rule of law and due process of law in reaching their decisions.

So far, in almost two days in the Judiciary Committee, I think Judge Gorsuch has performed admirably and demonstrated no reason why our colleagues across the aisle can't support him. As a matter of fact, my view is that if you can't vote for somebody like Judge Gorsuch, there is probably nobody that would be nominated by this President that you would vote to confirm. It is hard for me to imagine the nomination getting much better.

We have already learned a lot about the judge. We know of his intellect. We know of his sterling qualifications and his extensive experience. I particularly appreciated his testimony today about access to justice and his concern that people of modest means—low income, the so-called little guy that our friends across the aisle keep talking about. The little guy in America is essentially denied access to our courts because it costs so much and it takes too long, and there have to be mechanisms in place for us to resolve our differences that everybody has access to or else the statement carved in the marble over the U.S. Supreme Court that says ''equal justice under law'' is just a pathetic joke.

So we have a lot to do in terms of providing access to justice. I think somebody with Judge Gorsuch's background—someone who actually has practiced the law and who has represented clients in court and who has been thoughtful about this and so many other topics—is just the type of person that can help us get our legal system back on track, so that saying, that model, ''equal justice under law,'' is a reality.

We know that Judge Gorsuch has spent a decade on the bench and about 10 years in private practice, and he has also worked at the Department of Justice. Like Justice Scalia, he is a steadfast believer in the Constitution laws and that they should be interpreted based on their text; that is, what they actually say.

I asked Judge Gorsuch today: If you don't believe that you ought to interpret the law based on what the law actually says, what would you use as your guide? If you are not going to interpret the Constitution based on what the Constitution says, what are you going to use as your guide?

Well, some of our friends would talk about a living Constitution or judges knowing better than perhaps the elected representatives of the people. To me, that is just misguided. Judges are not philosopher kings or queens. Judges, as I said at the outset, hold a very important but finite role in our system of government. It is our job as the legislature to make the policy. It is the executive—the President's job—to execute the policy. And if we don't like the law, then it is our job to change it, not to look to the Court to say: I am going to let the Congress off the hook, and we are just going to write an opinion and render a judgment that changes the law under the guise of actually judging, actually engaging in more policymaking.

Well, the great thing about somebody like Judge Gorsuch is that the people who admire him also include people who differ from him politically but have seen him in action—people like the former Solicitor General under

President Obama, who said he is ''one of the most thoughtful and brilliant judges to have served our nation over the last century,'' and someone who ''has always put aside his personal views to serve the rule of law.''

In other words, Judge Gorsuch is the type of judge that we should all be able to get behind, and he is exactly the kind of nominee we would hope to see from any administration. That is why he was previously confirmed by the U.S. Senate 10 years ago when he was nominated to the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver. He was confirmed by voice vote. For people who may not be familiar with the practices of the Senate, that essentially is by unanimous consent, by unanimous agreement, including the Democratic leader, the Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER. He thought Judge Gorsuch was good enough for the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. I would challenge him to identify a reason why he is not well suited for the United States Supreme Court, unless it is based on some political calculation.

As the Judiciary Committee this week considers his nomination, I want to make crystal clear the purpose of the hearing. It is not about pinning the nominee down or asking trick questions or asking the judge to prejudge cases that might come before the Court. We know there have been outside special interest groups who have criticized Judge Gorsuch for failing to rule in favor of one sympathetic constituency or another, but, again, that is not what judges do—or what they are supposed to do. Are they really supposed to find the most sympathetic party to a lawsuit and say: I am going to decide that case for them, and I will figure out the justification for it later. That is not what judges are supposed to do. Judges are supposed to apply the law impartially and fairly and decide the facts and apply the law and render judgments on cases or controversies that become before the court, not write policy at large.

So I think some of these attacks are pretty silly, but they also are a reminder of the importance of these hearings because I really believe this is one of those opportunities to help acquaint millions more Americans with our unique founding story and the unique nature of our Constitution and our Nation of laws.

I see my friend from Tennessee here. I remember something he told me once about telling his constituents that one of the important functions of the Senate was to remind people what it means to be an American. Well, being an American means believing in the rule of law and equal justice for all.

I will close on this because I see my friend from Tennessee here waiting to speak. This is another kind of an interesting statistic I found pretty amazing, and the Presiding Officer, a distinguished lawyer in his own right, can marvel at this as I do.

Judge Gorsuch is no radical. He follows the law wherever it leads: sometimes for the police, sometimes for a criminal defendant; sometimes for the government, sometimes against the government. That is the way the rule of law works. He noted that about 97 percent of the thousands of cases he has decided have been unanimously. As the Presiding Officer knows, the circuit court sits in three-judge panels. The idea that 97 percent of the cases he decided were decided unanimously is pretty remarkable, and he sided with the majority 99 percent of the time. This is nobody out of the mainstream. This is a mainstream judge. So let's be honest and open about it.

I hope our colleagues across the aisle, after this nominee is voted out of the Judiciary Committee, will allow us to have an up-or-down vote on this nomination. It wasn't until the Presidency of George W. Bush in 2000 that somehow the tradition of allowing an up-or-down vote for nominees went out the window and instead some people got together and decided, well, we are going to come up with a rationale to raise the threshold to 60. In other words, a President won't be able to see his nominee confirmed unless not just a majority votes for it but 60 people vote for it in the Senate because of the Senate's rules on cloture closing off debate. That period of our history during the George W. Bush administration was an aberration, and I would hope no one would want to repeat that—again, politicizing the judicial nomination process.

People can vote any way they want, but denying the opportunity for the Senate to vote up or down on a nominee, particularly to the U.S. Supreme Court, is certainly not a road I would hope our colleagues would go down. As they presumably learned this year, after Senator Harry Reid, the Democratic leader, led his conference into the nuclear option, which basically changed the Senate rules by breaking the Senate rules—that is what allowed us to confirm the President's Cabinet with 51 votes, and that is what will allow us to confirm all lower court judicial nominees with 51 votes. So we would think they might have learned the lesson that what goes around comes around and that while you are in the minority one day, you might be in the majority in the not too distant future. What you force the Senate to do in order to do its job may end up biting you in the future. So I hope they seriously consider allowing Judge Gorsuch an up-or-down vote when his nomination comes to the floor sometime around or after April 3.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, later today the Senate will vote on H.J. Res. 69, and I am here to state as strongly and emphatically as possible my opposition to this misguided and unwise measure.

As a Senator who fights to preserve and protect the vast diversity of American wildlife and honor the natural beauty of our Nation's great refuges, I urge my colleagues to reject the effort to revoke a commonsense rule of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This rule of the FWS is designed to prevent the use of cruel, unsporting, and inhumane killing methods on Federal land. It is really that simple, and repeal of it is an outrage.

Proponents of H.J. Res. 69 have attempted to frame this debate as an effort by the Federal Government to usurp State power, but that argument is simply absurd. The rule at issue is about Federal management of Federal land, Federal control over land owned by the Federal Government, pure and simple. The rule, which took effect in September, does not restrict subsistence hunting or normal hunting practices. It does not imperil public safety or impede on defense of property. It simply prevents brutal, cruel, barbaric hunting methods that target vulnerable bears, wolves, and coyote from occurring on lands that were intended to provide refuge for these animals. ''Refuge'' is the key word.

This resolution subverts the judgment of professional wildlife managers to adopt sensible wildlife management actions that are based on the best available science. If the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule is undermined, any State would be permitted to allow egregious killing methods on these wildlife refuges, which is the one category of Federal lands specifically set aside to benefit wildlife. That is its singular purpose.

I will oppose this legislation because I believe in preserving our Nation's natural ecosystem and the constitutional responsibility of the Federal Government to manage Federal lands for all citizens and prevent the inhumane treatment of our Nation's most iconic wildlife.

This rule bans the killing of wolves and their pups at their den sites in springtime when they are most vulnerable. It bans the killing of sleeping black bear mothers and their cubs while they are hibernating in winter—not exactly fair sport and certainly damaging to our environment. The rule also bans the baiting of grizzly bears, which involves the use of toxic, rotting food or grease to lure and acclimate bears to a certain area so that trophy hunters can get a point-blank shot. It prohibits the use of traps such as steel-jawed traps or snares, which cause animals to suffer injury as they fight the trap or even slow and painful death from starvation or exposure. It prohibits using airplanes and helicopters to scout, land, and shoot brown or black bears. These practices are not only cruel and inhumane, they are really unsporting and have no place in a civilized society.

This resolution would foreclose our wildlife managers from making Federal wildlife management decisions. It will undoubtedly affect the future of all American wildlife, including regulating

inhumane practices on Alaska national wildlife refuges even though those practices may be recognized as cruel and unsustainable.

All in all, voiding the U.S. Fish and Wildlife rule would set a dangerous precedent for the management of public lands across the country. Time and time again, our Federal courts have held that the Federal Government has the authority to regulate wildlife on Federal lands and cannot be superseded by initiatives at the State level. This Federal rule explicitly prohibits only these particularly gruesome and egregious methods of hunting or other kinds of practices on national wildlife refuges. It does not apply to hunting in State-owned wilderness or to rural Alaskan practices for residents who hunt for subsistence.

Regardless of my colleagues' claims, there is not a Tenth Amendment issue here, and the case law clearly demonstrates it, from the Supreme Court decision in 1976 that held that ''the Property Clause also gives Congress the power to protect wildlife on public lands, state law notwithstanding''; the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which followed it; and just last year, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, which repeated the Supreme Court's well-established jurisprudence on the supremacy clause and the property clause.

Neither the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act nor the Alaska Statehood Act grants any State official the power to overrule these Federal land managers' decisions.

Putting aside the legal issues—and there are none that really argue in favor of sabotaging this Fish and Wildlife Service rule—it is the right thing to do for us and for our future. This legislation would essentially reject our authority and our responsibility and our obligation to future generations to promote humane wildlife management practices. It is not only a matter of our law but who we are and what kind of society we believe we should have.

I hope my colleagues will join me in opposing this abhorrent and appalling legislation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, President Trump's nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to be a member of the U.S. Supreme Court is being considered this week in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Soon, the nomination is likely to move to the floor for debate.

Some have suggested that instead of allowing a majority of Senators to decide whether to approve the nomination of Judge Gorsuch, there should be first a cloture vote to determine whether to cut off debate. Cutting off debate requires the approval of 60 Senators, so if 41 of the 46 Democratic Senators vote not to cut off debate, there would never be an up-or-down majority vote to approve Judge Gorsuch. In other words, the 41 Democratic Senators would have filibustered to death the Gorsuch nomination.

Filibustering to death the Gorsuch nomination—or any Presidential nomination, for that matter—flies in the face of 230 years of Senate tradition. Throughout the Senate's history, approval of even the most controversial Presidential nominations has required only a majority vote. For example, in 1991 President George H.W. Bush nominated Clarence Thomas to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. The debate was bitter. The Senate confirmed Judge Thomas narrowly, 52 to 48. Although the Senate rules allowed any Senator to try to filibuster the nomination to death, none did. In fact, Senate rules have always allowed Senators the option to filibuster to death a Presidential nomination; yet it has almost never happened. According to the former Senate Historian, with one possible exception, which I will mention in a minute, the number of Supreme Court Justices in our country's history who have been denied their seat by filibuster is zero. The number of Cabinet members in our country's history who have been denied their seats by filibuster is zero. The number of Federal district judges in our country's history who have been denied their seats by filibuster is zero. And until 2003, the number of Federal circuit judges in our country's history who have been denied their seats by filibuster was zero.

Senator Everett Dirksen did not filibuster President Lyndon Johnson's Presidential nominations. Senator Robert Byrd did not filibuster President Reagan's nominees. Senator Howard Baker did not filibuster President Carter's nominees. Senator Bob Dole did not filibuster President Clinton's nominees. During most of the 20th century, when one party controlled the White House and the Senate 70 percent of the time, the minority never filibustered to death a single Presidential nominee.

On the other hand, there have been plenty of filibusters on legislation—so many that in 1917, the Senate adopted a cloture rule as a way to end filibusters. The rule was amended in 1949, 1959, 1975, 1979, and 1986—always in response to filibusters on legislation, never on nominations. It was the 1975 change that established the current cloture standard of 60 votes to end debate except on amendments to the standing rules of the Senate.

Filibustering a Presidential nomination has always been treated differently than filibustering a legislative matter. The filibuster of legislation is perhaps the Senate's most famous characteristic. It has been called ''democracy's finest show, the right to talk your head off.'' As the actor Jimmy Stewart said in the movie ''Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,'' ''Wild horses aren't going to drag me off this floor until those people have heard everything I've got to say, even if it takes all winter.'' That was Jimmy Stewart in ''Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.''

The late Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia described the importance of the legislative filibuster in a different way. He said in his last speech:

> Our Founding Fathers intended the Senate to be a continuing body that allows for open and unlimited debate and the protection of minority rights. Senators have understood this since the Senate first convened.

In fact, the whole idea of the Senate is not to have majority rule on legislation. Throughout Senate history, the purpose of the legislative filibuster has been to force consensus on issues, to force there to be a group of Senators on either side who have to respect one another's views so they work together and produce 60 votes on important matters, as we did on the 21st Century Cures bill and as we did on the bill fixing No Child Left Behind.

Nominations have always been treated differently from legislation. For example, under rule XIV, any Senator could bring legislation directly to the calendar bypassing committees. There is no such power for nominations. Senate rules allow debate and therefore the possibility of filibuster on a motion to proceed to legislation. Debate is not allowed on a motion to proceed to nominations.

In summary, while Senate rules have always allowed extended debate or filibusters, the filibuster was never used to block a nomination until recently. As I mentioned earlier, it was never used to block a Cabinet nomination, never used to block a Federal district judge, and until 2003, never used to block a circuit judge, and never used to block a Supreme Court Justice in the country's history, with one possible exception. That was in 1968, when President Johnson sought to elevate Associate Justice Abe Fortas to be Chief Justice. When it became clear the Senate majority wouldn't agree, Johnson engineered a 45-to-43 cloture vote so forces could save face and appear to have won something. Fortas then asked the President to withdraw the nomination.

Other than the Fortas nomination, the filibuster was never used to block any judicial nomination until 2003 and 2004, when Democrats decided to use the 60-vote cloture requirement to block 10 of President George W. Bush's nominations. This unprecedented action produced a threat by Republicans to change the Senate rules, to make it clear that only a majority vote is required to approve a Presidential nomination. There was a negotiation and eventually five of Bush's nominations were approved, five were blocked and the rules were not changed. Then, in 2011 and 2013, Republicans returned the favor—as often happens around here—by seeking to block 5 of President Obama's nominees for the circuit court by insisting on a 60-vote cloture for

each. Republicans alleged that President Obama was trying to pack the circuit court in the District of Columbia with three liberal judges.

To overcome Republican objections, Democrats invoked the so-called nuclear option. They broke the Senate rules to change the Senate rules. The new rule eliminated the possibility of 60-vote cloture motions for all Presidential nominees except for the Supreme Court.

That is where we stand today. There have been other examples of minority Senators filibustering nominations to death, all of them during the last three administrations and all involving sub-Cabinet nominations. Of course, there have been delays in considering nominations. My own nomination in 1991 as U.S. Education Secretary was delayed 51 days by Democratic Senators. Of course, I thought unnecessarily.

President Reagan's nomination of Ed Meese as Attorney General of the United States was delayed a year by a Democratic Senate. No one has ever disputed our right in the Senate, regardless of who is in charge, to use our constitutional duty of advice and consent to delay and examine and sometimes cause nominations to be withdrawn or even to defeat nominees by a majority vote.

As we approach a vote on Judge Gorsuch on the floor of the Senate, it is useful to remember that the tradition of the United States Senate, for 230 years, has been to treat legislative matters and nominations differently. Filibuster to death legislation, yes. Filibuster to death Presidential nominations? No. Should the Gorsuch nomination come to the floor soon, as I believe it will, overwhelming Senate tradition requires that whether to approve it should be decided by a majority vote of Senators, and there should be no attempt by the minority to filibuster the nomination to death.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I rise to join my voice with a growing chorus of citizens, as well as members of the scientific community and colleagues, who are deeply disturbed by this CRA to repeal vital wildlife protections from Federal land in Alaska.

Before I speak on this CRA, I would like to be clear that I am not someone who believes all regulations are good. In fact, I don't believe we should be trying to regulate our way out of all of our problems. I am proud of the work I have done, with people on both sides of the aisle, in an effort to make our government work smarter and more efficiently for the benefit of my constituents in New Jersey, as well as all Americans, but today I am profoundly disappointed.

Instead of working to create bipartisan policies that will serve all Americans, we are now considering a CRA resolution—unfortunately, one of many ones of this type—that prioritizes special interests above the good of the public, and it is deeply unpopular, in fact, with the public at large.

I oppose this CRA that would repeal the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's rule called the non-subsistence take of wildlife on national wildlife refuges in Alaska rule. The rule was finalized by the Fish and Wildlife Service in August of 2016, with the clear goal to forever ban unnecessary and extremely cruel methods of killing bears and wolves and other animals on more than 70 million acres of public land managed under our Federal National Wildlife Refuge System in Alaska.

Let's be clear. When it says the word ''take''—that it prevents the ''take'' of wildlife—that means the killing of wildlife. Specifically, the rule prevents inhumane killing of animals on our wildlife refuges.

Examples of the rule are: prohibits the killing of mother bears and their cubs. It prevents the killing of wolves and pups in their dens. It prohibits using planes to track and kill bears. It prohibits using snares to strangle and kill bears, steel traps to kill bears, and it prohibits baiting and killing of grizzly bears.

Why was this rule issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service in the first place? Our national wildlife refuges are public lands that exist for the benefit of all Americans. Refuge lands are managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service for the express purpose of conserving natural diversity in wildlife populations. This means that any management activity that favors certain species over others is inconsistent with the goals of the National Wildlife Refuge.

It doesn't mean that hunting is not allowed on Federal land. Hunting is one of many permitted practices on wildlife refuges, and this rule does not prevent hunting on any wildlife refuge. What is permitted on refuges under this law is the indiscriminate killing of bears and wolves in an attempt to boost populations of moose and caribou.

Unfortunately, this is exactly how Alaska has been managing its wildlife since 1994 on State and private lands, when it adopted an intensive management strategy for its wildlife that is specifically designed to artificially reduce populations of predators so hunters might have more prey, more animals to kill.

In Alaska, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the State work together to manage wildlife within the National Wildlife Refuge System. However, when any State's wildlife management approach is in direct conflict with the goals of the refuge system, the Federal Government has the authority—indeed the obligation—to step in and ban certain practices. This is exactly what the Fish and Wildlife did last year when they issued their rule prohibiting this inhumane killing method on 16 Federal national wildlife refuges in Alaska.

It is important to note that the predator control practices I have described, some of which are currently allowed on certain State and private lands in Alaska, have never been allowed on national wildlife refuges in Alaska. This rule simply clarifies that these practices—even those explicitly authorized under State regulations in Alaska—are never to be used on Federal wildlife lands in Alaska, regardless of what is decided to be allowed under this State law.

I have heard concerns from my colleagues in Alaska that they believe the Fish and Wildlife Service rule triggers a State sovereignty issue by dictating which practices can and cannot be used on Federal refuge lands in Alaska. However, I don't believe this rule conflicts with any of Alaska's State sovereignty. The Fish and Wildlife Service has clear statutory and constitutional authority to prohibit wildlife management practices that are incompatible with the objectives of national wildlife refuges in Alaska, as well as other States, including New Jersey.

I have also heard the concerns of my Alaska colleagues that this rule threatens the many Alaskans who rely on subsistence, hunting of deer, moose, and caribou, to feed themselves and their families. I have sympathy for that concern and believe again that this subsistence hunting is not affected.

We know these predator control practices have never been done on Alaskan refuges before. This argument makes no sense. It is not affecting the subsistence hunting of deer and moose and caribou for them to feed their families. It has never been allowed to go on in the first place. How can these practices be necessary to preserve subsistence hunting when they have never been done before on Federal wildlife refuges? I want to be clear about something. Alaska is free to manage its wildlife on State lands and private lands however Alaska chooses. This point is not up for debate, not up for discussion. It is not the subject of the Fish and Wildlife Services rule in question. The rule only applies to federally owned and federally managed wildlife refuge land, which must be managed for the benefit of the American public, including the requirement to manage for national diversity of wildlife.

As former Fish and Wildlife Director Dan Ashe announced in a press release in August, ''Whenever possible, we prefer to defer to the State of Alaska on regulation of general hunting and trapping of wildlife on national wildlife refuges unless by doing so we are out of compliance with Federal law and policy. This regulation ensures that we comply with our mandates and obligations.''

Let's move beyond talk of mandates and obligations. The hunting practices banned by this rule are flatout inhumane. They are an anathema to the type of thoughtful, humane wildlife management that should be taking place on national wildlife refuges.

In a committee hearing, I asked management experts about this rule last

week, and they agree that these practices were not necessary on wildlife refuges. In fact, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Acting Director Jim Kurth—who was the former manager for many years of the Arctic Wildlife Refuge in Northern Alaska—testified that the service did not find that the practice prohibited by this rule was in any way necessary.

Another witness, Brian Nesvik, Chief Game Warden with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department—again, a Republican-invited witness—testified that Wyoming has a different perspective on utilizing national wildlife refuges in their State. The practices discussed in this rule, he said, are not used in Wyoming's wildlife refuges, nor did he make an appeal to use these inhumane practices because they are not necessary. Killing a mother bear or mother wolf when she has young cubs virtually guarantees that those cubs will not survive, creating the potential for much broader negative impacts on the overall population.

The baiting of grizzly bears, which involves putting piles of food out to attract bears in unusually high numbers at the start of hunting season, is literally akin to shooting fish in a barrel. Bear baiting often occurs when bears are desperately searching for those extra calories to store energy for hibernation. It is an inhumane practice and is recognized so by many experts.

The use of aircraft hunting—using a plane to track wild animals and then landing to kill them—violates the principle of fair chase in every sense of the word. In fact, killing wolves from aircraft or on the same day that air travel occurred was already prohibited on refuge lands prior to this new rule being issued. The new rule merely extends that same protection to bears.

Finally, the use of snares—these are these choking traps—and steel traps to kill the bear is a practice that is particularly troubling, and I am not alone. A statewide poll of Alaskans themselves shows that nearly 60 percent of Alaskans oppose trapping and snaring bears in their State.

Charles Darwin called the leghold trap one of the cruelest devices ever invented by man, stating:

> Few men could endure to watch for five minutes an animal struggling in a trap with a torn limb.
>
> Some who reflect upon this subject for the first time will wonder how such cruelty can have been permitted to continue in these days of civilisation.

That was Charles Darwin decades and decades ago in 1863. I echo that again today, more than 150 years later. Such cruelty should not be permitted on Federal wildlife refuges of all places, and the Fish and Wildlife Service was absolutely right to permanently protect bears from such cruelty on Alaska's wildlife refuges.

I would like to take a few more moments to talk about the animals that are subject to this rule. Grizzly bears and wolves are the top predators in North America. Predators in any ecosystem play a critical role in maintaining populations and in preventing problems like we have actually seen in New Jersey by the overgrazing and disease that can occur when deer, moose, and caribou grow in high numbers.

These charismatic animals also attract huge numbers of tourists to national parks, refuges, and other wild lands in the United States. All across the country, nearly 72 million Americans spend over $50 billion on wildlife watching.

In Alaska, wildlife watchers outnumber hunters by nearly five to one, and they also contribute more than four times as much money to the State's economy as hunting does. Put another way, even considering the issue from an economic perspective, these animals are worth far more alive than they are dead, killed by these savage inhumane practices.

There are few values as deeply entrenched in the American culture as conservation. This legacy is our American heritage, and the coexistence of people, wildlife, and wild lands remains a key objective for our public lands today.

Americans interact with nature in many different ways on public lands, some through consumption uses, like hunting and fishing, and others through more hands-off activities, like camping and wildlife watching. No single use is more important and more valuable than another. So public lands should be managed in a way that minimizes conflict across those different uses while allowing for natural diversity.

The Fish and Wildlife Service rule does just that. Our wildlife refuges are not game parks, and they should not be managed as though they are.

The cruel practices this rule prohibits—killing mother animals and their babies and the trapping, snaring, baiting, and aerial hunting of bears—are practices that I believe do not align with who we are as a country. They are practices that have no place on our national wildlife refuges in Alaska or any other State.

I want to close with something that my friend Senator HEINRICH already mentioned. Many people know that Teddy Roosevelt was an avid hunter, a naturalist, a wildlife enthusiast. When he was President, Roosevelt went on a bear hunting trip in Mississippi. Roosevelt's hunting party cornered a Louisiana black bear. They tied it to a willow tree and suggested the President shoot it.

Viewing this as an extremely unsportsmanlike way to kill a bear, Roosevelt refused to do it. A political cartoonist heard the story and drew a cartoon that celebrated President Roosevelt's decision. A Brooklyn candy shop owner saw the cartoon and decided to create a stuffed toy bear and dedicated it to the President, who refused to engage in this kind of inhumane hunting of a bear. He called it a ''Teddy bear'' or ''Teddy's bear,'' and little children for generations have been loving them ever since.

Teddy Roosevelt knew that using certain methods to kill animals was immoral and wrong. We know this too.

With all of the issues going on right now—from healthcare to tax and all of the issues and urgencies, such as infrastructure—why are we about to consider a CRA that would literally, on our Federal lands, allow the cruelest types of killing to go on of bears and wolves and their pups in dens.

Why, with all that is going on, would we, as Americans, violate our culture and history by allowing the most inhumane, cruel killing practices to go on? Why, with all that we have to do, are we going to allow this to happen?

Well, I will not support it, and I stand against it. Our national wildlife refuges—our refuges for wildlife—have never allowed these cruel practices, and we should not start now.

We should not CRA this rule. I stand strong and firm in honor of our traditions and stand against this CRA.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

NOMINATION OF NEIL GORSUCH

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, today I rise to speak in support of the President's Supreme Court nominee, Judge Neil Gorsuch, who, right now, is about two-thirds through his second day of hearings—better described perhaps as a grilling.

Simply put, I think the President made an extraordinary selection. Currently, Judge Gorsuch serves on the Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, which includes my home State of Kansas.

Our State has seen firsthand how Judge Gorsuch interprets the law. He has had an outstanding judicial record while serving on the court. What is more, he is highly respected and supported by individuals in the judicial community who align on all sides of the political spectrum—except, inexplicably, the U.S. Senate.

Judge Gorsuch's qualifications are not only noteworthy but extremely impressive. He graduated from Columbia University and Harvard Law School. He received a doctorate in legal philosophy from Oxford, as a recipient of the Marshall Scholarship, one of the most prestigious scholars programs in the country. He has litigation experience from his time as a law partner, and he has clerked for not one but two Supreme Court Justices.

Examining his record during his time on the Tenth Circuit gives us some insight into the judge's approach to interpreting the law. When we read his opinions, we know he is a judge who follows the law, applying the text of the Constitution and statutes impartially. Of primordial importance to this body is his critique of the executive branch's tendency to assume the roles of the judicial and legislative branches.

No matter which political party controls the executive branch, this body—the Senate of the United States—must protect its ability to legislate and create laws. The Founding Fathers intended for the separation of powers to remain inviolate.

Judge Gorsuch understands the role of the judicial branch and the significance of maintaining that balance of power. He has made it absolutely clear that he will not legislate from the bench. I repeat. He has made it clear that he will not legislate from the bench. That might just be the problem for those who would like to vote for a judge who would legislate from the bench.

I, along with many of my colleagues here in the Senate today, confirmed Judge Gorsuch over 10 years ago. Judge Gorsuch's record was so noncontroversial, the Senate unanimously supported his nomination. That includes the minority leader, Senator SCHUMER, and then-Senators Obama, Clinton, and Biden.

I repeat. Judge Gorsuch has received support from across the entire political spectrum. His judicial record over the past 10 years has made him even more deserving of the Senate's full support.

The American people went to the polls in November, knowing the next President would have the distinct honor of nominating the next Supreme Court Justice. The American people have spoken. As the Senate, it is now our responsibility to see through this nomination and appoint the judge to the High Court.

The Wall Street Journal summed up what is happening within its editorial page today in pointing out that Senators want Judge Gorsuch to declare how he would vote in specific areas of the law—questions that every Supreme Court nominee declines to answer. Quoting from the editorial: ''At the 1967 hearings for Thurgood Marshall, then-Senator Edward Kennedy called it a sound legal precedent that any nominee for the Supreme Court would have to defer any comments on any matters which are either before the court or very likely to appear before the court.'' The Journal's editorial went on to say that in the 1993 confirmation hearings, Judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg emphasized: ''A judge sworn to decide impartially can offer no forecast, no hints; for that would show not only disregard for the specifics of the particular case, it would also display disdain for the entire judicial process.''

I regret to say that profound advice apparently does not apply today.

One of my colleagues serving on the Judiciary Committee pretty well summed up the dilemma we have in the Senate when he said to the judge: ''If you fail to be explicit and forthcoming, the committee would have to assume his views were in line with Mr. Trump's.''

And there is the rub. Judge Gorsuch has written 789 opinions, with only 15 dissents from other judges. The apparent burr in the minority's saddle—the Democrats' saddle—has nothing to do with Judge Gorsuch or his qualifications. The problem is that Mr. Trump is now President Trump.

My question is this. All right, we know you feel that way. In every committee hearing that we have, we know you feel that way. When will this end? When will we get back to what is referred to as regular order? That question lies squarely with my colleagues in the minority.

I am really disheartened to hear the rhetoric coming from across the aisle in the days since the new President took office. The minority has taken extraordinary lengths to extend the confirmation process of the President's nominees—from shying away from our constitutional responsibilities and not voting on nominees in committee hearings to using unprecedented amounts of time to speak on this floor, disapproving of the President and his nominees, or anything else. These stall tactics are unbefitting of the world's greatest deliberative body. We have fallen from bipartisan deliberation, worthy of public opinion and support, to engaging with poisonous arrows of political procrastination.

With the nomination of Judge Gorsuch, we now have an opportunity to fix this sorry state of affairs. This is the opportunity we should seize to restore comity to the Senate. The people of this great Nation deserve nothing else.

I am hopeful that the minority will recognize the superlative qualities Judge Neil Gorsuch possesses and provide him with a fair and swift confirmation process.

That is not happening as of today. But hope springs eternal, even within the Senate as it now exists.

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. UDALL. 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. UDALL. Mr. President, we are here to consider another joint resolution of disapproval under the Congressional Review Act. This one, H.J. Res. 69, repeals the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's regulation and would allow extreme and inhumane hunting practices on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska.

My first concern about this measure is that it is a distraction. It benefits special interests to the detriment of the American people at a time when Congress should be focused on much more pressing issues.

Mr. President, 24 million Americans are at risk of losing their healthcare. Clean air and clean water protections are threatened. The President is proposing to cut Meals on Wheels, Head Start, the arts and humanities, and the National Institutes of Health. Each day we learn more details about the President and his team's connections to Russia and about Russia's involvement in our elections.

The American people want Congress to work together to rebuild our Nation's infrastructure and boost our economy. Instead, Congress is wasting time and energy using the Congressional Review Act to repeal commonsense rules that protect people, places, and iconic species. These rules have been vetted over months and years through a thorough public process, but if we repeal them using the CRA, these measures will be permanently blocked unless Congress passes a new law directing the government to act.

My second concern is just as serious. I support responsible hunting practices. Many New Mexicans hunt for sport and for food, but the vast majority of hunters also recognize that some practices are counterproductive, unsportsmanlike, cruel, and they can even wipe out species and the diversity of wildlife in certain regions. The Fish and Wildlife's rule deals with that issue, and it carries Congress's express direction that the Service protect natural diversity at national wildlife refuges in Alaska.

We are talking about national wildlife refuges. These are the country's refuges. The Service bars a few extreme practices for hunting bears, wolves, and coyotes that are totally inappropriate on national wildlife refuge land. These extreme practices include targeting and killing black bears and brown bears and their cubs, and wolves and coyotes and their pups during denning season; baiting Grizzly bears with food so they are easier to kill at point-blank range; trapping brown and black bears with steel-jawed traps that shut on the animal's leg, leaving them to suffer indefinitely; and shooting bears from aircraft or killing them same-day from spotting them with aircraft. Many of these practices violate ''fair chase'' ethical standards established and used by sportsmen across the country. Alaska voters actually oppose these practices.

We are not talking about private hunting land. This is Federal refuge land. Fish and Wildlife's rule is based on sound science and appropriate wildlife management standards. The rule doesn't change or restrict the taking of fish or wildlife for subsistence purposes, which some Alaskans count on to feed their families, and it doesn't restrict sport hunting. Fish and Wildlife's rule is not an anti-hunting rule. It is a commonsense guideline that ensures bear and wolf populations, as well as caribou, elk, and moose, are sustained for generations to come.

Let me reiterate that. Like the vast majority of New Mexicans, I support hunting and sportsmen's access to public lands consistent with State and Federal law and sound wildlife management practices. Fish and Wildlife's rule

doesn't affect these uses at all in any way. Fish and Wildlife's rule carries out Congress's intent in three longstanding pieces of legislation that are now law: the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, or ANILCA; the 1966 National Wildlife Administration Act; and the 1964 Wilderness Act. Importantly, none of these laws prevents reasonable hunting. Together, those acts establish national wildlife refuges and provide for their management, and they establish the 76 million acres of national refuges in Alaska. Alaska accounts for over 85 percent of our National Wildlife Refuge System, so this is not a State or parochial issue. The rule governs the vast majority of refuge lands designated for protection by Congress.

Again, none of these laws prevents reasonable hunting on national refuges. National wildlife refuges are established for the benefit of ''present and future generations of Americans'' and for the whole nation. Every American has an ownership stake in and a right to enjoy public lands and the astounding scenic, cultural, and natural qualities that make these places so special.

The first listed purpose of ANILCA is to ''conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity.'' The words ''natural diversity'' are important to this discussion. My uncle, Congressman Mo Udall, was the floor manager for the House when ANILCA passed in 1980. On the House floor, he said the term natural diversity meant ''protecting and managing all fish and wildlife populations within a particular wildlife refuge system unit in the natural 'mix,' not to emphasize management activities favoring one species to the detriment of another.''

He also said that in managing for natural diversity, Congress's intent was to ''direct the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the best of its ability . . . to manage wildlife refuges to assure that habitat diversity is maintained through natural means, avoiding artificial developments and habitat manipulation programs; to assure that wildlife refuge management fully considers the fact that humans reside permanently within the boundaries of some areas and are dependent . . . on wildlife refuge subsistence resources; and to allow management flexibility in developing new and innovative management programs different from the lower 48 standards, but in the context of maintaining natural diversity of fish and wildlife populations and their dependent habitats for the long-term benefit of all citizens.''

Fish and Wildlife's rule carries out congressional intent by managing the national refuges in Alaska for natural diversity through natural, not artificial means, by continuing to allow for subsistence hunting, and by managing the law for the benefit of all—exactly what Representative Mo Udall said the act was intended to accomplish.

Maintaining natural diversity means promoting the health of all fish, wildlife, and plants in the ecosystem, not favoring certain species and harming others, and not interfering with natural ecosystems. Protecting bears and wolves and other apex predators is essential. It helps maintain predator-prey relationships and the health of Alaska's Arctic and sub-Arctic ecosystems.

Federal and State laws overlay management of public lands, including national wildlife refuges. State law on fish and wildlife management applies on national refuge land as long as it is consistent with Federal law. The Fish and Wildlife Service in the State of Alaska worked together for years to manage fish and wildlife on Alaskan refuges, and Federal requirements ensured that hunting was balanced with conservation of wildlife and their habitat.

Alaska law did not conflict with Federal law until an Alaskan administrative agency, the Alaska Board of Game, adopted rules allowing for extreme hunting practices on national wildlife refuges within Alaska's borders. The Board of Game said it targeted reduction of wolf, black bear, and brown bear to increase the moose, caribou, and deer populations for harvesting. But the indiscriminate killing of bears and wolves to provide more game hunting is contrary to ANILCA. That law directs the preservation of the ''natural diversity'' or ''natural mix'' of wildlife. The Board of Game regulation allowing extreme hunting practices is not consistent with the law.

As I said earlier, while the Fish and Wildlife's rule does not allow extreme hunting practices, it does not change the rules for subsistence hunting or sports hunting. It even authorizes a process for predator control to benefit prey species and to meet refuge purposes. The process is based on sound science, an evaluation of alternatives, and an assessment of impacts to subsistence uses and needs. Again, Alaskans don't support overturning the Service's rule to allow indiscriminate killing of apex predators. A February 2016 Remington poll found that Alaska voters oppose the extreme hunting practices banned under the Fish and Wildlife's rule by wide margins. Alaska voters don't want to see unsporting and cruel practices used to kill bears, wolves, and coyotes on National Wildlife Refuges in their State.

Wildlife watching is an important part of Alaska's economy. Each year, thousands of tourists visit Alaska's national wildlife refuges to see iconic wildlife. According to a Fish and Wildlife report, wildlife watching on the National Wildlife Refuge System contributed over $2 billion to Alaska's economy in 2011. That same year, hunting contributed approximately $425 million.

Congress's repeated use of the Congressional Review Act with no public hearing, no record or evidence, no use of science, and no stakeholder involvement is a bad way to legislate. It makes government opaque and inaccessible, and what people want to see is transparency and openness, which we didn't have here. It caters to special interests behind the scenes and outside of public view. It makes the swamp murkier than ever.

Fish and Wildlife's rule carries out what Congress wanted when it established the wildlife refuges—to conserve our wild American land and wildlife for generations to come. The rule prohibits the most extreme of hunting practices—against grizzlies and black bears and their cubs and against wolves and coyotes and their pups—and protects the natural diversity. We should not rush to undermine this important, national, long-term goal for short-term political gain—to benefit select special interests.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

HONORING DEPUTY SHAWN ANDERSON

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, this weekend, the city of Baton Rouge was reminded of how precious life is and of the harsh reality of law enforcement officers putting their lives on the line to protect us.

On Saturday, March 18, 2017, this past Saturday, East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Deputy Shawn Anderson made the ultimate sacrifice while he and a fellow officer were conducting a rape investigation in Baton Rouge.

We honor Deputy Anderson's life and recognize him for his 18 years of faithful service to East Baton Rouge Parish, the State of Louisiana, and our Nation for his service and his having been enlisted in the U.S. Army.

Deputy Anderson embodied public service—taking action to help those in need. Deputy Anderson repeatedly put his life on the line to protect the lives of others. He spent 12 years as a member of the SWAT team and was recognized in 2014 for serving more than 60 high-risk warrants in the previous year with there having been no injuries or shots fired.

Last year, Deputy Anderson added midwifery to his job description after having delivered a child. With baby on the way and the hospital out of reach, a Prairieville, LA, couple turned to Deputy Anderson for help. In stopping before the hospital, with baby emerging, Anderson successfully delivered a healthy child before turning over the situation to arriving EMTs. A Louisiana family asked for his help, and Deputy Anderson answered the call.

This is the latest in a string of law enforcement tragedies to inflict our State. Since January 2016, Louisiana has lost 11 officers and one K–9 in the line of duty. I will read their names:

Here you see Deputy Anderson. Here we have Police Officer Michael Louviere, of the Westwego Police Department, aged 26; Police Officer Jude Williams Lewis, of the New Orleans Police Department, aged 46; Police Officer Shannon Matthew Brown, of the Fenton Police Department, aged 40; Deputy Sheriff Bradford Allen Garafola,

Sr., of the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office, aged 45; Police Officer Matthew Lane Gerald, of the Baton Rouge Police Department, aged 41; Corporal Montrell Lyle Jackson, of the Baton Rouge Police Department, aged 32; Sergeant David Kyle Elahi, of the Sterlington Police Department, aged 28; Deputy Sheriff David Francis Michel, Jr., of the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office, aged 50; Police Officer Natasha Maria Hunter, of the New Orleans Police Department, aged 32; Sergeant Derrick Morial Mingo, of the Winnsboro Police Department, aged 35; and K–9 Duke, of the Winnsboro Police Department.

Mr. President, thousands of men and women in law enforcement put on the uniform, step into the community, and risk their lives daily to keep us safe. Far too often, the price of this safety falls on these officers and their families. Deputy Anderson represents the best of law enforcement. He and his family deserve our admiration and support. His sacrifice will be remembered. The prayers of a grateful State and Nation are with his wife Rebecca, his daughter Delaney, and his son Breland.

I yield to my colleague, Senator KENNEDY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, if I make it to Heaven—and I hope I do—the first question I am going to ask God is why bad things happen to good people. We have had some bad things happen in Louisiana to some really good people, as my colleague from Louisiana just referred to.

This past weekend, while most of us slept, Louisiana lost yet another officer in the line of duty. East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office Sergeant Shawn Anderson—as shown in this photograph here—was a law enforcement veteran. He was a military veteran, and he was a father. He served high-risk warrants. He had been recognized for doing his job without having resorted to firing his weapon. In short, he was an American hero, and he was a Louisiana hero.

On Saturday night, Sergeant Anderson was just doing his job. He went into a barbershop in search of a suspected rapist. Sergeant Anderson lost his life. A line of law enforcement vehicles escorted his body from the scene, and their flashing blue lights lit up the dark night.

It has been a tough few months for our law enforcement families in Louisiana. We have buried six officers who were shot and killed simply because they were wearing a badge.

In January, Westwego Police Officer Michael Louviere stopped to help at a traffic accident, and he was shot in the back of the head. Michael was not even on duty. He was driving home and saw an accident and immediately stopped his car to help. That is the kind of person he was.

The Presiding Officer and all of those listening to me today, no doubt, saw the news footage as to what unfolded along a busy Baton Rouge highway last summer. July will no longer be just about hot dogs and fireworks for us in Louisiana. The shootings that took the lives of three law enforcement officers shattered our summer and broke our hearts.

Just a month earlier, Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Deputy David Michel was shot three times in the back—not once, not twice, but three times—and he died in Harvey. His killer, apparently, shot him because the killer did not want to return to jail.

I would ask all of those who wish to, to join me in saying a prayer for these law enforcement officers and their families. They were sons and they were fathers and they are going to miss out on holidays and birthdays and graduations. They were men who sacrificed their lives so we could sleep a little bit better at night.

Let us also, while we are praying for these brave men—and, yes, women too—pray for an end to the violence. We have had enough flashing blue lights light up the dark nights in Louisiana.

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. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 6 p.m. today, there be 10 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form, remaining on H.J. Res. 69; further, that following the use or yielding back of that time, the resolution be read a third time and the Senate vote on the resolution with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. 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. BROWN. 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. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, the five Great Lakes are as vital to our industrial heartlands as the Rockies are to the West or the Atlantic coastline is to New England. Eighty-four percent of America's freshwater is in the Great Lakes—84 percent. Around the globe, only polar ice caps contain more freshwater than do these five Great Lakes.

Lake Erie is one of the biggest lakes in the world. From the boats and barges that moved goods along the Ohio River and the Erie Canal to the ships that leave Lake Erie and export grain and steel to the world, my State of Ohio has a rich history of cultivating this vital natural resource. In Ohio, families and businesses rely on Lake Erie. Its waters are critical to farming and to clean energy development and industry and regional economic competitiveness, to fishing and recreation and so much that people do every day in my State.

From tourism in Catawba and Put-in-Bay, to fishing at Marblehead, to vacations and family reunions at Maumee Bay State Park, Lake Erie benefits our communities and creates jobs in our State, but for more than a half century, keeping our lake healthy has been a constant struggle. Lake Erie is the shallowest of the Great Lakes. In the Western Basin off the shore of Toledo, it is only 30 feet deep—much shallower in contrast with Lake Superior, which is 600 feet deep on average.

I remember how polluted Lake Erie was when I was growing up. As a child, it was obvious the water shouldn't look quite the way it looked. While improvements have been made, today's problems are different and in many ways more urgent.

Harmful algal blooms are a constant threat. Because the Western Lake Erie Basin near Toledo is the shallowest part of the lake, it is uniquely vulnerable to these blooms, the same way that much of Lake Erie, 60 or 70 or 80 feet deep, is more vulnerable to pollution.

In August 2014, a bloom left 500,000 Ohioans in Lucas County in Northwest Ohio, in the Toledo area, without safe drinking water for nearly 3 days. We know these blooms are caused by excess nutrients in our water. This comes from untreated sewage, it comes from urban runoff, and it comes from farm field runoff. Heavy rains lead to more combined sewage overflows, more nutrient runoff from our fields, and to larger and more harmful algal blooms.

Algal blooms leave our lake looking like this. This may be a beautiful painting in your living room or a striking photograph of something, but this color here is more the regular, natural color of Lake Erie, the dark here in the wake of this boat. This green is the algal blooms, and you can see what this has done to pollute one of the greatest bodies of freshwater in the world. Would you want to fish there? Likely not. Would you take your children out on water that looks like this? Of course not. Does this water look like what you want coming out of your faucet when you turn on the faucet in Toledo or in Lorain, where I lived for 10 years, or in Sandusky or Cleveland or Ashtabula or any city along the Great Lakes?

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, we

know that one effect of climate change in the Great Lakes region has been a 37-percent increase in gully washers, or heavy rain events that contribute to blooms. Hotter summers will only make these blooms worse. The effects of algal blooms like that have profound effects on the entire ecosystem.

Protecting our lake is one of the biggest environmental challenges our country faces. We have made progress over the last 8 years, thanks in large part to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. We have continued to clean up Lake Erie and its tributaries, we have increased access to the lake, and we have improved habitats for fish and wildlife in the region.

Because it is shallow, this Great Lake, Lake Erie, only one of five Great Lakes and the Great Lake with actually the least water—almost 50 percent of all the fish in the Great Lakes live in this Great Lake. So you can see what these algal blooms do to aquatic life, to our way of life when you have these kinds of algal blooms.

We know that the bipartisan Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is working. As we celebrate Water Week this week, we should recommit ourselves to strengthening this program and building on our success. But in President Trump's budget proposal this week, the administration proposed entirely eliminating this important program that has been so successful—entirely eliminating this program that has been so successful. It is basically a surrender to the algal blooms. It is the administration—our country, if he speaks for our country—surrendering and just saying: Give up; we are not going to make the fight.

We have cleaned up Lake Erie because of the Federal EPA, because of the State EPA, because of the cities and the counties along the lake, places like Toledo, Lorain, Sandusky, Cleveland, and my wife's hometown of Ashtabula. We have cleaned it up, but it is a constant struggle because so many people live along this very shallow, very vulnerable to pollution Great Lake. That is why we don't give up.

We are not just talking about cutting funding for a program; the administration budget completely cuts this program, completely ends it. Taking an axe to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative will cost Ohio jobs, jeopardize public health, and will put our drinking water at risk and reverse the progress we have made. It is simply something you don't do in a country like ours. It is unacceptable. I will fight like hell to protect the Great Lakes, I will fight like hell to protect Lake Erie, and I will fight like hell to protect the entire lake ecosystem.

The fact is, these five Great Lakes are a natural resource like none other in the world. Here is what is at risk if the administration's budget plan becomes a reality: Forty percent of the funds used to protect the lake from Asian carp would just disappear like that; 1.8 million more pounds of phosphorus would enter the Lake, making algal blooms like this more likely, just like that; and the cleanup of toxic sediment in habitat restorations in some of our most polluted rivers would grind to a halt. Why would they do this? Why would they eliminate this program? Neither party here wants them to do this. Senator PORTMAN stands with me on this. Most of the Republican House Members stand with Democrats like Congresswoman FUDGE and Congresswoman KAPTUR, who represent much of the area along the Great Lakes.

There are projects across Ohio that simply couldn't take place without this program. In Ashtabula, a cleanup project has removed sediment containing 25,000 pounds of toxic material, transforming the lower two-thirds of the Ashtabula River. A $61 million project never would have gotten off the ground without the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Look at the new Lake Erie Bluffs Park in Perry Township—they used $1.6 million from the initiative to leverage other sources of funding to restore and protect this shoreline.

My Ohio colleagues of both parties have made it clear that zeroing out the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is not an option and that they will not stand for it.

It isn't just this initiative on the chopping block; the budget makes deep cuts in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which monitors these algal blooms. Scientists at Ohio State's Stone Lab play a key role in protecting our lake, and the reported NOAA cuts would nearly eliminate the grant funding that supports Stone Lab's mission. I have been at Stone Lab. I see the work they do. I see the dedicated dozen or so naturalists, not well-paid—Federal employees or State employees not particularly well paid. They love nature, they love Lake Erie, they love our State, they love its natural beauty, and they love all that it does for us.

When I was young, people wrote off Lake Erie as a dying lake. It was polluted, it smelled bad, and it looked bad. It was a dying lake. Over the past century, people have had a habit of trying to write off my State. We have proved them wrong time and again. The lake is improving. It is supporting entire industries. It supports jobs. It provides drinking water. It provides recreation. It is beautiful to look at from my home in Lorain when I lived there. It is beautiful to look at anywhere along the coastline of Lake Erie. We cannot allow this President and we cannot allow Washington, DC, to write off Lake Erie and the millions of Americans who rely on it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 10 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form.

If no one yields time, time will be charged equally to both sides.

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I will close on the issue of the CRA before us today.

This CRA will turn back the clock on the management of native wildlife on our Nation's wildlife refuges. Methods of take, like shooting mother grizzlies with cubs, aerial gunning of wolves, killing wolf pups in their dens—these are not 21st-century tools for wildlife management. They are relics of the 19th century, before we truly understood the importance of predators to healthy ecosystems and populations. These practices have no place on our Nation's Federal wildlife refuges.

This rule, frankly, doesn't stand up for subsistence hunters or hunters at all; it simply reinforces the politically driven and unscientific turn that the Alaska Board of Game has taken under Governors like Sarah Palin. This isn't about hunting; it is about dogma and dogma driving policy.

I urge all of my colleagues tonight to vote for fair chase hunting, to vote for native wildlife, and to vote for our national wildlife refuges. To do that, I ask you to vote against this measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, in spite of what my good friend from New Mexico has been saying about this resolution, I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of the resolution.

I came down here predicting that he was going to come down with a parade of horribles, none of which have happened in Alaska—that is a fact—none of which happened in Alaska.

The resolution we have before us is backed by the force of law. The Fish and Wildlife Service did not have the authority to do what they did by passing this regulation, and not one of my colleagues tried to defend this on the basis of legal authority by the Feds because it doesn't exist. So I think that is the starting point.

The principle of federalism. We have had a lot of discussion here by colleagues from New Jersey and New Mexico telling Alaskans, who have a tremendous record on the management of fish and game—they are going to tell Alaskans how to do that, Senators from States that don't know anything about my State. That is the whole principle of federalism, and that is another reason we need to support this resolution.

This rule is about subsistence. Thousands of Alaskans, particularly Alaskan Natives, rely on subsistence. Again, my colleagues on the other side come down here and say that it is not about subsistence. Come up to Alaska. Ask the people who have to live off the land, who need the food to survive in the winter. Tell them it is not about subsistence.

Finally, it is important to recognize just how many other Americans care about what we are doing right now. As I mentioned, literally millions of Americans from every State of the country, represented by groups as diverse as Ducks Unlimited, Boone and

Crockett, and the National Rifle Association, are all supportive of this resolution, as are every Fish and Wildlife Service State agency, including from New Mexico, including from New Jersey. They are all supportive of our resolution.

To have our colleagues come down here and say ''Those Alaskans don't know what they are doing'' when we have the record of well-managed fish and game, awards every year from the Department of the Interior and others—to have them come down here with very little knowledge of my State is not the humility that I think is needed in this body.

So I ask all my colleagues to vote in favor of this resolution. It is backed by law. It is backed by millions of Americans in every State. It is very important to the people of Alaska, particularly those who live a subsistence lifestyle.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I yield back the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority time is yielded back.

All time is yielded back.

The joint resolution was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 92 Leg.]

YEAS—52

Alexander	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cassidy	Hoeven	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Scott
Collins	Johnson	Shelby
Corker	Kennedy	Strange
Cornyn	King	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Young
Ernst	Murkowski	
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—47

Baldwin	Coons	Hassan
Bennet	Cortez Masto	Heinrich
Blumenthal	Donnelly	Heitkamp
Booker	Duckworth	Hirono
Brown	Durbin	Kaine
Cantwell	Feinstein	Klobuchar
Cardin	Franken	Leahy
Carper	Gillibrand	Manchin
Casey	Harris	Markey
McCaskill	Reed	Udall
Menendez	Sanders	Van Hollen
Merkley	Schatz	Warner
Murphy	Schumer	Warren
Murray	Shaheen	Whitehouse
Nelson	Stabenow	Wyden
Peters	Tester	

NOT VOTING—1

Isakson

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 69) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SULLIVAN. 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.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTION

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to mention that I am very gratified by my colleagues—by the way, on both sides of the aisle. It was a bipartisan vote. H.J. Res. 69, as the Presiding Officer just mentioned, has passed the Senate and will soon be going to the White House for a signature by President Trump. That is a resolution—now a law—that will be heading to the White House. It is not just important for Alaska, but, as the Presiding Officer and I were talking about, for any American who believes in federalism, State control over our land, and the Tenth Amendment. That is what was at stake.

For my State a lot more was at stake—subsistence rights, the ability to continue to hunt in the ways that we have been doing for generations in Alaska. So I just want to thank all the Alaskans—hundreds—including the State of Alaska Board of Game, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, our Governor and his attorney general, who filed suit against the Federal Government over this issue. Obviously, it is all going to be resolved right now, right here, because of this vote.

I want to thank all the Alaskans who played such an important role, the groups that I talked about in my remarks outside of Alaska that represent millions of Americans—the conservationists, the people who love the outdoors, and hunters who also weighed in and in a very powerful way to make sure that this resolution passed. So I want to thank them all.

ELECTION IN ECUADOR

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, article 2 of chapter I of the Charter of the Organization of American States, of which Ecuador is a party, states that one of the OAS's purposes is ''to promote and consolidate representative democracy, with due respect for the principle of nonintervention.''

I mention this because the second round of Ecuador's Presidential election is scheduled for April 2, less than 2 weeks away. In the first round, Lenin Moreno, who is supported by outgoing President Correa, received 39 percent and his opponent, Guillermo Lasso, received 28 percent, so it is a hotly contested election.

But democracy is about more than elections. There is no institution more fundamental to democracy than a free and independent press. A free press helps protect the rule of law, to ensure that no person or group is above the rules and procedures that govern a democratic society. A free press helps ensure transparency to prod governments to be honest and accountable to their citizens.

Although wavering at times, Ecuador has a history of democratic government of which its citizens can be proud. It has a long tradition of recognizing the importance of freedom of the press. Ecuador's first constitution, written in 1830, stipulated that ''every citizen can express their thoughts and publish them freely through the press.'' Ecuador's 1998 constitution guaranteed the right of journalists and social communicators to ''seek, receive, learn, and disseminate'' events of general interest, with the goal of ''preserving the values of the community.'' Even Ecuador's current constitution protects the right ''to voice one's opinion and express one's thinking freely and in all of its forms and manifestations,'' and the right to ''associate, assemble and express oneself freely and voluntarily.''

Yet, since President Correa was first elected, freedom of the press has been under assault. He has called the independent press his ''greatest enemy.'' He sought to intimidate and silence his critics in the media and civil society, like Janet Hinostroza, El Universo, Vanguardia, El Comercio, Xavier Bonilla, and Fundamedios. He publicly vilified Dr. Catalina Botero, a respected Colombian lawyer and former OAS Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression. He pursued criminal charges against columnists and newspaper owners who had criticized his policies. During this period, the number of state-owned media organizations exploded, growing from just one government-run news outlet to a media conglomerate that today is made up of more than a dozen outlets echoing the government's self-serving declarations. These actions are a threat to democracy, and they damaged relations with the United States.

On April 2, when the people of Ecuador elect their next President, they alone will decide Ecuador's future. What is important at this stage is to ensure that the electoral process is free and fair, that the press can participate freely, and that the election is open to international observers, including the OAS.

Whoever wins on April 2, I hope Ecuador's next President is someone who genuinely believes in the freedoms of

expression and association that are enshrined in Ecuador's Constitution. I hope he defends the right of a free press, an independent judiciary, and the right of civil society organizations to function without government interference. These rights are part of the foundation of the representative democracy referenced in the OAS Charter. The alternative is unaccountable government. That is, in fact, where Ecuador was heading, after President Correa orchestrated the adoption of a new constitution in order to run for reelection in 2009 and again in 2013.

I hope the result on April 2 will signify a commitment to uphold Ecuador's Constitution and the beginning of a new relationship with the United States, based on a common devotion to the fundamental rights of citizens.

THE RULE OF LAW IN GUATEMALA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to call the Senate's attention to the current situation in Guatemala, where upholding the rule of law has too often been the exception rather than the rule.

For centuries, most Guatemalans had no access to justice. This was exacerbated during—and in the years since—the civil war, when an estimated 200,000 people were killed or disappeared. Most of them were innocent victims of the armed forces, and only a small number of the military officers and their accomplices who were responsible have been punished. In fact, the armed forces and their benefactors have for the most part successfully avoided justice, by threatening prosecutors and witnesses and paying off judges.

At the same time, Guatemala is experiencing the corrosive effects of drug gangs, smugglers, and organized crime. Former President Perez Molina is under arrest, and other high-ranking officials have been implicated in corruption. Rampant gang violence and a lack of job opportunities have caused tens of thousands of Guatemalans, including unaccompanied minors, to seek safety and employment in the United States.

Two individuals, Thelma Aldana, Guatemala's Attorney General, and Ivan Velasquez, the head of CICIG, the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, have been courageously investigating these high-profile cases and working diligently to bring those responsible to justice. Both are respected former judges, Aldana a Guatemalan and Velasquez a Colombian.

The United States, with the support of Democrats and Republicans in Congress, has provided funding to both of their offices.

It is difficult, dangerous work. They have received anonymous threats in an attempt to intimidate them, and there is a concern that President Morales may oppose the renewal of Mr. Velasquez's term of duty, which ends in September, or request the U.N. Secretary General to remove or replace Mr. Velasquez.

This would be of great concern because no democracy can survive without the rule of law, and there can be no rule of law without independent investigators, prosecutors, and judges.

In Guatemala, with its history of impunity, Thelma Aldana and Ivan Velasquez are making history by showing the Guatemalan people that justice is possible. It is possible even in cases in which the perpetrators are high-ranking government officials, members of their families, or others with wealth and power who have long evaded justice.

Guatemala needs our support to reduce poverty and malnutrition, improve education, combat crime, reform the police, and strengthen its economy and public institutions, but none of that can be achieved or sustained without political will and a transparent, accountable justice system. I know this from my own experience, first as a prosecutor, and more recently as the senior member of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

I have been here a long time, in fact longer than any other Senator. I know Guatemala's history and the daunting challenges it faces. Its people deserve better, and they need leaders who respect the rule of law.

If Guatemala's leaders support Thelma Aldana and Ivan Velasquez for as long they are willing to make the personal sacrifice and continue their important work, we will do our part by supporting the Alliance for Prosperity, but if there are attempts to undermine or curtail the work of these two outstanding prosecutors, then Guatemala's leaders should look elsewhere for support.

TRIBUTE TO DR. HARRY CHEN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for over a decade, Vermont has been named one of the healthiest States in the Nation. For those who know the tireless dedication of Vermont's Commissioner of Health, Dr. Harry Chen, this fact is not surprising. Dr. Chen recently made the difficult decision to not seek reappointment. He leaves behind a legacy which future leaders will undoubtedly follow.

Dr. Chen has long graced Vermont as a top leader in healthcare. Before his appointment as health commissioner in 2011, Dr. Chen served in the Vermont House of Representatives from 2004 to 2008 and in his last term was the vice chair of the Health Care Committee. In 2008, he was honored with the Physician Award for Community Service by the Vermont State Medical Society.

Prior to his election to the State legislature, Dr. Chen worked for more than 20 years as an emergency room physician and medical director at the Rutland Regional Medical Center. Dr. Chen also served on the clinical faculty at the University of Vermont's College of Medicine and as vice chair of the University of Vermont's board of trustees. He obtained his medical degree and completed his residency at the University of Oregon's school of medicine as chief resident.

Dr. Chen's work to improve public health awareness and education has long made Vermont a nationwide leader in healthcare. As Vermont's Commissioner of Health since 2011 and briefly as the interim Secretary of Health and Human Services from 2014 to 2015, Dr. Chen led the charge to expand public health education and resources across the State. Dr. Chen was especially instrumental in the fight against opioid and substance abuse. I was proud when he testified at the field hearing I held on the issue while ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2014. In the years after, he worked to strengthen State resources for treatment and education programs. He has worked to improve the State's prescription drug monitoring system in order to curb harmful opioid prescribing and misuse.

Dr. Chen also led efforts to reduce tobacco, marijuana, and alcohol use among youth. In 2013, he and I worked to secure a $10 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA, to expand substance abuse efforts in Vermont among young adults at risk of developing habits in alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and illicit drug use. Since his efforts, the conversation regarding youth substance abuse, especially on marijuana, has become a major public health discussion in the Vermont Statehouse and beyond. He also worked to expand nutrition education in schools and to increase awareness surrounding the importance of vaccines. For instance, 2 years ago, after the outbreak of Ebola, Dr. Chen worked with Vermont's top health facilities to strengthen defenses against the disease, while educating patients on the importance of disease prevention. He also led efforts to increase vaccinations for children in efforts to prevent the spread of disease at school.

Dr. Chen's dedication to public health promotion did not stop at the State level. In 2009, Dr. Chen testified before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee on Vermont's experience with healthcare reform and the creation of Vermont Health Connect. In 2014, he became chair of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Food Safety and Modernization Act Surveillance Working Group where he continues to strengthen foodborne illness surveillance systems across the country. He has also long served on the board of the CDC's Office of Infectious Disease, and he currently chairs the Prevention Committee of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

Vermont's national role in promoting the health and well-being of patients has made strides under the leadership of Dr. Chen. Vermonters are sorry to

see him go, but I know we can expect many more years of outstanding leadership from him. In fact, he and his wife have just been accepted to the Peace Corps, where they look forward to training physicians in Africa. I wish them both the very best in this exciting work, and I once again thank Dr. Chen for his incredible contributions to our State and beyond.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD–423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 17–02, concerning the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of the United Kingdom for defense articles and services estimated to cost $150 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

J.W. RIXEY,
Vice Admiral, USN, Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17–02

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: United Kingdom.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* $135.0 million.

Other $ 15.0 million.

Total $150.0 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

One thousand (1,000) AGM–114–R1/R2 Hellfire II Semi-Active Laser (SAL) Missiles.

Non-MDE:

Logistics support services and other related program support.

(iv) Military Department: Air Force (YAI).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: UK–D–YAC—$22M—May 2008; UK–D–YAF—$21M—Mar 2011; UK–D–YAY—$134M—Aug 2013.

(vi) Sales Commission. Fee. etc., Paid. Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: March 16, 2017.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

United Kingdom—Hellfire Missiles

The Government of the United Kingdom (UK) requested a possible sale of 1,000 AGM–114–RI/R2 Hellfire II Semi-Active Laser (SAL) Missiles with logistics support services and other related program support. The estimated cost is $150 million.

This proposed sale directly contributes to the foreign policy and national security policies of the United States by enhancing the close air support capability of the UK in support of NATO and other coalition operations. Commonality between close air support capabilities greatly increases interoperability between our two countries' military and peacekeeping forces and allows for greater burden sharing.

The proposed sale improves the UK's capability to meet current and future threats by providing close air support to counter enemy attacks on coalition ground forces in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility (AOR) and other areas, as needed. The UK already has Hellfire missiles in its inventory and will have no difficulty absorbing these additional missiles.

The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

There is no principal contractor for this sale as the missiles are coming from U.S. stock.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of any additional U.S. Government or contractor representatives to the UK.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

2017 FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION USER FEE REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of my remarks at the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions earlier today.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

2017 FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION USER FEE REAUTHORIZATION

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions will please come to order. We're holding a hearing today on ''FDA User Fee Agreements: Improving Medical Product Regulation and Innovation for Patients Part 1.''

Now, Senator Murray and I will each have an opening statement, then we will introduce our panel of witnesses. After our witness testimony, senators will have 5 minutes of questions. The subject of today is the Food and Drug Administration's medical device and drug user fees. It seems like a long time ago, but it really wasn't that long ago, that Congress passed the 21st Century Cures Act. 94 Senators voted for it, President Obama and Vice President Biden were strongly in support of it. So were Speaker Ryan and Mitch McConnell, who called it ''the most important piece of legislation in the last Congress.

It came through this committee and I thank the members of the committee, especially for resolving our differences of opinions and making it possible to reach a consensus. That bill was about the moving medical products, drugs and devices more rapidly, in a safe way, through the investment and the regulatory process into the hands of patients and doctors offices.

Today, we are talking about really implementing that great goal, one that shows so much promise for virtually every American. We're here to talk about how we continue the fund the Food and Drug Administration, the agency responsible for making sure the promising research supported by 21st Century Cures actually reaches patients.

We will hear from witnesses from the agency itself to tell us how the user fee agreements will improve the agency's abilities to regulate medical products and promote innovation. We will hear from patients, device manufacturers, and brand and generic drug manufacturers in a second hearing, which is tentatively scheduled for April 4.

I want to thank the witnesses for taking the time to testify today. We respect the great amount of expertise and service that you've given for our country. I want to thank you also for moving so quickly to implement the 21st Century Cures Act. I noticed specifically that the provision involving regenerative medicine was published with about a month after President Obama signed the law.

The first medical product user fee agreement was enacted in 1992. FDA worked with the drug manufacturers to hammer out an agreement that the agency would collect user fees from drug manufacturers in exchange for more timely, predictable reviews. The agreement was a success—it decreased review times and increased patient access to medicines.

Before September 30 of this year, 4 different user fee agreements need to be reauthorized: The Prescription drug user fee is the first one. Now it's common around here to call it PDUFA, I'm not going to do it. I just can't stand PDUFA, and MDUFA and GDUFA and the other UFA. So I'm going to call them if you don't mind, the prescription drug user fee, which accounted for over 70 percent of the brand drug review budget in FY2015.

The second one is the Medical device user fee, which accounted for 35 percent of the medical device review budget in 2015.

The Generic drug user fee accounted for 70 percent of the generic drug review budget. Biosimilar user fee accounted for 7 percent of the biosimilar review budget.

CONSEQUENCES OF FAILING TO REAUTHORIZE

So a lot of the money for the FDA comes from these agreements with manufacturers of prescription drugs and devices.

The authority for FDA to collect user fees for medical product review will expire on September 30 of this year—six months from now.

Now this is probably the most important part of what I have to say this morning. If we do not move quickly to reauthorize these agreements, the FDA will be forced to begin sending layoff notices to more than 5,000 employees to notify them that they may lose their jobs in 60 days—that's what they have to do by law.

A delay in reauthorizing these agreements would delay the reviews of drugs and devices submitted after April 1, only a few days away.

For example, if we do not pass these reauthorizations into law before the current agreements expire, an FDA reviewer who

gets started reviewing a cancer drug submitted to the agency in April would be laid off on October 1, before the reviewer is able to finish his or her work. The sooner we reauthorize the agreements, the better—to give patients, reviewers, and companies certainty.

In addition to harming patients and families that rely on medical innovation, a delay in reauthorizing the user fees would threaten biomedical industry jobs and America's global leadership in biomedical innovation.

PROCESS FOR REAUTHORIZATION

I am hopeful that this committee, and this Congress, can work in a bipartisan manner to reauthorize the user fees before the August recess.

Congress must pass legislation reauthorizing and updating the fees to support the recommendations contained in what are called ''commitment letters'' sent to Congress in January.

Now these commitment letters are part of the agreements between FDA and industry—they establish the agency's commitments, such as timelines for application review or to put out guidances in exchange for the fees Congress authorizes. The letters were transmitted to Congress in January of this year.

So today's hearing is not the first time members of Congress or the public is hearing about the recommendations for reauthorization.

In Congress, while we were working on the 21st Century Cures and after it was signed into law, the HELP Committee had 15 bipartisan briefings, some of which were in conjunction with the Energy and Commerce Committee in the House of Representatives as well, so we could hear from FDA and industry about the reauthorization. The first of those briefings was back in late 2015.

Outside of Congress, the FDA posted meeting minutes after every negotiation, and held public meetings to hear feedback.

So the content of the commitment letters, and the changes to the fee authorizations, should not be new, or a surprise, for any member of this committee.

After the April 4th hearing, I hope to move to mark-up the legislation in committee as soon as possible.

This is the first time that the user fees have sunset in the first year of a new administration, so we are starting hearings a little later this year than we did in 2012.

In order to get this done on time, any additional policies that Senators may want to attach need to be broadly bipartisan, related to human medical products, and non-controversial in order to avoid slowing the package down.

HOW REAUTHORIZATION BUILDS ON 21ST CENTURY CURES

There are many improvements in the commitment letters and fee structure in these reauthorizations to be excited about.

The prescription drug and medical device reauthorizations include many provisions that build on the work of 21st Century Cures, such as: involving patients in drug and medical device development, dedicated staff to assist in the development and review of rare disease drugs, improved timelines, increased guidance for drug and device combination products, and modernizing the clinical trial process.

There are important structural reforms. Each agreement contains reporting measures built both by FDA and by independent third parties, so we can see how the changes are working. FDA is going to work to implement full time reporting by 2022, so Congress, patients, and medical product manufacturers will have a better picture about how resources are being used at FDA and understand what is needed to do what we ask.

The biosimilar and generic drug user fee agreement includes additional staff and resources to approve more biosimilars and more generic drugs, which provide more competition and lower drug costs.

These are just a few of the highlights of the reauthorization and commitment letters. It is a good agreement for patients, and I look forward to working with Senator Murray and all the members of the Committee to get it done expeditiously.

TRIBUTE TO NINA M. SERAFINO

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to a dedicated public servant at the Congressional Research Service, CRS, of the Library of Congress, Ms. Nina M. Serafino. Ms. Serafino recently retired after more than 35 years of service to Congress. This length of public service is not only a credit to Ms. Serafino, but also a demonstration of the dedication that she and many other CRS employees bring to support our work here in Congress.

During Ms. Serafino's 35 years with CRS, she provided Congress with many types of assistance to help inform national policymaking on a variety of war and peace issues. From 1981, when she joined CRS, through the 1980s, she was deeply involved in bipartisan efforts to evaluate U.S. policy in Central America. Her work focused on providing a common understanding of the problems and possibilities in the region in order to shape U.S. options and alternatives. Particularly noteworthy was her original research on aspects of the Central American conflicts where there was a little or no information available from other sources. Responding to a congressional request, she conducted field research and delved into the Library of Congress's historical materials to provide a unique report on the many parties of the civic opposition to the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Similarly, her field research on the Latin American ''Contadora'' effort significantly informed congressional deliberations regarding the peace process to end the conflicts in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

With the advent of U.S. military involvement in peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and elsewhere beginning in the 1990s, Ms. Serafino contributed to congressional efforts to comprehend the plethora of institutional and budgetary considerations relevant to our government's ability to bring its full toolbox to bear in those operations. Providing information and analysis through reports, briefings, and several comprehensive conferences and workshops for Members and staff, Ms. Serafino assisted Congress in understanding the possibilities, constraints, and options for legislating and overseeing military and civilian tools and the development of interagency resources and mechanisms.

As Congress sought to comprehend and deal with the post-9/11 world, Ms. Serafino supplemented targeted CRS work on Afghanistan and Iraq with conferences and reports that brought an historical perspective to congressional deliberations. The conferences and reports provided insights on a wide variety of international experiences in dealing with terrorism and contained historical information and pertinent analysis on previous U.S. interventions and occupations.

Over the past decade, Ms. Serafino also developed a number of products on security assistance and cooperation. Most recently, as the U.S. Government has expanded U.S. military efforts to build partner capacity among foreign security forces worldwide, Ms. Serafino contributed an historical perspective on U.S. security assistance and cooperation development in the post-World War II period to inform our deliberations on an evolving legislative framework for such assistance. Her written work on post-9/11 topics has enlightened both Congress and the broader foreign policy and defense communities.

Throughout Ms. Serafino's career, she won the respect and admiration of her colleagues for her geniality and expertise on Latin America and international security affairs. She won a Distinguished Service Award and several Merit Service and Special Achievement awards. Her steadfast dedication to serve Congress and her commitment to the highest standards of research made a lasting contribution to congressional policy discourse. I have said many times that the Federal workforce is a critical national asset. Ms. Serafino and the other talented and dedicated public servants at CRS are yet another example. While we will miss her contributions, I know my colleagues will want to join me in sending our best wishes to Ms. Serafino for a happy retirement.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO STEVE HAMMOND

● Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the three decades of distinguished service journalist Steve Hammond has provided to the citizens of Maryland's Eastern Shore and the viewers of WBOC-TV 16 in Salisbury, MD, ''Delmarva's News Leader.''

Steve Hammond is a Maryland native, raised in Towson's Rodgers Forge neighborhood. He learned many of life's lessons on the football and lacrosse fields before graduating from the University of Delaware with a degree in mass communications. Since his mother, sister, and brother have all been involved in television production, it is no surprise, perhaps, that Steve gravitated toward the business of broadcasting and interned for several stations. He discovered he felt most at home in the newsroom and was drawn particularly to the variety of daily reporting. In 1985, after working without pay for 2 weeks to illustrate his potential value, Steve was hired by WHYY, a

PBS affiliate in Philadelphia, PA. Two years later, on March 23, 1987, he joined WBOC–TV to serve as the first bureau chief for Dover, DE. It was there that he first began to anchor news broadcasts. It was a role, it turned out, which suited him perfectly.

Today Steve Hammond is WBOC–TV's main anchor and managing editor. He has become a household name in the region, having covered countless elections, major crisis, and natural disasters. Steve has flown with the Blue Angels and interviewed U.S. Presidents. He also has filed reports from several foreign countries to tell the stories of local troops in harm's way in Iraq and Somalia. Steve is highly respected in his field and has been widely recognized, winning innumerable awards, including a prestigious national Edward R. Murrow Award and distinctions from the Associated Press and Radio Television News Directors Association; yet Steve is characteristically modest about his accomplishments. If he were inclined to brag about anything, it probably would be about his beloved family—his sons Graham and Hunter, and his wife, Heather, who are his favorite companions for a day at the beach.

Steve Hammond is deeply invested in his community and has volunteered for many years for numerous charitable organizations, including Junior Achievement, March of Dimes, Easter Seals, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and The Salvation Army. He has helped spearhead The Salvation Army's Red Kettle Holiday Campaign on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He also serves as a member of the board of trustees for Worcester Preparatory School in Berlin, MD, and is a member of Trinity United Methodist Church in Salisbury. Steve's coworkers, friends, and audience appreciate the dedication, service, and leadership he shown professionally and privately throughout his career. As he enters his fourth decade at WBOC–TV 16, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Steve Hammond on 30 years of exemplary work and community service and wishing him all the best in the years ahead.●

REMEMBERING JOHN BRUCE FERY

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of John Bruce Fery, a friend and mentor.

John's obituary beautifully conveyed a sense of who he was: ''John's journey took him from challenging early years as a latchkey kid with a working mom to remarkable lifetime accomplishments. He loved God, his family, his community, and his country. He loved the outdoors, sunshine, and John Wayne. He had a zest for life and a work ethic that was incomparable, while his commanding presence, charming smile, and quick-witted humor made him adored by family and friends. He was captivated by the joys of family life, the challenges of business, the warmth of friendships, the satisfaction of philanthropic work, and the stories each brought to his life.''

On February 16, 1930, John was born in Bellingham, WA, to Margaret and Carl Fery. John lost his father at a young age, and he and his mother moved to Seattle, where he graduated from Roosevelt High School and attended the University of Washington before serving in the U.S. Navy during the Korean war. He married his wife, Dee, in 1953, and obtained his masters of business administration from Stanford University before his extensive, much respected career in the pulp and paper industry. He led the Boise Cascade Company for more than two decades, taking on the position of president and chief executive officer in 1972 and chairman of the board in 1978. Throughout his 37-year career with the company, he built a legacy of sound judgement and expertise that led to his many honors, awards, and service on multiple boards.

In addition to his esteemed business career, John and Dee have given generously to many philanthropic efforts. His obituary aptly highlights some of their significant contributions to the community: ''Whether attending the new Horsethief Reservoir Y Camp in Cascade, Idaho, learning about Birds of Prey at the World Center, enjoying the Idaho Shakespeare Festival and the park that he and Dee donated, attending Medical School through the WWAMI program which John helped found as a means of training physicians for Idaho, staying at St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center where John chaired the board and established its Foundation, receiving a grant from the Idaho Community Foundation, which exists today due to John's leadership in its formation and growth, or receiving a scholarship to Boise's Bishop Kelly High School, the University of Idaho, or Stanford, people will have experiences made possible by John and Dee's vison and generosity.''

John was also a dear friend to me. He encouraged me and was instrumental in inspiring my public service. His guidance, advice, and insight are forever etched in my life's path, and I am deeply grateful for the time he took to help shape my service. I extend my deepest sympathies to Dee; their sons, Brent, Bruce, and Michael and their families; and their many other family members, loved ones, and friends. We are bettered for having had John in our lives. He leaves behind an enduring, loving, and joyful legacy.●

RECOGNIZING THE JEWISH COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SOUTHERN MAINE

● Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the Jewish Community Alliance in Portland, Maine, for their longstanding service and commitment to Maine's Jewish community across southern Maine.

In 1999, the Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine, JCA, was founded following a merger of the Jewish Community Center and the Jewish Federation. With a strong commitment to upholding Jewish values and culture, the JCA provides diverse programs for the entire community, educating children, teens, and adults to better connect with their community and learn from one another. The organization welcomes citizens of all backgrounds, encouraging a deeper understanding of Jewish history, practice, and culture.

The JCA understands the importance of supporting and educating future generations through high-quality programming for children offered throughout the year. The JCA administers a nationally accredited preschool program, now in its 24th year, which provides children with the opportunity to grow and learn in a safe and positive environment driven by Jewish values. Additionally, each summer, the JCA welcomes children of all faiths to the Center Day Camp, along the shores of Sebago Lake in Cumberland County, ME. Heading into its 68th summer, the Center Day Camp encourages Maine's youth to explore new interests, build confidence and friendships, and develop new skills.

The JCA also offers adult education classes to engage both Jewish and non-Jewish individuals, and to provide opportunities to learn about a wide range of topics relating to Judaism and Jewish life. One such program, NextDor, offers peer-led social, cultural, and educational engagement guided by Jewish values to adults in their twenties, thirties, and early forties. The program is dedicated to engaging members in a variety of settings that are accessible, inclusive, and uniting to help encourage Jewish and non-Jewish participation.

I would like to recognize the positive impact that the JCA has had in the lives of Maine's citizens and its positive impact in strengthening the Jewish community. Their ongoing commitment to a better and more prosperous tomorrow is to be commended, and their message of inclusiveness and engagement is a model for the entire State. I look forward to the continued success of the Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine, and to watching their community grow and thrive.●

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC OREGON TRAIL INTERPRETIVE CENTER

● Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Baker, OR, on its 25th anniversary and to recognize the cultural and historical importance of this special place. Twenty-five years ago, volunteers, philanthropists, and community leaders came together with the Bureau of Land Management to make this dream a reality, and today I want to honor them for their dedication to their community and the State of Oregon.

Since 1992, the Interpretive Center has brought to life the story of the Oregon Trail. Through life-size displays, historical artifacts, and live performances by historical interpreters, visitors to the center are transported back in time to the first days of Baker City. What started as a small goldmining town grew through the years as more emigrants arrived. These pioneers had fought through challenging conditions and traveled thousands of miles to reach Oregon, but had they not persevered, the growth of this State could never have taken place. We owe it to those who blazed the trail before us to listen to their story, and we owe it to ourselves to take their lessons of perseverance, innovation, and community spirit to heart.

It is no coincidence that the community that came together to make the Interpretive Center possible, shares the characteristics of their ancestors. In the 1970s, Baker City was struggling to keep up with a changing economy. It took the innovative vision of modern-day pioneers, who recognized the cultural importance of this place, to bring its rich history back to life. Joining forces with the Bureau of Land Management, community leaders worked together to create the Interpretive Center and jumpstarted Baker City's growing tourism industry.

Over 25 years, this community has continued to contribute to the sustained success of the Interpretive Center. From the hard-working caretakers of the center's 4 miles of interpretive trails, to the philanthropy of individuals like the late Leo Adler who help sustain the center financially, the people of Baker City demonstrate every day the same spirit as the pioneers they honor. In this way, the story of the Interpretive Center mirrors the very story it tells.

It stands today as a living testament to the value of learning from our past. Therefore, I wish today to not only celebrate this milestone, but to encourage us all to reflect on the example set by both the pioneers of the Oregon Trail and those who continue to blaze new trails for their communities every day.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, 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 a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2017, the Secretary of the Senate, on March 16, 2017, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the House had passed the following joint resolution, without amendment:

S.J. Res. 1. Joint resolution approving the location of a memorial to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2017, the Secretary of the Senate, on March 16, 2017, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker had signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 1362. An act to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Pago Pago, American Samoa, the Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin VA Clinic.

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2017, the enrolled bill was signed on March 20, 2017, during the adjournment of the Senate, by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTIONS SIGNED

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2017, the Secretary of the Senate, on March 17, 2017, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker had signed the following enrolled joint resolutions:

S.J. Res. 1. Joint resolution approving the location of a memorial to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield.

H.J. Res. 42. Joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to drug testing of unemployment compensation applicants.

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2017, the enrolled joint resolutions were signed on March 20, 2017, during the adjournment of the Senate, by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:32 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 132. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land and appurtenances of the Arbuckle Project, Oklahoma, to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District, and for other purposes.

H.R. 267. An act to redesignate the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes.

H.R. 382. An act to amend the Department of Agriculture program for research and extension grants to increase participation by women and underrepresented minorities in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to redesignate the program as the ''Jeannette Rankin Women and Minorities in STEM Fields Program''.

H.R. 648. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to amend the Definite Plan Report for the Seedskadee Project to enable the use of the active capacity of the Fontenelle Reservoir.

H.R. 1029. An act to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act to improve pesticide registration and other activities under the Act, to extend and modify fee authorities, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1181. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the conditions under which certain persons may be treated as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes.

H.R. 1228. An act to provide for the appointment of members of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance to replace members whose terms expire during 2017, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1249. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require a multiyear acquisition strategy of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1252. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for certain acquisition authorities for the Under Secretary of Management of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1259. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1294. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for congressional notification regarding major acquisition program breaches, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1309. An act to streamline the office and term of the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1367. An act to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 161(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2211), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives as Congressional Advisors on Trade Policy and Negotiations: Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts and Mr. PASCRELL of New Jersey.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 132. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land and appurtenances of the Arbuckle Project, Oklahoma, to the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 267. An act to redesignate the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 382. An act to amend the Department of Agriculture program for research and extension grants to increase participation by women and underrepresented minorities in

the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to redesignate the program as the ''Jeannette Rankin Women and Minorities in STEM Fields Program''; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

H.R. 648. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to amend the Definite Plan Report for the Seedskadee Project to enable the use of the active capacity of the Fontenelle Reservoir; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 1029. An act to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act to improve pesticide registration and other activities under the Act, to extend and modify fee authorities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

H.R. 1249. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require a multiyear acquisition strategy of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1252. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for certain acquisition authorities for the Under Secretary of Management of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1259. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 1294. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for congressional notification regarding major acquisition program breaches, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1309. An act to streamline the office and term of the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 1367. An act to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physicians and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on March 20, 2017, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled joint resolution:

S.J. Res. 1. Joint resolution approving the location of a memorial to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. MURRAY, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 669. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to assess sanitation and safety conditions at Bureau of Indian Affairs facilities that were constructed to provide affected Columbia River Treaty tribes access to traditional fishing grounds and expend funds on construction of facilities and structures to improve those conditions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. HASSAN, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 670. A bill to provide for the regulation of over-the-counter hearing aids; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mrs. ERNST):

S. 671. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income certain amounts realized on the disposition of property raised or produced by a student farmer, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. HELLER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. GARDNER, and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 672. A bill to require a report on designation of North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 673. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to decrease the distance away from home required for a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces to be eligible for the above-the-line deduction for travel expenses; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 674. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the retirement income account rules relating to church controlled organizations; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 675. A bill to amend and reauthorize certain provisions relating to Long Island Sound restoration and stewardship; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. ROUNDS:

S. 676. A bill to amend title 44, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to review regulations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. HELLER, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 677. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate Federal and State permitting processes related to the construction of new surface water storage projects on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to designate the Bureau of Reclamation as the lead agency for permit processing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 678. A bill to delcare English as the official language of the United States, to establish a uniform English language rule for naturalization, and to avoid misconstructions of the English language texts of the laws of the United States, pursuant to Congress' powers to provide for the general welfare of the United States and to establish a uniform rule of naturalization under article I, section 8, of the Constitution; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 679. A bill to require the disclosure of information relating to cyberattacks on aircraft systems and maintenance and ground support systems for aircraft, to identify and address cybersecurity vulnerabilities to the United States commercial aviation system, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 680. A bill to protect consumers from security and privacy threats to their motor vehicles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. NELSON, Ms. HASSAN, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 681. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the benefits and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to women veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KING, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 682. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to provide for the purchase of paper United States savings bonds with tax refunds; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. KING):

S. 683. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the requirement to provide nursing home care to certain veterans with service-connected disabilities; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 684. A bill to establish a national, research-based, and comprehensive home study assessment process for the evaluation of prospective foster parents and adoptive parents and provide funding to States and Indian tribes to adopt such process; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 685. A bill to authorize the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System and the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System in the States of Montana and North Dakota, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. HATCH):

S. 686. A bill to amend the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 to provide for regulatory impact analyses for certain rules and consideration of the least burdensome regulatory alternative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mr. CASEY):

S. 687. A bill to amend the Trade Act of 1974 to authorize a State to reimburse certain costs incurred by the State in providing training to workers after a petition for certification of eligibility for trade adjustment assistance has been filed, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TESTER:

S. 688. A bill to suspend the importation of beef and poultry from Brazil; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 689. A bill to provide women with increased access to preventive and life-saving cancer screening; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 690. A bill to extend the eligibility of redesignated areas as HUBZones from 3 years to 7 years; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 691. A bill to extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 692. A bill to provide for integrated plan permits, to establish an Office of the Municipal Ombudsman, to promote green infrastructure, and to require the revision of financial capability guidance; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. PERDUE (for himself, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. COONS, Mr. KAINE, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. TESTER):

S. Res. 90. A resolution recognizing the importance of the United States-Israel economic relationship and encouraging new areas of cooperation; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. STABENOW:

S. Res. 91. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Professional Social Work Month in March 2017 and World Social Work Day on March 21, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. UDALL):

S. Con. Res. 10. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the Secretary of the Navy should name the next nuclear powered submarine of the United States Navy the ''USS Los Alamos''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 26

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 26, a bill to amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to require the disclosure of certain tax returns by Presidents and certain candidates for the office of the President, and for other purposes.

S. 65

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 65, a bill to address financial conflicts of interest of the President and Vice President.

S. 130

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 130, a bill to require enforcement against misbranded milk alternatives.

S. 188

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 188, a bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the costs of painting portraits of officers and employees of the Federal Government.

S. 223

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 223, a bill to provide immunity from suit for certain individuals who disclose potential examples of financial exploitation of senior citizens, and for other purposes.

S. 236

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 236, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform taxation of alcoholic beverages.

S. 260

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 260, a bill to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board.

S. 292

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 292, a bill to maximize discovery, and accelerate development and availability, of promising childhood cancer treatments, and for other purposes.

S. 324

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 324, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans.

S. 372

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 372, a bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to ensure that merchandise arriving through the mail shall be subject to review by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and to require the provision of advance electronic information on shipments of mail to U.S. Customs and Border Protection and for other purposes.

S. 378

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) were added as cosponsors of S. 378, a bill to amend titles 5 and 28, United States Code, to require the maintenance of databases on awards of fees and other expenses to prevailing parties in certain administrative proceedings and court cases to which the United States is a party, and for other purposes.

S. 382

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) were added as cosponsors of S. 382, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a voluntary registry to collect data on cancer incidence among firefighters.

S. 384

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 384, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the new markets tax credit, and for other purposes.

S. 407

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 407, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 422

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 422, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S. 438

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 438, a bill to encourage effective, voluntary investments to recruit, employ, and retain men and women who have served in the United States military with annual Federal awards to employers recognizing such efforts, and for other purposes.

S. 445

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 445, 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.

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 445, supra.

S. 461

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 461, a bill to allow Homeland Security Grant Program funds to be used to safeguard faith-based community centers across the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 464

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 464, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a permanent Independence at Home medical practice program under the Medicare program.

S. 479

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 479, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive coinsurance under Medicare for colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening.

S. 480

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 480, a bill to reauthorize the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp.

S. 493

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) were added as cosponsors of S. 493, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes.

S. 512

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) were added as cosponsors of S. 512, a bill to modernize the regulation of nuclear energy.

S. 537

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 537, a bill to amend title 9 of the United States Code with respect to arbitration.

S. 540

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 540, a bill to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States.

S. 544

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 544, a bill to amend Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to modify the termination date for the Veterans Choice Program, and for other purposes.

S. 546

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 546, a bill to reduce temporarily the royalty required to be paid for sodium produced on Federal lands, and for other purposes.

S. 567

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 567, a bill to amend the Home Owners' Loan Act to allow Federal savings associations to elect to operate as national banks, and for other purposes.

S. 573

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 573, a bill to establish the National Criminal Justice Commission.

S. 576

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 576, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to extend certain protections against prohibited personnel practices, and for other purposes.

S. 582

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 582, a bill to reauthorize the Office of Special Counsel, and for other purposes.

S. 591

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 591, a bill to expand eligibility for the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to expand benefits available to participants under such program, to enhance special compensation for members of the uniformed services who require assistance in everyday life, and for other purposes.

S. 593

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 593, a bill to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to facilitate the establishment of additional or expanded public target ranges in certain States.

S. 618

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 618, a bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to more comprehensively address the interstate transportation of firearms or ammunition.

S. 625

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 625, a bill to preserve the integrity of American elections by providing the Attorney General with the investigative tools to identify and prosecute foreign agents who seek to circumvent Federal registration requirements and unlawfully influence the political process.

S. 630

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 630, a bill to amend the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 to make 2,500 visas available for the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program, and for other purposes.

S. 635

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 635, a bill to amend title 28, United States Code, to prohibit the exclusion of individuals from service on a Federal jury on account of sexual orientation or gender identity.

S. 636

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 636, a bill to allow Americans to earn paid sick time so that they can address their own health needs and the health needs of their families.

S. 657

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 657, a bill to provide for the publication by the Secretary of Health and Human Services of physical activity recommendations for Americans.

S. 659

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 659, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to the People's Republic of China in relation to activities in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 27

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 27, a joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to ''Clarification of Employer's Continuing Obligation to Make and Maintain an Accurate Record of Each Recordable Injury and Illness''.

S.J. RES. 34

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 34, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to ''Protecting the Privacy of Customers of Broadband and Other Telecommunications Services''.

S. RES. 83

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from

Florida (Mr. NELSON) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 83, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the trafficking of illicit fentanyl into the United States from Mexico and China.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KAINE (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 691. A bill to extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President. I am pleased to reintroduce the Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act of 2017. Indian Affairs previously voted our bill out of committee in the 113th Congress and by voice vote in the 114th Congress, and we remain hopeful that the full Senate will finally vote to recognize our Tribes in the 115th Congress.

This month marks the 400th anniversary of the death of Pocahontas, the famous daughter of Chief Powhatan, whose tribes were among the first to make contact with English settlers in the 17th century. Today, as we introduce this bill, a delegation from the Commonwealth, including Chief Stephen Adkins of the Chickahominy, Chief Anne Richardson of the Rappahannock, and Chief Emeritus Ken Adams of the Upper Mattaponi, is in England to commemorate the anniversary, including a presentation and ceremony at St. George's Church, Gravesend to honor Pocahontas.

The ceremony reflects the sovereign recognition that the British Government grants to our Virginia tribes, which the United States has yet to acknowledge. This legislation is critically important because it strives toward reconciling an historic wrong for Virginia and the Nation. While the Virginia Tribes have received official recognition from the Commonwealth of Virginia, acknowledgement and officially-recognized status from the Federal Government has been considerably more difficult due to their systematic mistreatment over the past century.

More specifically, Virginia's Racial Integrity Act, a State law in effect from 1924 to 1967, stripped the identities of the Tribal members of Virginia's Indian Tribes. The act changed the racial identifications of those who lacked White ancestry to ''colored'' on birth certificates during that period. In addition, five of the six courthouses that held the vast majority of the Virginia Indian Tribal records were destroyed in the Civil War. Those records were crucial for documenting the history of the Tribes for recognition by the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Federal Acknowledgement.

Furthermore, Virginia Indians made peace too soon when they signed the Treaty of Middle Plantation with England in 1677. This predated the creation of the United States of America by just short of 100 years, and the Founding Fathers of the United States never recognized the treaty. Therefore, unlike tribes that received Federal recognition upon the signing of a treaty with the United States, the Virginia Tribes did not receive Federal recognition because they made peace with England prior to the founding of our Nation.

I am proud of Virginia's recognized Indian Tribes and their contributions to our Commonwealth. The Virginia Tribes are not only part of our history, but they remain ever present today. We go to school together, work together, and serve our Commonwealth and Nation together every day. These contributions should be acknowledged, and this Federal recognition for Virginia's Native peoples is long overdue.

Virginia's Indian Tribes contributed to the successful founding of our country and continue to help define our national identity. Their members have attended our schools, worked next to us, and served in every American war since the Revolution, all while maintaining a unique identity and culture. I am hopeful the Senate will act upon my legislation this year, to give these six Virginia Native American Tribes the Federal recognition that is long overdue.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 685. A bill to authorize the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System and the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System in the States of Montana and North Dakota, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, water is a basic foundation of life. In Montana, we depend on a steady supply of water to drink, irrigate our crops, water our livestock, and provide energy through hydropower. Water is a precious resource, and there are still rural communities that face barriers to access and are in dire need of clean drinking water. The struggle for water continues to create health challenges for Indian Country and nearby communities, in addition to making economic development more difficult.

There are approximately 35,000 Americans across 12 counties in both Montana and North Dakota whose existing public water supply systems are unable to provide them with water that meets the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

The Bureau of Reclamation plays a critical role in managing the storage and delivery of water in the Western United States. Some of the earliest water projects built by the Bureau were built in Montana. These projects provided critical infrastructure for Montana homesteaders and were of critical importance to the long-term growth of our State. They are still vital today.

That is why I am introducing the Clean Water for Rural Communities Act. This legislation would authorize the Bureau of Reclamation to provide Federal assistance for the planning, design, and construction of the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System and the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System in Montana and North Dakota. The Dry-Redwater and Musselshell-Judith rural water projects have spent 7 and 11 years, respectively, in deliberation with the Bureau, as well as $4 million and $3 million in State, local, and Federal funding. It is critical we provide the Bureau of Reclamation the necessary authorization to complete these projects and provide clean and reliable water to 35,000 Montanans and North Dakotans.

I thank Senator TESTER for being an original cosponsor of this bill. I ask my Senate colleagues to join us in support of this important legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 685

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 ''Clean Water for Rural Communities Act''.

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to ensure a safe and adequate municipal, rural, and industrial water supply for the citizens of—

(1) Dawson, Garfield, McCone, Prairie, Richland, Judith Basin, Wheatland, Golden Valley, Fergus, Yellowstone, and Musselshell Counties in the State of Montana; and

(2) McKenzie County, North Dakota.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ''Administrator'' means the Administrator of the Western Area Power Administration.

(2) AUTHORITY.—The term ''Authority'' means—

(A) in the case of the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System—

(i) the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority, which is a publicly owned nonprofit water authority formed in accordance with Mont. Code Ann. § 75–6–302 (2007); and

(ii) any nonprofit successor entity to the Authority described in clause (i); and

(B) in the case of the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System—

(i) the Central Montana Regional Water Authority, which is a publicly owned nonprofit water authority formed in accordance with Mont. Code Ann. § 75–6–302 (2007); and

(ii) any nonprofit successor entity to the Authority described in clause (i).

(3) DRY-REDWATER REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY SYSTEM.—The term ''Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System'' means the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System authorized under section 4(a)(1) with a project service area that includes—

(A) Garfield and McCone Counties in the State;

(B) the area west of the Yellowstone River in Dawson and Richland Counties in the State;

(C) T. 15 N. (including the area north of the Township) in Prairie County in the State; and

(D) the portion of McKenzie County, North Dakota, that includes all land that is located west of the Yellowstone River in the State of North Dakota.

(4) INTEGRATED SYSTEM.—The term ''integrated system'' means the transmission system owned by the Western Area Power Administration Basin Electric Power District and the Heartland Consumers Power District.

(5) MUSSELSHELL-JUDITH RURAL WATER SYSTEM.—The term ''Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System'' means the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System authorized under section 4(a)(2) with a project service area that includes—

(A) Judith Basin, Wheatland, Golden Valley, and Musselshell Counties in the State;

(B) the portion of Yellowstone County in the State within 2 miles of State Highway 3 and within 4 miles of the county line between Golden Valley and Yellowstone Counties in the State, inclusive of the Town of Broadview, Montana; and

(C) the portion of Fergus County in the State within 2 miles of US Highway 87 and within 4 miles of the county line between Fergus and Judith Basin Counties in the State, inclusive of the Town of Moore, Montana.

(6) NON-FEDERAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM.—The term ''non-Federal distribution system'' means a non-Federal utility that provides electricity to the counties covered by the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System.

(7) PICK-SLOAN PROGRAM.—The term ''Pick-Sloan program'' means the Pick-Sloan Missouri River Basin Program (authorized by section 9 of the Act of December 22, 1944 (commonly known as the ''Flood Control Act of 1944'') (58 Stat. 891, chapter 665)).

(8) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(9) STATE.—The term ''State'' means the State of Montana.

(10) WATER SYSTEM.—The term ''Water System'' means—

(A) the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System; and

(B) the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System.

SEC. 4. DRY-REDWATER REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY SYSTEM AND MUSSELSHELL-JUDITH RURAL WATER SYSTEM.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary may carry out—

(1) the project entitled the ''Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System'' in a manner that is substantially in accordance with the feasibility study entitled ''Dry-Redwater Regional Water System Feasibility Study'' (including revisions of the study), which received funding from the Bureau of Reclamation on September 1, 2010; and

(2) the project entitled the ''Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System'' in a manner that is substantially in accordance with the feasibility report entitled ''Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System Feasibility Report'' (including any and all revisions of the report).

(b) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.—The Secretary shall enter into a cooperative agreement with the Authority to provide Federal assistance for the planning, design, and construction of the Water Systems.

(c) COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT.—

(1) FEDERAL SHARE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Federal share of the costs relating to the planning, design, and construction of the Water Systems shall not exceed—

(i) in the case of the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System—

(I) 75 percent of the total cost of the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System; or

(II) such other lesser amount as may be determined by the Secretary, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation, in a feasibility report; or

(ii) in the case of the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System, 75 percent of the total cost of the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System.

(B) LIMITATION.—Amounts made available under subparagraph (A) shall not be returnable or reimbursable under the reclamation laws.

(2) USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS.—

(A) GENERAL USES.—Subject to subparagraphs (B) and (C), the Water Systems may use Federal funds made available to carry out this section for—

(i) facilities relating to—

(I) water pumping;

(II) water treatment; and

(III) water storage;

(ii) transmission pipelines;

(iii) pumping stations;

(iv) appurtenant buildings, maintenance equipment, and access roads;

(v) any interconnection facility that connects a pipeline of the Water System to a pipeline of a public water system;

(vi) electrical power transmission and distribution facilities required for the operation and maintenance of the Water System;

(vii) any other facility or service required for the development of a rural water distribution system, as determined by the Secretary; and

(viii) any property or property right required for the construction or operation of a facility described in this subsection.

(B) ADDITIONAL USES.—In addition to the uses described in subparagraph (A)—

(i) the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System may use Federal funds made available to carry out this section for—

(I) facilities relating to water intake; and

(II) distribution, pumping, and storage facilities that—

(aa) serve the needs of citizens who use public water systems;

(bb) are in existence on the date of enactment of this Act; and

(cc) may be purchased, improved, and repaired in accordance with a cooperative agreement entered into by the Secretary under subsection (b); and

(ii) the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System may use Federal funds made available to carry out this section for—

(I) facilities relating to—

(aa) water supply wells; and

(bb) distribution pipelines; and

(II) control systems.

(C) LIMITATION.—Federal funds made available to carry out this section shall not be used for the operation, maintenance, or replacement of the Water Systems.

(D) TITLE.—Title to the Water Systems shall be held by the Authority.

SEC. 5. USE OF POWER FROM PICK-SLOAN PROGRAM BY THE DRY-REDWATER REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY SYSTEM.

(a) FINDING.—Congress finds that—

(1) McCone and Garfield Counties in the State were designated as impact counties during the period in which the Fort Peck Dam was constructed; and

(2) as a result of the designation, the Counties referred to in paragraph (1) were to receive impact mitigation benefits in accordance with the Pick-Sloan program.

(b) AVAILABILITY OF POWER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Administrator shall make available to the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System a quantity of power required, of up to 1½ megawatt capacity, to meet the pumping and incidental operation requirements of the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System during the period beginning on May 1 and ending on October 31 of each year—

(A) from the water intake facilities; and

(B) through all pumping stations, water treatment facilities, reservoirs, storage tanks, and pipelines up to the point of delivery of water by the water supply system to all storage reservoirs and tanks and each entity that distributes water at retail to individual users.

(2) ELIGIBILITY.—The Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System shall be eligible to receive power under paragraph (1) if the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System—

(A) operates on a not-for-profit basis; and

(B) is constructed pursuant to a cooperative agreement entered into by the Secretary under section 4(b).

(3) RATE.—The Administrator shall establish the cost of the power described in paragraph (1) at the firm power rate.

(4) ADDITIONAL POWER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If power, in addition to that made available to the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System under paragraph (1), is necessary to meet the pumping requirements of the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority, the Administrator may purchase the necessary additional power at the best available rate.

(B) REIMBURSEMENT.—The cost of purchasing additional power shall be reimbursed to the Administrator by the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority.

(5) RESPONSIBILITY FOR POWER CHARGES.—The Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority shall be responsible for the payment of the power charge described in paragraph (4) and non-Federal delivery costs described in paragraph (6).

(6) TRANSMISSION ARRANGEMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System shall be responsible for all non-Federal transmission and distribution system delivery and service arrangements.

(B) UPGRADES.—The Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System shall be responsible for funding any transmission upgrades, if required, to the integrated system necessary to deliver power to the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System.

SEC. 6. WATER RIGHTS.

Nothing in this Act—

(1) preempts or affects any State water law; or

(2) affects any authority of a State, as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act, to manage water resources within that State.

SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out the planning, design, and construction of the Water Systems, substantially in accordance with the cost estimate set forth in the applicable feasibility study or feasibility report described in section 4(a).

(b) COST INDEXING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amount authorized to be appropriated under subsection (a) may be increased or decreased in accordance with ordinary fluctuations in development costs incurred after the applicable date specified in paragraph (2), as indicated by any available engineering cost indices applicable to construction activities that are similar to the construction of the Water Systems.

(2) APPLICABLE DATES.—The date referred to in paragraph (1) is—

(A) in the case of the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System, January 1, 2008; and

(B) in the case of the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water Authority System, November 1, 2014.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 90—RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES-ISRAEL ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP AND ENCOURAGING NEW AREAS OF COOPERATION

Mr. PERDUE (for himself, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. COONS, Mr. KAINE, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. TESTER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 90

Whereas the deep bond between the United States and Israel is exemplified by its many facets, including the robust economic and commercial relationship;

Whereas, on April 22, 2015, the United States celebrated the 32nd anniversary of its free trade agreement with Israel, which was the first free trade agreement entered into by the United States;

Whereas the United States-Israel Free Trade Agreement established the United States-Israel Joint Committee to facilitate the agreement and collaborate on efforts to increase bilateral cooperation and investment;

Whereas, since the signing of this agreement, two-way trade has multiplied tenfold to over $40,000,000,000 annually;

Whereas Israel is the third largest importer of United States goods in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region after Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, despite representing only 2 percent of the region's population;

Whereas nearly 40 percent (37 percent) of all investment in the United States from the MENA region comes from Israel;

Whereas Israel has more companies listed on the NASDAQ Stock Exchange than any other country except for the United States and China;

Whereas, in 1956, the United States-Israel Education Foundation was established to administer the Fulbright Program in Israel, and has facilitated the exchange of nearly 3,300 students between the United States and Israel since its inception;

Whereas, in 1972, the United States-Israel Binational Science Foundation (BSF) was established to promote scientific relations between the United States and Israel by supporting collaborative research projects in basic and applied scientific fields, and has generated investments of over $480,000,000 to over 4,000 projects since its inception;

Whereas Binational Science Foundation grant recipients have included 45 Nobel Laureates, 19 winners of the Albert Lasker Medical Research Award, and 38 recipients of the Wolf Prize;

Whereas, in 1977, the United States-Israel Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation (BIRD) was established to stimulate, promote, and support non-defense industrial research and development of mutual benefit to both countries in agriculture, communications, life sciences, electronics, electro-optics, energy, healthcare information technology, homeland security, software, water, and other technologies, and has provided over $300,000,000 to over 700 joint projects since its inception;

Whereas recent successful BIRD projects include the ReWalk system that helps paraplegics walk, a medical teaching simulator for Laparoscopic Hysterectomies, and a new drug to treat chronic gout;

Whereas, in 1978, the United States-Israel Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund was established as a competitive funding program for mutually beneficial, mission-oriented, strategic and applied research of agricultural problems conducted jointly by United States and Israeli scientists, and has provided over $250,000,000 to over 1,000 projects since its inception;

Whereas an independent review of the United States-Israel Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund (BARD) estimated that the dollar benefits of just 10 of its projects through 2010 came to $440,000,000 in the United States and $300,000,000 in Israel, far exceeding total investment in the program;

Whereas, in 1984, the United States and Israel began convening the Joint Economic Development Group (JEDG) to regularly discuss economic conditions and identify new opportunities for collaboration;

Whereas, in 1994, the United States-Israel Science and Technology Foundation (USISTF) was established to promote the advancement of science and technology for mutual economic benefit and has developed joint research and development programs that reach 12 States;

Whereas the United States-Israel Innovation Index (USI3), which was developed by USISTF to track and benchmark innovation relationships, ranks the United States-Israel innovation relationship as top-tier;

Whereas, in 2007, the United States-Israel Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation (BIRD) Energy program was established to provide support for joint United States-Israel research and development of renewable energy and energy efficiency, and has provided $18,000,000 to 20 joint projects since its founding;

Whereas, since 2011, the United States Department of Energy and the Israeli Ministry of National Infrastructures, Energy and Water Resources have led an annual United States-Israel Energy Meeting with participants across government agencies to facilitate bilateral cooperation in that sector;

Whereas, in 2012, Congress passed and President Barack Obama signed into law the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–150), which set United States policy to expand bilateral cooperation across the spectrum of civilian sectors, including high technology, agriculture, medicine, health, pharmaceuticals, and energy;

Whereas, in 2013, President Obama said in reference to Israel's contribution to the global economy, ''That innovation is just as important to the relationship between the United States and Israel as our security cooperation.'';

Whereas, in 2014, Secretary of the Treasury Jacob Lew said, ''As one of the most technologically-advanced and innovative economies in the world, Israel is an important economic partner to the United States.'';

Whereas, in 2014, Congress passed and President Obama signed into law the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–296), which deepened cooperation on energy, water, agriculture, trade, and defense, and expressed the sense of Congress that Israel is a major strategic partner of the United States;

Whereas the 2015 Global Venture Capital Confidence Survey ranked the United States and Israel as the two countries with the highest levels of investor confidence in the world; and

Whereas economic cooperation between the United States and Israel has also thrived at the State and local levels through both formal agreements and bilateral organizations in over 30 States that have encouraged new forms of cooperation in fields such as water conservation, cybersecurity, and alternative energy and farming technologies: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) affirms that the United States-Israel economic partnership has achieved great tangible and intangible benefits to both countries and is a foundational component of the strong alliance;

(2) recognizes that science and technology innovation present promising new frontiers for United States-Israel economic cooperation, particularly in light of widespread drought, cybersecurity attacks, and other major challenges impacting the United States;

(3) encourages the President to regularize and expand existing forums of economic dialogue with Israel and foster both public and private sector participation; and

(4) expresses support for the President to explore new agreements with Israel, including in the fields of energy, water, agriculture, medicine, neurotechnology, and cybersecurity.

SENATE RESOLUTION 91—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK MONTH IN MARCH 2017 AND WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY ON MARCH 21, 2017

Ms. STABENOW submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 91

Whereas the primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance the well-being and help meet the basic needs of all individuals, especially the most vulnerable individuals in society;

Whereas social work pioneers have helped—

(1) lead the struggle for social justice in the United States; and

(2) pave the way for positive social change for millions of people of the United States each day;

Whereas social workers work in all areas of United States society to improve happiness, health, and prosperity, including in government, schools, institutions of higher education, social service agencies, communities, the military, and mental health and health care facilities;

Whereas social workers—

(1) are key employees at the Federal, State, and local levels of government; and

(2) work to expand policies and practices that promote equity and social justice for all individuals;

Whereas, as of March 2017, there are almost 650,000 social workers in the United States, and social work is 1 of the fastest-growing careers in the United States;

Whereas social workers help individuals, organizations, communities, and the larger society tackle and solve the issues that confront the individuals, communities, and larger society;

Whereas each day social workers embody the themes of—

(A) National Professional Social Work Month in March 2017, which is ''Social Workers Stand Up!''; and

(B) World Social Work Day on March 21, 2017, which is ''Promoting Community and Environmental Stability'';

Whereas social workers have pushed for decades to ensure equal rights for all individuals, including women, African Americans,

Latinos, individuals who are disabled, individuals who are LGBTQ, and individuals of various ethnic, cultural, and religious groups;

Whereas social workers have worked to reduce racial discord by advocating for—

(1) legislation, including—

(A) the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

(B) each reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 1971 note; Public Law 89–110);

(C) the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.);

(D) the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925 et seq.); and

(E) the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148; 124 Stat. 119); and

(2) policies relating to—

(A) benefits under the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 301 et seq.);

(B) unemployment insurance; and

(C) workplace safety;

Whereas social workers are the largest group of mental health care providers in the United States, and social workers work each day to help individuals overcome substance use disorders and mental illnesses, such as depression and anxiety;

Whereas the Department of Veterans Affairs employs more than 12,000 professional social workers, and social workers help to bolster the security of the United States by providing support to active duty military personnel, veterans, and the families of active duty military personnel and veterans;

Whereas thousands of child, family, and school social workers across the United States provide assistance to protect children and improve the social and psychological functioning of children and their families;

Whereas social workers help children find loving homes and create new families through adoption;

Whereas social workers in schools work with families and schools to foster future generations by ensuring that each student reaches the full academic and personal potential of the student;

Whereas social workers work with older adults and the families of older adults—

(1) to improve quality of life and the ability to live independently as long as possible; and

(2) to have access to quality health care and mental health care; and

Whereas social workers help the United States and other nations overcome earthquakes, floods, wars, and other disasters by helping survivors receive services, including food, shelter, health care, and mental health care to address stress and anxiety: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of —

(A) National Professional Social Work Month in March 2017; and

(B) World Social Work Day on March 21, 2017;

(2) acknowledges the diligent efforts of each individual and group that promotes the importance of social work and observes National Professional Social Work Month and World Social Work Day;

(3) encourages the people of the United States to engage in appropriate ceremonies and activities to promote further awareness of the life-changing role that social workers play; and

(4) recognizes with gratitude the contributions of the millions of caring individuals that have chosen to serve the community through social work.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 10—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY SHOULD NAME THE NEXT NUCLEAR POWERED SUBMARINE OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY THE ''USS LOS ALAMOS''

Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. UDALL) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

S. CON. RES. 10

Whereas the people of Los Alamos and the Navy have a 74-year relationship that continues from the Manhattan Project through the creation of a nuclear Navy and into the current ocean-borne leg of the strategic nuclear triad of the United States;

Whereas the contributions of the people of Los Alamos and surrounding communities allowed the Navy to keep its offensive edge from World War II, through the Cold War, continuing to the emerging conflicts as of the date of adoption of this resolution;

Whereas Captain ''Deke'' Parsons was one of the first residents of Los Alamos and, along with Laureate Ramsey, oversaw the safe delivery, assembly and loading of the nuclear bomb that led to the surrender of Japan in World War II;

Whereas the people of Los Alamos and surrounding communities played a critical role in designing the nuclear portion of the first nuclear weapon to enter the arsenal of the Navy, known as the Regulus, along with atomic depth bombs, torpedoes, rockets, and even next generation weapon systems like the B61-12 precision-guided nuclear bomb;

Whereas the people of Los Alamos designed the warheads that armed the first generation Trident submarine-launched ballistic missiles of the Navy and the follow-on Trident II missile warheads used by the Navy;

Whereas the research into nuclear energy conducted by Los Alamos during World War II advanced the technical basis for the development of the nuclear propulsion systems of the Navy used aboard Los Angeles, Seawolf, Ohio, and Virginia Class submarines along with multiple naval aircraft carriers today;

Whereas the people of Los Alamos and Los Alamos National Laboratory host United States Naval Academy midshipmen every year to provide hands-on scientific and engineering experience working to solve real world challenges in national security, thereby directly contributing to the development of future Navy leadership;

Whereas the people of Los Alamos carry the solemn responsibility to assess the sea-based nuclear deterrent carried aboard Navy fleet ballistic missile submarines;

Whereas naming a submarine Los Alamos will recognize and continue to forge the longstanding relationship between the Navy and Los Alamos;

Whereas the year 2018 will mark the 75th anniversary of Los Alamos National Laboratory; and

Whereas the distinctive service and contributions from the people of Los Alamos to the Navy merits naming a vessel that embodies the heritage, service, fidelity, and achievements of the residents of Los Alamos and surrounding communities in partnership with the United States Navy; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that the Secretary of the Navy should name the next nuclear powered submarine of the United States Navy as the ''USS Los Alamos''.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 192. Mr. BLUNT proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 244, to encourage effective, voluntary investments to recruit, employ, and retain men and women who have served in the United States military with annual Federal awards to employers recognizing such efforts, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 192. Mr. BLUNT proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 244, to encourage effective, voluntary investments to recruit, employ, and retain men and women who have served in the United States military with annual Federal awards to employers recognizing such efforts, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 9, strike lines 11 through 18.

On page 9, line 19, strike ''(b) UNLAWFUL DISPLAY PROHIBITED.—''.

On page 12, lines 18 through 19, strike '', as defined in such section''.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I have 7 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., to receive testimony on U.S. Policy and Strategy in Europe.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on March 21, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., to continue a hearing entitled ''The Nomination of the Honorable Neil M. Gorsuch''.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to hold a hearing on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, beginning at 10 a.m.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, at 10 a.m.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Special Committee on Aging is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 21, 2017.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate on Tuesday, March 21, 2017 from 2:30 p.m.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION, PRODUCT SAFETY, INSURANCE, AND DATA SECURITY

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, at 2:30 p.m.

The Committee will hold Subcommittee Hearing on ''Staying a Step Ahead: Fighting Back Against scams Used to Defraud Americans.''

PRIVILEGES

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that floor privileges be granted to the following member of my staff, Ariana Spawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF MARCH 2017 AS ''NATIONAL COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH''

On Wednesday, March 15, 2017, the Senate adopted S. Res. 89, with its preamble, as follows:

S. RES. 89

Whereas colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among men and women combined in the United States;

Whereas, in 2017, more than 135,430 individuals in the United States will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer and approximately 50,260 more will die from it;

Whereas colorectal cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer because screening tests can find polyps that can be removed before becoming cancerous;

Whereas screening tests can detect colorectal cancer early, which is when treatment works best;

Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that if every individual who is 50 years of age or older had regular screening tests, as many as 60 percent of deaths from colorectal cancer could be prevented;

Whereas the 5-year survival rate for patients with localized colorectal cancer is 90 percent, but only 39 percent of all diagnoses occur at that stage;

Whereas colorectal cancer screenings can effectively reduce the incidence of colorectal cancer and mortality, but 1 in 3 adults between 50 and 75 years of age are not up to date with recommended colorectal cancer screening;

Whereas public awareness and education campaigns on colorectal cancer prevention, screening, and symptoms are held during the month of March each year; and

Whereas educational efforts can help provide to the public information on methods of prevention and screening, as well as symptoms for early detection: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports—

(A) the designation of March 2017 as ''National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month''; and

(B) the goals and ideals of National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month with appropriate awareness and educational activities.

PROVIDING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 1228, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1228) to provide for the appointment of members of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance to replace members whose terms expire during 2017, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 1228) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

HIRE VETS ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 244 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 244) to encourage effective, voluntary investments to recruit, employ, and retain men and women who have served in the United States military with annual Federal awards to employers recognizing such efforts, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Blunt amendment at the desk be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 192) was agreed to, as follows:

On page 9, strike lines 11 through 18.

On page 9, line 19, strike ''(b) UNLAWFUL DISPLAY PROHIBITED.—''.

On page 12, lines 18 through 19, strike '', as defined in such section''.

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

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 244), as amended, was passed.

RECOGNIZING THE 196TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF GREECE

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 81 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 81) recognizing the 196th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating democracy in Greece and the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 81) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 6, 2017, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 1181

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1181) to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the conditions under which certain persons may be treated as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the title of the bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2017

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 22; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. SULLIVAN. 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 7:05 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, March 22, 2017, at 10:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

HEATHER WILSON, OF SOUTH DAKOTA, TO BE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE, VICE DEBORAH LEE JAMES.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JEFFREY A. ROSEN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, VICE VICTOR M. MENDEZ.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

DAVID MALPASS, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE D. NATHAN SHEETS.

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

COURTNEY ELWOOD, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, VICE CAROLINE DIANE KRASS, RESIGNED.

THE JUDICIARY

AMUL R. THAPAR, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT, VICE BOYCE F. MARTIN JR., RETIRED.

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) RICHARD A. BROWN
REAR ADM. (LH) JAMES S. BYNUM
REAR ADM. (LH) DARYL L. CAUDLE
REAR ADM. (LH) RICHARD A. CORRELL
REAR ADM. (LH) RANDY B. CRITES
REAR ADM. (LH) DANIEL H. FILLION
REAR ADM. (LH) COLLIN P. GREEN
REAR ADM. (LH) MARY M. JACKSON
REAR ADM. (LH) JAMES W. KILBY
REAR ADM. (LH) JAMES J. MALLOY
REAR ADM. (LH) JOHN W. TAMMEN, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. WILLIAM C. GREENE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. WILLIAM S. DILLON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. JOHN A. OKON
CAPT. MICHAEL W. STUDEMAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. KEVIN M. JONES
CAPT. THOMAS J. MOREAU

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. EDWARD L. ANDERSON
CAPT. STUART P. BAKER
CAPT. MICHAEL D. BERNACCHI, JR.
CAPT. FRANK M. BRADLEY
CAPT. DANIEL L. CHEEVER
CAPT. YVETTE M. DAVIDS
CAPT. BRIAN P. FORT
CAPT. PETER A. GARVIN
CAPT. WILLIAM J. HOUSTON
CAPT. SARA A. JOYNER
CAPT. FREDERICK W. KACHER
CAPT. TIMOTHY C. KUEHHAS
CAPT. CARL A. LAHTI
CAPT. ANDREW J. LOISELLE
CAPT. DOUGLAS G. PERRY
CAPT. FRED I. PYLE
CAPT. ERIK M. ROSS
CAPT. PAUL J. SCHLISE
CAPT. PETER G. VASELY
CAPT. JAMES P. WATERS III

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. DAVID G. BELLON
BRIG. GEN. PATRICK J. HERMESMANN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. EDWARD D. BANTA
BRIG. GEN. ROBERT F. CASTELLVI
BRIG. GEN. MATTHEW G. GLAVY
BRIG. GEN. MICHAEL S. GROEN
BRIG. GEN. KEVIN M. IIAMS
BRIG. GEN. WILLIAM F. MULLEN III
BRIG. GEN. GREGG P. OLSON
BRIG. GEN. ERIC M. SMITH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. MICHAEL S. MARTIN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. JAMES H. ADAMS III
COL. ERIC E. AUSTIN
COL. JAY M. BARGERON
COL. MICHAEL J. BORGSCHULTE
COL. WILLIAM J. BOWERS
COL. DIMITRI HENRY
COL. KEITH D. REVENTLOW
COL. ROBERTA L. SHEA
COL. BENJAMIN T. WATSON
COL. CHRISTIAN F. WORTMAN

FOREIGN SERVICE

THE FOLLOWING–NAMED CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PROMOTION WITHIN THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, CLASS OF CAREER MINISTER:

ALEXANDER DICKIE IV, OF TEXAS

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 21, 2017:

UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION

CHARLES R. BREYER, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 31, 2021.

DANNY C. REEVES, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 31, 2019.

WITHDRAWAL

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on March 21, 2017 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nomination:

VINCENT VIOLA, OF NEW YORK, TO BE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY, VICE ERIC KENNETH FANNING, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON JANUARY 20, 2017.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTES HONORING FORMER CONGRESSMAN FALEOMAVAEGA ENI FA'AUA'A HUNKIN, JR.

HON. AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend and former Member of Congress Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin who served honorably as the representative for American Samoa for 26 years.

I want to thank everyone for being here and particularly want to acknowledge my friend Hinanui Hunkin, who came all the way from Utah with her children to be at this service. Because he spent over 30 years of his career in the nation's capital, it is only fitting to have a memorial service for Eni here. He would be gratified to see how he touched so many people who would come out to pay tribute to him.

Congressman Faleomavaega was a soldier and a statesman who dedicated his entire life to serving the United States and the people of American Samoa. Indeed, his entire career was devoted to public service and social justice. He was a champion of Native Americans, Native Hawaiians and the Melanesian natives of West Papua. His causes were many. He strenuously fought against nuclear weaponry, from confronting France in French Polynesia over nuclear testing to pressing for nuclear cleanup in Central Asia. He took up the cause of Korean comfort women, expressed concern about disputes in the South China Sea and even helped solve land disputes in Rapa Nui. Even as his health began to deteriorate, he refused to cut back his workload or give up any of his important causes.

Although we had our political differences, it never affected our personal friendship or devotion to the people of American Samoa. There was very little on which we disagreed when it came to the territory and, in fact, when I came into office, I picked up right where he left off in a lawsuit before the U.S. Supreme Court involving Samoan citizenship and voting rights. We both believed American Samoa's political should not be decided in a federal courtroom thousands of miles away; most importantly, it should be decided by our own people at a time of own choosing. Our approaches to issues were different and that often put us at odds with one another, but it was always with the utmost respect and grace, which allowed us to form the bond that we would come to share . . . One I am very thankful for, and will never forget. Ours was a true friendship that demonstrated that, despite our differences in political party, we can all come together for the good of those we serve. Partisan differences on national issues never interfered with our relationship because we were very much of one mind when it came to federal policy and funding for American Samoa.

As a veteran, whose long-term health suffered due to his service in Vietnam, Eni dedicated his life to improving the conditions for our veterans in American Samoa, and took great pride in securing funds to build the local VA Clinic, which has served our veterans well. Although I myself am not a veteran, I come from a family with a strong military tradition. My grandfather, father, several brothers and three nephews are, so I appreciate the needs of our veterans and am as devoted to them as Eni was.

As a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, I was in a position to offer legislation to name our local VA clinic in his honor. He was primarily responsible for the establishment of this clinic, so I could think of no more appropriate way to permanently honor his memory and legacy than by dedicating the clinic to him. Because of his long service in the House, he is remembered by many Members on both sides of the aisle who helped smooth the path for this tribute. As much as people complain about the slowness of the legislative process, my bill passed the House in less than a week, the Senate passed it a week later and in short order it was on the president's desk for signature.

After enactment of this legislation, I made arrangements for Members to speak of their colleague Eni on the floor of the House and am pleased to say that those tributes were delivered for the record, in addition to press statements made and remarks by several members on the Floor when we debated the VA clinic bill. In most of the stories written about Eni's passing, he was described as the longest serving Member of Congress in American Samoa's history. That is a title I expect will be his alone for many, many years to come, perhaps forever.

Goodbye My friend. Farewell and Godspeed.

(The Samoan version is as follows):

E muamua ona ou Fa'atulou Le Pa'ia o le Maota Namu Asi, i le Paia O le lagi, ma le lagi, ma le lagi tulou, tulouna ia, tulouna lava. O Paia o le aufaigaluega totofi a le Atua i ona Tafa'i Va'aia, ou to fa'atulou atu.

E le vaea fo'i le fala fofola loa o Samoa mai Saua e o'o atu i Salafai nu'unu'u atu fa'atini o tausala. O lo'o mamalu fo'i le aofia i le Afio Mai O Le Kovana Sili o le malo o Amerika Samoa, le tofa i le to'oto'o ia Lolo Moliga ma le Masiofo ia Cynthia, le afio i le Lutena Kovana ma le kapeneta, le paia o maota e lua i le afio o le Peresetene ma le senate, le Fofogafetalai ma le Maota o Sui, o le mamalu lava lea o le afio o le fa'amasino sili ma le vaega o fa'amasinoga tulou, tulou lava.

E le fa'agaloina le tapuaiga i uso i sisifo i le afio i le ao o le malo tuto'atasi, le Palemia ma le Palemene o Samoa, ma le usoga ia Tumua ma Pule.

Ua tu mai nei Lagi le laga'ali a Tamafaiga, a ua tagita'amilo le Manuali'i ina ua ta'ape papa, ae tafea le tau'ofe i le Afioga a Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin sa tu i le tofi o lo'o o'u tauaveina nei i Uosigitone.

O le lagia lava lea o le Tafatolu o lau faigamalo Amerika Samoa, tulou, tulou, tulou, tulouna lava.

Taluai o lea ua ou tula'i mai i le tofi Faipule i le Konekeresi i le Laumua i Uosigitone, o lea ou te fa'apea atu ai i le Faletua ia Hinanui ma le nofo a Alo loto fa'avauvau aemaise le tagi mai ala o le paia i Aiga ma Paolo ma Gafa sili i lagi tainane le Malo o Amerika Samoa ma le tapuaiga I le Malo Tuto'atasi i le Usoga Tumua ma Pule:

''Amuia e fa'anoanoa, aua e fa'amafanafanaina i latou.''

CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

HON. COLLEEN HANABUSA

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, I remember the first time I met Eni. It was in the Supreme Court of the State of Hawaii. As the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Chair for the Hawaii State Senate, I was speaking on behalf of a Circuit Court Judge, the first of American Samoan ancestry who was confirmed by the Senate and there to receive his oath of office. Eni was there, the Delegate to the Congress of the United States from American Samoa, to show his support for the Judge. Eni was so proud, as if he was being sworn in. I do know that American Samoans in Hawaii looked up to Eni as if he was their ultimate role model.

I was fortunate to serve four years in the House of Representatives with Eni. I learned from him how we each represent a constituency that deserves our advocacy, albeit that we may come from islands in the vast Pacific Ocean. I learned that our voices are equal to our colleagues and it is up to us to ensure that we are heard.

My favorite memory of Eni comes from 2012 when he performed the formal Samoan dance with his niece to honor the retirement of our much beloved and respected Senator Daniel K. Akaka. Eni told me Senator Akaka was his friend and his Senator. Eni proudly showed me his tattoos, made the traditional way. I was in awe of his strength and perseverance.

Most importantly, I will never forget the friendship of Eni and his wonderful smile and big bear hug I was so fortunate to receive whenever I saw him. Upon my return to Congress, my first questions were about Eni and if anyone had seen him.

I will miss you my friend.

My condolences to his wife, Hinanui Bambridge Cave, and their five children. Mahalo (Thank You) for sharing him with us for all these years.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF REP. ENI FALEOMAVAEGA OF AMERICAN SAMOA

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and legacy of my good friend and our former colleague from American Samoa, Congressman Eni Faleomavaega, who passed away on February 22, 2017. Throughout his 26 years here in the House of Representatives, Eni was a tireless champion for the people of American Samoa, an advocate for the U.S. territories, and leader on issues affecting the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. He was also a leader on the House Foreign Affairs Committee on issues important to the Asia-Pacific region. More importantly, he got leaders in Congress and in administration after administration to focus on the importance of the Pacific Islands. We are often overlooked in grand Asia strategy but he got policymakers to understand our importance to the world community.

I am proud to have worked with Eni on a number of issues that impact the Asia-Pacific region and the 4.5 million Americans living in the territories. For much of my time here in Congress, Eni was the longest serving representative from a U.S. territory, so he was the Dean of what we refer to as our Territorial Caucus. I leaned on his advice and appreciated his insightful perspectives that were grounded in not only his almost three decades as a Member of Congress, but also his work in public service as American Samoa's Lieutenant Governor and Deputy Attorney General, as a staffer here on Capitol Hill, and service in the U.S. Army. He, like many Members in this body, fought hard to secure much needed federal funding for American Samoa. Eni had a broad vision but never forgot his constituents. He never forgot the people that gave him the privilege to serve in this esteemed body. His depth of knowledge and compassion for the less fortunate were evident to everyone he met, and I will look back fondly on the work that we did together in Congress.

Eni's passing is a great loss for the people of American Samoa and all Americans, and we are all better for having known him. I extend my sincere condolences to his family, loved ones, and the people of American Samoa, and I join them in celebrating his memory. I thank my colleague from American Samoa, Congresswoman RADEWAGEN for organizing this Special Order, so that this body can appropriately honor and pay tribute to Congressman Faleomavaega for his years of dedicated service to his constituents and to our nation. He is deeply missed, but he will forever be remembered by all who he served.

ENI FA'AUA'A HUNKIN FALEOMAVAEGA, JR.

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the extraordinary life of Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin Faleomavaega, Jr., who passed away last month at the age of 73. Eni Faleomavaega was not only my colleague, he was my friend. Eni was the senior delegate and, therefore, the dean of the delegates. We became friends from the time I was elected in 1990. Eni was as affable as he was serious and dedicated to his constituents in American Samoa. He was the first person of Asian-Pacific descent to chair the House Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, later serving as ranking member.

Eni was fully prepared for his leadership roles in the Congress. He served his country for three years during the Vietnam War. Eni put his education at Brigham Young University and the University of Houston Law Center to a lifetime of public service. He served the people of American Samoa in critical positions. Eni Faleomavaega was deputy attorney general and, later, lieutenant governor of American Samoa. Eni was the administrative assistant to American Samoa Delegate A.U. Fuimaono before he was elected to that position himself in 1988.

Even though the District of Columbia pays federal taxes (highest per capita in the U.S.), the delegates have much in common and always worked together. When I discovered that the D.C. flag was not carried by D.C. troops as state troops do, further investigation showed that the troops of the territories also did not carry their flags. Yet, the territories and the District have served their country in notably-disproportionate numbers. All of us signed a letter to House and Senate Armed Services committees. Working together, we got this failure to acknowledge all our troops corrected by the Congress.

I was particularly appreciative of Eni's initiatives. For example, he introduced the bill to cancel the trademark using the disparaging word ''Redskins,'' the name of the District of Columbia's football team. That challenge has been vindicated, but is now on appeal.

Delegates have always supported one another on issues unique to their districts. I appreciate that all the Democratic delegates are original cosponsors of my bill to make the District of Columbia the 51st state. In the same way, we supported Eni's work against nuclear testing in the South Pacific. Eni led in the Congress on this critical issue, even boycotting then-French president Jacques Chirac's address before a joint session of Congress. Only days before that speech, France was conducting a series of nuclear tests in the South Pacific, despite protests.

Eni led the Congress on issues important to American Samoa and to our country. He set a high standard for representation. Eni Faleomavaega was kind and generous, and he was intelligent, able, dedicated, and hardworking. I miss my friend. So does the Congress.

HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF REPRESENTATIVE ENI FALEOMAVAEGA

HON. PAUL A. GOSAR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of a true statesman, Congressman Eni Faleomavaega.

I'm Congressman PAUL GOSAR and I represent Arizona's Fourth Congressional District.

I am also Chairman of the Congressional Western Caucus, Chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, and Vice-Chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

I would like to start by thanking Congresswoman AMATA for her great leadership in the House of Representatives and for organizing this bipartisan special order today to pay tribute to our colleague Eni.

On February 22, 2017, a Member of the House who served the Congress and represented the people of American Samoa for 26 years, passed away out West while at his home in Utah.

Eni was a patriot who honorably served this great nation in uniform in the U.S. Army. Unfortunately, he was exposed to Agent Orange during one of his tours, something that negatively impacted his health for the rest of his life.

Eni did not let this incident hold him back though and went on to serve our great country for nearly three decades as the Delegate for American Samoa. He also served the territory as its Lieutenant Governor.

I got to know Eni through our work together on the House Committee on Natural Resources. Eni was a passionate and effective member on issues impacting the Pacific.

Eni was a devoted husband and father of five children. Eni and his wife were active members of their church.

Family, friends and colleagues were saddened to learn of his passing last month. This demonstrates just how much he will be missed. I am confident there will be a large turnout next Saturday the 25th at his memorial service and subsequent reception that follows to celebrate his life.

Again, I would like to thank Congresswoman AMATA for organizing this most worthy tribute to our colleague Eni. Eni left big shoes to fill, but Congresswoman AMATA has stepped up, continued the excellent representation the people of American Samoa have come to expect, and become an effective leader that is respected throughout the country.

I know Eni would be proud of the Congresswoman and the great work she has done for American Samoa.

ENI FALEOMAVAEGA

HON. STEVE CHABOT

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I had the honor of serving on the Foreign Affairs Committee with Congressman Eni Faleomavaega for 16 years. We got to know each other well in 2001, when President Bush nominated the two of us to be the bipartisan Congressional Delegates to the United Nations, and we would travel to New York together to meet with our Ambassador and his diplomatic team.

During Eni's last term in Congress, I chaired the Asia Pacific Subcommittee. Eni was the subcommittee's Ranking Member. I can tell you that during that period, we disagreed from time to time on policy matters, but never were we disagreeable. Eni was the consummate

gentleman who respected the views of his colleagues, as we all respected his.

It was during that time that Eni and I had the opportunity to travel together to the Republic of Korea, Japan and Taiwan to meet with the leaders of those nations and discuss the economic, political and security issues in the region. In those many meetings, Eni was an engaged participant who clearly had earned the respect of our allies. There were two of us—one Democrat, one Republican. But there was no partisanship on that trip. Eni came not as a Democrat but as a thoughtful Member of Congress who understood the realities of the modem day Asia-Pacific region.

I think you can tell a lot about an individual Member of Congress by what his colleagues and staff think of him. In all the years I had the privilege of knowing Eni, I never heard a negative word from anybody about him. His colleagues respected him—appreciating his hard work, his dedication to this institution, his service during the Vietnam War, and his love for American Samoa. And his staff thought the world of him—as did mine.

Mr. Speaker, to his wife, Hina, and his children, grandchildren, former staff and extended family—my sincere condolences. Eni was an outstanding public servant, a proud Samoan, and a great American. He will be missed. Rest in peace, Eni.

CONGRESSMAN ENI FALEOMAVAEGA

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to recognize the long career and dedication to public service of Congressman Eni Faleomavaega. Congressman Faleomavaega passed away on February 22, 2017. He served the people of American Samoa for over thirty years, first as Lieutenant Governor and later on as their Representative.

A true patriot, Congressman Faleomavaega served his country in the Army and eventually became an officer in the United States Army Reserve, having served during the Vietnam War as a captain. As a legislator, his achievements for the people of our nation and American Samoa came through his important work with the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Committee on Natural Resources. He fought tirelessly for the prosperity and wellbeing of his people. I am proud to be able to say that I was able to serve alongside Congressman Faleomavaega in the House of Representatives from 2009–2015.

It is my honor to commemorate Eni Faleomavaega today, and I take pride in recognizing a great American and public servant. Today, his commitment to public service lives on through his great nephew, Andrew Tuitele, who is currently an intern in my district office in Aurora, Colorado.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CONGRESSMAN ENI FALEOMAVAEGA

HON. TULSI GABBARD

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, today let's honor the life and service of our dear colleague, my friend, the late Congressman Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin Faleomavaega, Jr.

My memories with Congressman Faleomavaega extend back to small-kid time, in Hawaii—he was elected to Congress as American Samoa's delegate when I was just 8 years old. On his way to and from American Samoa, he would often stop in Hawaii, pay visits to his alma mater Kahuku High School, watch a Red Raider game or two, and visit with friends and family in Hawaii's vibrant Samoan and Polynesian community. I grew up understanding and appreciating Fa'a Samoa—The Samoan Way—which like the aloha spirit, refers to how we should respect and honor one another, no matter where you're from or your stature in life. He shared this Fa'a Samoa every day with his colleagues and others in Washington, seven thousand miles from his homeland. It was a very special thing to serve alongside him as a Member of Congress when I was elected in 2012. We served on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and he often pulled me aside to talk story about his experiences on this committee, the places he'd been, and the people he'd met.

Eni was a warrior, a public servant, a devoted Christian, and a family man. He was born in Vailoatai Village in American Samoa. It's a beautiful and culturally rich island with that small-town feel where everybody knows everybody. Eni's father served in the military, so growing up, he moved around a bit. He lived in Guam and later moved to Hawaii and attended Kahuku High School and Brigham Young University on Oahu's northeast shore, eventually graduating from the main BYU campus in Utah. Eni was an active member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints alongside his wife Hinanui and their family.

Eni was a soldier in the United States Army. He served honorably in Vietnam, earned the rank of Captain, joined the Reserves decades later, and unfortunately suffered from complications associated with his exposure to Agent Orange. Throughout his four decades of service in Congress (1989–2015), he worked hard for the people of American Samoa and for our veterans, caring for them deeply and fighting for them relentlessly. As a delegate, Congressman Faleomavaega was passionate about representing his people and ensuring the communities at home had the resources they needed, especially health care and other essential services. He stanchly opposed free trade deals so that the few but impactful industries of American Samoa would not be devastated. He always put the people first, and he served with all of his heart.

So as we honor the life and service of this great man, Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin Faleomavaega, Jr., we send our deepest gratitude to his 'aiga (family) for their support and sacrifice over the years.

Traditionally, at a Samoan memorial service, guests give the grieving family hand-woven mats in a ceremonial exchange of gifts called fa'alavelave. We don't have one here today, but offer these words in their absence: Fa'afetai Tele Lava (thank you), Fa'amanuia le Atua (God bless), and Fa Soifua.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, on March 17, 2017, I was unable to be present for the recorded votes on roll call no. 170, 171, and 172. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: AYE on Hanabusa Amendment No. 11, YEA on the final passage of H.R. 1367, and AYE on the journal vote.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE HONORABLE WILLIAM F. ADOLPH, JR. OF SPRINGFIELD, PA

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Honorable William F. Adolph, Jr. of Springfield, PA on his retirement and thank him for his decades of service to Delaware County families. Bill is retiring as Representative from the 165th Legislative District in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, where he served as Chairman of the Appropriations Committee. After more than thirty years of public service, Bill has earned a record as a champion for the middle class, small and growing businesses and fiscal responsibility in Harrisburg.

Throughout his career in public service, first as a township commissioner in Springfield, as a lawmaker in Harrisburg and ultimately as the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Bill has always fought to ensure the taxpayer got the most out of every dollar government spends. He's fought to lessen the tax burden on job creators and spur economic growth. He's fought to ensure Pennsylvania's most vulnerable have access to the services they need. And he's fought to hold government accountable to the people it serves.

As important as his legislative achievements have been to Pennsylvania, perhaps his greatest legacy is the role model he's been to countless young people as a coach and through his decades-long involvement with the Springfield Youth Club. He's taught generations of Springfield's young people how to conduct themselves with integrity and responsibility—both on and off the field.

I thank Bill for all he's done for our state and our community, and I wish him the best in his retirement.

NATIONAL ROSIE THE RIVETER DAY: A TRIBUTE TO THE LONG BEACH ROSIE THE RIVETER PARK

HON. ALAN S. LOWENTHAL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I am a proud co-sponsor of House Resolution 162, which will designate March 21, 2017, as National Rosie the Riveter Day. This honor has special significance for the City of Long Beach, California which I represent.

Long Beach is one of two locations in the nation that has a park dedicated to recognizing and preserving the history and legacy of the working women, including volunteer women, of World War II.

The Long Beach Rosie the Riveter Park was dedicated in March 2006. It is a 3.2 acre park that is just steps away from where tens of thousands of women worked at Douglas Aircraft Company during WWII, assembling the planes and bombers that helped our brave service members win the war. It is also located near what was the Long Beach Airfield (now the Long Beach Municipal Airport), where during WWII Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs), commanded by 24-year-old Barbara Erickson, flew the finished warplanes to military bases around the world.

The Long Beach Rosie the Riveter Park was inspired by former Long Beach City Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske, author of the book ''Rosie the Riveter in Long Beach,'' and designed by public artist, Terry Braunstein. It features a rose colored walk-way that winds through the park so that visitors can see photographs depicting the work and efforts of these women. Visitors can access a narrated tour via cell phone and hear the song by the Four Vagabonds—''Rosie the Riveter'' that gave these women their collective and affectionate name.

At both ends of the park are a ''compass rose'' that have been etched and painted into concrete, marking the location of the park.

At the north end of the park are both a military memorial and wall with plaques commemorating the lives of those who have served our country in so many ways and outlined with a rose garden in the shape of a ''V'' for victory. The Long Beach Rosie the Riveter Park displays one of only two bas reliefs sculpted by Raymond Kaskey, who designed the same for the National World War II monument, here in Washington, D.C.

Last year, C–SPAN, in its ''Cities Tour,'' featured the Long Beach Rosie the Riveter Park because of its role in honoring the women who contributed on the home front during WWII.

As we celebrate ''National Rosie the Riveter Day,'' let us continue our efforts to recognize and preserve the history and legacy of working women, including volunteer women during World War II, as a way of promoting cooperation and fellowship among all American women and their descendants.

IN HONOR OF ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY'S WAR GARDENS

HON. MARTHA ROBY

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Alabama State University upon its 100 year anniversary of planting war gardens to aid the United States efforts in World War I.

One hundred years ago, students, staff, and faculty of the then State Normal School at Montgomery, subsequently Alabama State University, assisted and advised residents near campus and in the City of Montgomery, Alabama on how to plant war gardens. Thanks to these efforts, it was reported that in March 1918 over 1,400 black homes in Montgomery had war gardens.

These gardens were important acts of sacrifice and rationing as commercially grown produce was shipped overseas to feed our troops and food-insecure Allies during The Great War or World War I.

Next month, the ASU Department of History and Political Science and university community will plant a Memorial WWI War Garden in commemoration and in honor of what was done on our campus a century ago.

The garden will represent the pride and commitment of ASU's campus to community and to country.

It was originally on March 21, 1918 that Alabama Governor Charles Anderson declared ''Garden Days'' urging Alabamians to grow war gardens, and this day on March 21, 2017 I declare ''Garden Days'' in tribute to what was done in the Montgomery community.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor Alabama State University for its legacy of civil duty and service to both community and country.

IN RECOGNITION OF KITTY JURCIUKONIS

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Kitty Jurciukonis for her achievements as a volunteer, professional, and elected official in southeastern Pennsylvania. In recognition of these accomplishments, Mrs. Jurciukonis was posthumously awarded the Women of Achievement Award from the Delaware County Women's Commission.

Kitty worked as a tireless advocate for her community, serving as member of the Springfield Township Board of Commissioners for nineteen years, two of which were spent as President. She was also a leader in the Suburban West Realtors Association, the Springfield School District Home and School Association, and Community Education Council. She even volunteered her time and talents to help open the Springfield School District's Parent Resource Center.

The current Springfield Township Commissioner says of Kitty: ''I was humbled and honored to follow in her footsteps. . .She worked tirelessly with integrity and enthusiasm for the Township and the people she served.''

I honor all of the work Kitty accomplished in our community and the trail she blazed for the women inspired by her achievements.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for roll call votes 173, 174, 175 on Monday, March 20, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted ''Yea'' on roll call votes 173, 174, and 175.

SPECIAL TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF JUDGE BENTLEY KASSAL'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I hereby congratulate Judge Bentley Kassal on the occasion of his 100th birthday. Judge Kassal has dedicated his life to public service, and we are grateful for his contributions to the people of New York. As a member of the New York State Assembly from 1957 through 1962, Judge Kassal represented a significant portion of Manhattan's Upper West Side in the very same Assembly district that I would later serve. During his time in Albany, Judge Kassal, among other accomplishments, authored a bill establishing the New York State Council on the Arts—the very first arts council to operate in the United States.

Mr. Kassal was later elected to the New York City Civil Court in 1969 and then the New York Supreme Court in 1975. In 1982, Governor Hugh Carey appointed Judge Kassal to the Appellate Division of the New York Supreme Court. He continued in that capacity until 1993. Following his retirement from the bench, Judge Kassal has served as counsel at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher, and Flom, where he continues to provide assistance with litigation matters.

Judge Kassal is also a decorated war veteran, and was stationed abroad as an air combat intelligence officer for four years during World World II. In recognition of his distinguished military service, Judge Kassal has received the Bronze Star medal and the French Legion of Honor medal.

I am incredibly proud to count Judge Kassal as one of my constituents. The people of New York have been the fortunate beneficiaries of Judge Kassal's years of service. I wish him a warm congratulations on this special occasion, and thank him for his contributions to our community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed Roll Call vote

numbers 173, 174, and 175. Had I been present, I would have voted Aye on all of these measures.

IN RECOGNITION OF JUDGE CHRISTINE FIZZANO CANNON

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Judge Christine Fizzano Cannon for receiving the Women of Achievement Award from the Delaware County Women's Commission. The Honorable Christine Fizzano Cannon has been a leader in our community both as a small business owner and a public servant. She ran her own law firm for over ten years and has served as a Delaware County Women's Commissioner, member of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Disciplinary Board Hearing Committee, Ridley Hospital Foundation, and Delaware County Council.

In 2012, Judge Fizzano Cannon was elected to the Court of Common Pleas. In this role she handles civil and equity matters, personal injury and property damage cases, real estate, land use and zoning matters, and medical malpractice cases. She is also currently serving on the Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania, which reviews, investigates, and prosecutes judicial misconduct.

I thank Judge Fizzano Cannon for all of her work in our community, and I congratulate her on receiving this award.

RECOGNIZING THE SILHOUETTE CIVIC AND SOCIAL CLUB

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today to recognize the Silhouette Civic and Social Club, which holds a commendable record of service to the El Paso community.

This Saturday, March 25, 2017 the club will recognize their 50th anniversary. Founded in 1967, the Silhouette Civic and Social Club has served the El Paso community through events, social activities, and scholarships.

The Club's founders wanted to create an organization with a unity of sisterhood dedicated to enriching and supporting the El Paso community. Three of its founders, Doris Gary, Baby Ruth Boswell, and Edna Black, still actively participate in the organization's activities to this day.

The Silhouette Civic and Social Club, affectionately referred to as the ''Ladies with the Big Hearts,'' has graciously supported churches, shelters, and crisis centers through regular donations. They have supported El Paso's McCall Neighborhood Center, which preserves and advances the History of the African-American Community in El Paso, as well as the Reynolds Home, a shelter for homeless mothers and children.

They are most proud of providing college scholarships for deserving, honorable high school graduates. Their grass roots initiatives help young El Pasoans pursue the American Dream.

I thank the Silhouette Civic and Social Club for their efforts to improve our community and have a positive impact on the world through their generosity. The ''Ladies with the Big Hearts'' represent the compassion, selflessness, and community that is indicative of our country's southwest border and the people of El Paso that I have the distinct privilege to represent.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES B. RENACCI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 173, YEA on Roll Call No. 174, and YEA on Roll Call No. 175.

HONORING MODESTO FIRE DEPARTMENT CHIEF SEAN SLAMON

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor Modesto Fire Department Chief Sean Slamon, who announced his retirement after serving the community of Modesto for 29 years.

In 1989, Sean began his successful career with the Modesto Fire Department. Throughout his many years of service, he has held various positions, including Firefighter, Engineer, Captain, Training Captain, Battalion Chief, Division Chief of Operations and Training, and Fire Chief since August 2014.

In addition to his dedicated service, Chief Slamon previously served as President of the Training Officers section of the California Fire Chiefs Association and remains on the team as an Area Director. Currently, Sean is a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the California Fire Chiefs Association, in addition to being the former President of the Stanislaus County Fire Chiefs.

Knowing that education is the key to success, Chief Slamon obtained a Bachelor's degree in Occupational Studies from California State University, Long Beach as well as an Associate of Science degree in Fire Science from Modesto Junior College. He has furthered his education and training by obtaining numerous certificates from the California State Fire Marshalls Office and FEMA, and is a state certified instructor in numerous command and management courses.

Sean has been happily married to his wife, Shannon, for 23 years. Together, they have two children: Zachary, a Cal Poly San Luis Obispo graduate who is currently serving as an Airman 1st Class in the United States Air Force, and Courtney, a Senior in High School, who will be attending Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in the Fall.

Chief Slamon's 29 years of experience, knowledge, and commitment are unparalelled. His expertise has led him on a new journey as the Fire Chief of the Carson City Fire Department.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and commending the outstanding contributions made to the Modesto Fire Department by Chief Sean Slamon as we wish him continued success in his future endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF STEPHANIE (SAM) FLEETMAN

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Stephanie (Sam) Fleetman for receiving the Women of Achievement Award from the Delaware County Women's Commission. Sam is the CEO of Mustang Expedition, Inc.—a nationally recognized full-service delivery carrier. She has grown the company from one truck and a few employees to a multi-million dollar company employing over 50 individuals.

While reaching success in a male-oriented industry, Sam has also been a leader in her community. She has served as Chair of the Board of Directors for the Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association—only the second woman to do so in eighty-six years—and the Delaware County Historical Society. And she previously held positions as the President of the Bridgewater Park Association and the Sharon Alumnae Association.

I thank Sam for all she's done professionally and philanthropically in our community and congratulate her on receiving this important award.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JAMES COTTON

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and commemorate the remarkable life of James Cotton who passed away on March 16, 2017, at the age of 81. Mr. Cotton was a pioneering harmonica player who helped establish his instrument as an integral part of modern blues.

James Henry Cotton was born on July 1, 1935 in Tunica, MS, the youngest of eight brothers and sisters. His parents, Hattie and Mose were sharecroppers who worked on a cotton plantation and his father was also the preacher at the local Baptist church. Mr. Cotton was inspired to take up the harmonica by his mother and by the time he was 7 years old, he was performing for small change on the streets of nearby towns in the Mississippi Delta. At age 9, he moved in with Sonny Boy Williamson II to learn the instrument and Sonny Boy remained his hero for the rest of his life.

Around 1950, Mr. Cotton moved to West Memphis with Sonny Boy, which is where Howlin' Wolf heard him. Mr. Cotton played with Howlin' Wolf appearing in some of the recordings he made with Sam Phillips at Sun Records, in Memphis, in the early 1950s. In 1954, he also made four recordings under his own name for Sun. Mr. Cotton also played with Muddy Waters in Chicago where he contributed to classics like ''Got my Mojo Working'' and ''Rock Me.'' In 1966, Mr. Cotton embarked on a solo career when he formed the

James Cotton Blues Band which performed with popular acts like Janis Joplin, the Grateful Dead, Led Zeppelin, B.B. King, Santana, and many others. In 1977, Mr. Cotton reunited with Muddy Waters for the album ''Hard Again,'' which won a Grammy Award for best ethnic or traditional recording.

His work influenced several major blues-rock groups of the era such as the Allman Brothers, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, and the Electric Flag. He was much imitated but never duplicated. Mr. Cotton continued to play in concerts and on records well into his 70s and released some two dozen albums. Mr. Cotton moved from Chicago to Memphis in the 1990s, after the death of his first wife, Ceola and he settled in Austin in 2010. In 1997, his album ''Deep in the Blues'' won a Grammy for best traditional blues album and his 2013 album ''Cotton Mouth Man'' was nominated. Mr. Cotton also won several W.C. Handy International Blues Awards (known as the Blues Music Awards since 2006) long considered among the highest accolades for musicians working in Blues. Mr. Cotton was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame in 2006.

Mr. Cotton is survived by his wife and manager, Jacklyn Hairston Cotton; his two daughters, Teresa Hampton and Marshall Ann Cotton; a son, James Patrick Cotton; and numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren. His was a life well lived.

TESTIMONY OF MNIKESA WHITAKER-HAAHEIM ON THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the testimony of one of my constituents—Mnikesa Whitaker-Haaheim. She is an English teacher who has won teacher of the year twice. She is also living with and dying from a debilitating disease. These are her words:

''The debate about healthcare has turned into something of a spectacle—as if it exists apart from the flesh and bones that are experiencing the consequences of the decisions being made. I think it is exceedingly important to talk about the felt experience of illness.

The feeling like an elephant's sitting on my chest—daily—because I have pulmonary fibrosis. No, I have never smoked. Not cigarettes. Not anything. Ever. I am simply sick. The feeling of my leg bones splintering, waking me up with the pain, several times a night, several times a week. Each leg is splayed beneath me as if I'd fallen from a window. Of course that's not what happened. This is just what joints and muscles feel like as a part of my rare disease.

The feeling of having a widespread flu-like, bone-crushing ache that does not end. I don't have the flu. I have a rare, autoimmune disease. This is what my entire body feels like 90% of the time. The feeling of choking without warning, regularly on coffee. On water. On my own spit. This is what my disease feels like.

The feelings I'm talking about are what it is like to not be able to take a deep breath, ever, because over 70% of my lungs have turned to hardened, stony, scar tissue. The feeling of not even remembering what it is like to take a deep breath.

Because my particular disease is one that is categorized as autoimmune, it would be several months before we got the correct diagnosis; autoimmunity is notoriously difficult to diagnose.

And unless you are a specialized medical professional or happen to know someone who is afflicted by rheumotoid disorders, you have likely never heard of what I have: anti-synthetase syndrome. It is rare, progressive and aggressive. Often it is fatal, especially with the amount of lung damage that I have incurred.

When after over 2 years of chemotherapy, the progression of my pulmonary fibrosis and overall disease process was not successfully remaining stable, I had to go on supplemental oxygen. Within 6 months, I was getting so sick that I eventually had to medically retire at 36 years old; it was a heartbreaking decision.

I loved my job, and I was very good at it. Without the protections afforded to me through the Affordable Care Act, my oxygen, the cost of seeing my numerous specialists, paying for 14 medications, admissions to the hospital, and life-threatening emergency trips to the ER would be nothing short of financially catastrophic for my family.

A rare disease like mine baffles many doctors. It has not been uncommon for my caretakers to have to spend hours on the phone with insurance companies fighting for a drug that is literally thousands of dollars but necessary for my treatment.

When you have a rare illness, you often have to try new things. Insurance companies will unabashedly see you as a risk. Why? You are expensive, rare and dying. That is an unholy trinity.

But since the Affordable Care Act, my medications have been affordable. Access to care is NOT accessible if you cannot afford it, and what the ACA has done is create a safeguard so that the care that my doctors have prescribed for one of their sickest patients is truly accessible to that patient because I can afford it.

I come from a family who has, for generations, always worked and always paid into ''the system.'' There are next to no services available for a relatively young woman like me at Social Services; I know. I've checked. I am not old enough for a full teacher's pension, but do receive a small disability allowance.

I need you to understand that people like me are not asking for anything for free. I am willing to continue to pay for the quality healthcare that I have had. I am willing for there to be changes made to it.

I find it unconscionable, however, that decisions can be made regarding life and death without actual regard for the felt lives and actual deaths that you will be responsible for if you repeal the ACA.

I do not know the course that my disease will take. But I have the blood of some powerful ancestors flowing in me, and their fight for life continues in me as well. I am honored to do so in their memory and on behalf of the millions of Americans who do not have the words or the ability to speak for themselves yet are terrified of losing their affordable, solid coverage under the ACA.''

Those were her words—and she is not alone in her fear of repeal. We owe it to Mnikesa and everyone like her across the country to protect their health care—and to reject this repeal bill.

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NATIONAL GUARD HOME RULE ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the District of Columbia National Guard Home Rule Act, a bill that would give the mayor of the District of Columbia authority to deploy the D.C. National Guard, after consultation with the Commanding General of the D.C. National Guard, with the President retaining authority on federal matters. In local emergencies, including natural disasters and civil disturbances unrelated to national or homeland security, the mayor of the District should have the same authority that governors exercise over the National Guard in their states. Each governor—including the governors of three U.S. territories with Guards—has the authority to deploy the National Guard to protect his or her state or territory, just as local militia did historically.

The National Guards in the 50 states and territories operate under dual federal and local jurisdiction. Yet only the President currently has the authority to deploy the D.C. National Guard for both national and local purposes. Today, by far the most likely need for the D.C. National Guard here would be for natural disasters, such as hurricanes and floods, and to restore order in the wake of civil disturbances. The mayor, who knows the city better than any federal official and who works closely with federal security officials, should be able to call on the D.C. National Guard for local natural disasters and civil disturbances, after consultation with the Commanding General of the D.C. National Guard. The President should be focused on national matters, including homeland security, not local D.C. matters. Homeland security authority, with respect to the D.C. National Guard, would remain the sole province of the President, along with the power to federalize the D.C. National Guard for federal matters at will. It does no harm to give the mayor authority to deploy the Guard for civil disturbances and natural disasters. However, it could do significant harm to leave the mayor powerless to act quickly. If it makes sense that governors would have control over the deployment of their National Guards, it makes equal sense for the mayor of the District, with a population the size of a small state, to have the same authority.

The mayor of the District, as chief executive, should have the authority to deploy the D.C. National Guard in instances that do not rise to the level of federal homeland security activities. My bill permits the mayor to only deploy the D.C. National Guard after consultation with the Commanding General of the D.C. National Guard. The bill is another important step toward completing the transfer of full self-government powers to the District. Congress began with the passage of the Home Rule Act of 1973, when it delegated most of its authority over District matters to an elected mayor and Council. The bill follows that model.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, March 20, 2017, I missed votes due to unavoidable flight delays. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on roll call votes no. 173, 174 and 175.

SAN JACINTO COLLEGE NAMED 5TH BEST COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN THE NATION

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate San Jacinto College of Houston, TX, for being named the fifth best community college in the country by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program.

Ten top-notch community colleges were nominated for the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence Award for the schools' student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings for graduates and accessibility and success of minority and lower income students. San Jacinto was recognized because of its extreme focus on supporting and working with students to ensure they are the most equipped to find a job and prepare for life after graduation. Between 2007 and 2015, the number of certificates and associate degrees San Jacinto College has awarded has increased by an impressive 140 percent. San Jacinto College works closely with local workforce to develop degree programs that match employment needs and their strong leadership is paying off for their students and our local money.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to San Jacinto College for being named the fifth best community college in the country. We are proud of their strong commitment to prepare students for life after graduation. Keep up the good work.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD SECTOR ST. PETERSBURG AND HONORING THE LIFE OF ANDREW DILLMAN

HON. CHARLIE CRIST

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. CRIST. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the courageous men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg, located in Florida's 13th District, and a brave St. Petersburg resident, Andrew Dillman.

Last week, amid high winds and rough seas, the U.S. Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg, led by its Commander, Captain Holly Najarian and Deputy Commander Randall Brown, responded to multiple search-and-rescue calls. Within a 12-hour timespan, they assisted 18 individuals in distress, seven of which were pulled from the water.

Pinellas County is a peninsula, on the peninsula of Florida. As such, we are fortunate to have three major Coast Guard Commands, Sector St. Petersburg, Station Sand Key, and Air Station Clearwater, that patrol our waters every day. The work they do is indispensable, and to those seven people pulled from the water last week, it was the difference between life and death. I salute the Coast Guard for their service, protecting our people, property, and national security along our coastline. And I will fight for them, providing the resources needed to carry out their critical mission. Their budget should be strengthened, not depleted or diminished.

Sadly, last week we were also reminded of the importance of the U.S. Coast Guard through tragedy. One of my constituents, Andrew Dillman, a brave young man and crewman for a local boat charter company, perished in the turbulent waters off Shell Key attempting to rescue a college student under his care. A powerful rip current overtook Andrew and Chinese student Jie Luo. I offer my deepest condolences to their families, and our prayers are with their loved ones during this most difficult time.

Mr. Speaker, putting service before self is a hallmark of the U.S. Coast Guard, and Mr. Dillman exhibited that same spirit with his actions. This willingness to sacrifice represents the best of who we are as human beings. We give thanks for their courage, may it inspire us to always be our brother's keeper.

I am humbled to have this opportunity to honor the service of our U.S. Coast Guard and the life of Mr. Andrew Dillman. May he rest in eternal peace.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, on March 20, 2017, I was unavoidably detained during Roll Call vote numbers 173, 174 and 175. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 173, YEA on Roll Call No. 174, and YEA on Roll Call No. 175.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER WELCH

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, due to my participation in a meeting with President Trump at the White House, I was unable to vote on Roll Call 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, and 135. Had I been present, I would have voted:

Roll Call 129: "Nay"
Roll Call 130: "Nay"
Roll Call 131: "Nay"
Roll Call 132: "Aye"
Roll Call 133: "Nay"
Roll Call 134: "Aye"
Roll Call 135: "Aye"

CINCO RANCH STUDENTS WIN 3RD IN C–SPAN'S VIDEO COMPETITION

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jayden Fitts and Keaton Urioste of Katy, TX, for winning third place in C–SPAN's national 2017 StudentCam competition.

Since 2006, C–SPAN has invited middle and high school students to produce short documentaries on an issue of national importance. This year students were asked to answer, "Your message to Washington: What is the most urgent issue for the new president and Congress to address in 2017?" Jayden and Keaton's documentary, "Putting Unemployment Out of Business," focused on America's unemployment problem and what can be done to fix it. Jayden and Keaton were awarded $750 for their hard work. The two students are freshmen at Cinco Ranch High School.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Jayden and Keaton for winning third place in the 2017 StudentCam competition. We are very proud of them and look forward to their future successes.

VETERANS 2ND AMENDMENT PROTECTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ELIZABETH H. ESTY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, on March 16th, 2017, during debate on H.R. 1181, the Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act, the official positions of several veteran services organizations were discussed. To clarify remarks I made during that debate, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) did not take an official position on H.R. 1181 prior to the House's consideration of the bill, nor has IAVA publicly discussed why they have not taken a position on this bill in the 115th Congress. I regret any confusion that may have been caused by my remarks.

RECOGNIZING LISA COHEN, FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WASHINGTON GLOBAL HEALTH ALLIANCE

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Lisa Cohen, the Founder and Executive Director of the Washington Global Health Alliance. As Lisa steps down from her ten years of service to the organization, we acknowledge the successes of the WGHA under her leadership, and we thank her for her tireless service to the greater Puget Sound region.

WGHA was founded with the goal of facilitating collaboration between various health

and globally-focused organizations—empowering them to more effectively face the most challenging global health issues. Under Lisa Cohen's leadership, the WGHA has done exactly that; it has channeled the resources of Washington's vibrant healthcare sector.

In the time that I have represented Washington's 9th District, I have had the privilege of attending many WGHA forums and healthcare advocacy meetings. In the past ten years, Lisa Cohen has moderated more than 100 panels and presented to over 50,000 people. WGHA now has over 70 members who, because of her commitment to collaboration, are now better able to serve the communities they touch. It has been an honor to watch WGHA as it has built an international network that achieves more in a more efficient manner.

Lisa Cohen has not only helped to set WGHA on a path to success, she has tirelessly served the greater Puget Sound community. Her list of accomplishments include channeling resources to many of those who are most at-risk in our community, mapping the state's global health community, cofounding Global to Local, and leading the Washington Global Health Fund and Global Health Nexus. As a huge proponent of collaboration, Lisa has helped to form Washington's organizations into a community, so that they can collectively tackle the world's most pressing issues.

Lisa Cohen's unique ability to bring people together has left our community better equipped to handle future health challenges. As she takes her next steps, I know she will continue to make a positive impact and help to make our world a better place.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I recognize the global health work that Lisa Cohen has done in our community and wish her well in her future endeavors.

INTRODUCTION OF THE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE TRUST FUND ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, America's water systems are in crisis. The American Society of Civil Engineers 2017 report card graded our wastewater infrastructure a D+, while drinking water received a D. While our clean water needs are estimated to be nearly $11 billion per year, appropriations for clean water infrastructure have averaged just $1.4 billion per year over the past five years. Drinking water infrastructure is in worse shape—the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that we need to invest over $19 billion annually to ensure the provision of safe tap water, while Congress appro riates less than $1 billion. Though most of our water and wastewater systems are 75 to 100 years old, these growing challenges are not due to age alone: federal investment has fallen more than 85 percent since 1977.

Our failure to maintain and improve our water infrastructure doesn't only result in a poor grade on paper, it has real and dangerous outcomes, like the ongoing lead crisis in Flint, MI or lead-tainted water in Portland Public Schools. Water infrastructure-related problems are not confined to attention-grabbing headlines. Last year alone, American communities suffered more than 250,000 water main breaks and saw overflowing combined sewer systems—causing contamination, property damage, disruptions in the water supply, and massive traffic jams. These problems will only increase. It is time to establish a dedicated trust fund for water infrastructure similar to the Highway Trust Fund.

In honor of Water Week, today, I'm introducing the Water Infrastructure Trust Fund Act. This bipartisan bill will provide a small, deficit-neutral source of revenue to help states replace, repair, and rehabilitate critical clean and drinking water facilities. Half of the trust fund revenue will be distributed to local governments as grants and loans through the existing Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) for wastewater treatment construction, while the other 50 percent will be distributed through the existing Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) to finance projects to meet federal drinking water standards.

The Water Infrastructure Trust Fund Act is a step in the right direction to addressing our growing water challenges, keeping our kids and families healthy and our communities safe, livable, and economically secure.

SUGAR LAND SENIOR REGENERON STS FINALIST

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Bryon Xu of Sugar Land, TX, for being named a Regeneron Science Talent Search (STS) 2017 finalist.

Bryon was awarded $100,000 for winning fourth place out of 1,749 high school seniors for his project, Direct Determination of Ocean Temperature Profiles from Seismic Oceanography. He developed a method of measuring ocean temperature that can fill in the gaps existing with current techniques, such as satellites and probes. The Regeneron STS award is based on students' originality and creative thinking, as well as their achievement and leadership. In his spare time, Bryon is a member of the Mu Alpha Theta club for mathematics, coaches a local Mathcounts team and tutors science. He has also developed a web app to help with Science Olympiad event.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Bryon Xu for winning fourth place in this esteemed competition. We are confident he will have a successful future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER WELCH

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, because of flight cancellations due to inclement weather, I was unable to vote on Roll Call 159, 160, and 161. Had I been present, I would have voted:

Roll Call 159: "Aye"

Roll Call 160: "Aye"

Roll Call 161: "Nay"

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1857–S1898

Measures Introduced: Twenty-four bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 669–692, S. Res. 90–91, and S. Con. Res. 10. **Pages S1890–91**

Measures Reported:

S. 19, to provide opportunities for broadband investment, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 115–4)

S. 89, to amend title 46, United States Code, to exempt old vessels that only operate within inland waterways from the fire-retardant materials requirement if the owners of such vessels make annual structural alterations to at least 10 percent of the areas of the vessels that are not constructed of fire-retardant materials and for other purposes. (S. Rept. No. 115–5)

S. 96, to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure the integrity of voice communications and to prevent unjust or unreasonable discrimination among areas of the United States in the delivery of such communications. (S. Rept. No. 115–6)

S. 140, to amend the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 to clarify the use of amounts in the WMAT Settlement Fund. (S. Rept. No. 115–7)

Measures Passed:

Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska Rule: By 52 yeas to 47 nays (Vote No. 92), Senate passed H.J. Res. 69, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Department of the Interior relating to "Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska", after agreeing to the motion to proceed. **Pages S1864–84**

Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance: Senate passed H.R. 1228, to provide for the appointment of members of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance to replace members whose terms expire during 2017. **Page S1897**

Honoring Investments in Recruiting and Employing American Military Veterans Act: Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 244, to encourage effective, voluntary investments to recruit, employ, and retain men and women who have served in the United States military with annual Federal awards to employers recognizing such efforts, and the bill was then passed, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Page S1897**

Sullivan (for Blunt) Amendment No. 192, to improve the HIRE Vets Medallion Program. **Page S1897**

Independence of Greece 196th Anniversary: Committee on Foreign Relations was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 81, recognizing the 196th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating democracy in Greece and the United States, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S1897**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By a unanimous vote of 98 yeas (Vote No. EX. 91), Danny C. Reeves, of Kentucky, to be a Member of the United States Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2019.

By a unanimous vote of 98 yeas (Vote No. EX. 91), Charles R. Breyer, of California, to be a Member of the United States Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2021. **Pages S1862–64**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Heather Wilson, of South Dakota, to be Secretary of the Air Force.

Jeffrey A. Rosen, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation.

David Malpass, of New York, to be an Under Secretary of the Treasury.

Courtney Elwood, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Amul R. Thapar, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

21 Marine Corps nominations in the rank of general.

37 Navy nominations in the rank of admiral.

A routine list in the Foreign Service. **Page S1898**

Nomination Withdrawn: Senate received notification of withdrawal of the following nomination:

Vincent Viola, of New York, to be Secretary of the Army, which was sent to the Senate on January 20, 2017. **Page S1898**

Messages from the House: **Page S1889**

Measures Referred: **Pages S1889–90**

Measures Read the First Time: **Page S1897**

Enrolled Bills Presented: **Page S1890**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1891–93**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1893–96**

Additional Statements: **Pages S1887–89**

Amendments Submitted: **Page S1896**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S1896–97**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—92) **Pages S1863, S1884**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10:30 a.m. and adjourned at 7:05 p.m., until 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 22, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on pages S1897–98.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

U.S. POLICY AND STRATEGY IN EUROPE

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine United States policy and strategy in Europe, after receiving testimony from General Philip M. Breedlove, USAF (Ret.), Georgia Institute of Technology Sam Nunn School of International Affairs; William J. Burns, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; and Alexander R. Vershbow, Atlantic Council Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security.

SCAMS USED TO DEFRAUD AMERICANS

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security concluded a hearing to examine fighting back against scams used to defraud Americans, after receiving testimony from Maureen K. Ohlhausen, Acting Chairman, and Terrell McSweeney, Commissioner, both of the Federal Trade Commission; Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, Columbus; Frank Abagnale, Abagnale and Associates, Washington, D.C.; and Michael Schwanke, Wichita, Kansas.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine opportunities to improve and expand infrastructure important to Federal lands, recreation, water, and resources, after receiving testimony from Marcia Argust, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Washington, D.C.; Bob Bonar, Snowbird Ski and Summer Resort, Snowbird, Utah; Jill Simmons, Washington Trails Association, Seattle; David B. Spears, Association of American State Geologists, Charlottesville, Virginia; Chris Treese, Colorado River Water Conservation District, Glenwood Springs; and Bradley Worsley, Novo Power, LLC, Snowflake, Arizona.

FDA USER FEE AGREEMENTS

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Food and Drug Administration user fee agreements, focusing on improving medical product innovation for patients, after receiving testimony from Janet Woodcock, Director, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Peter Marks, Director, Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, and Jeffrey Shuren, Director, Center for Devices and Radiological Health, all of the Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services.

NOMINATION

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee continued hearings to examine the nomination of Neil M. Gorsuch, of Colorado, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, the nominee testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

Hearings recessed subject to the call and will meet again on Wednesday, March 22, 2017.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

RAISING GRANDCHILDREN IN THE OPIOID CRISIS

Special Committee on Aging: Committee concluded a hearing to examine raising grandchildren in the opioid crisis and beyond, after receiving testimony from Jaia Peterson Lent, Generations United, Washington, D.C.; Megan L. Dolbin-MacNab, Virginia Tech Center for Gerontology, Blacksburg; Bette Hoxie, Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and the Kinship Program, Orono; and Sharon McDaniel, A Second Chance, Inc., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 20 public bills, H.R. 1644–1663; and 7 resolutions, H. Res. 213–219 were introduced. **Pages H2286–87**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H2288–89**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H. Res. 154, resolution of inquiry requesting the President of the United States and directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to transmit certain information to the House of Representatives relating to plans to repeal or replace the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the health-related measures of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010; adversely (H. Rept. 115–54). **Page H2286**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Jenkins (WV) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H2243**

Recess: The House recessed at 11:02 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H2249**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Pastor Chris Bell, 3 Circle Church, Fairhope, Alabama. **Pages H2249–50**

Suspensions—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures which were debated on Monday, March 20th:

Transparency in Technological Acquisitions Act of 2017: H.R. 1353, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require certain additional information to be submitted to Congress regarding the strategic 5-year technology investment plan of the Transportation Security Administration, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 414 yeas to 2 nays, Roll No. 178; and **Pages H2259–60**

Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Technical Corrections Act of 2017: H.R. 1297, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make technical corrections to the requirement that the Secretary of Homeland Security submit quadrennial homeland security reviews, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 415 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 181. **Pages H2276–77**

Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017: The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass S. 305, to amend title 4, United States Code, to encourage the display of the flag of the United States on National Vietnam War Veterans Day. **Page H2267**

Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017: The House considered H.R. 372, to restore the application of the Federal antitrust laws to the business of health insurance to protect competition and consumers. Consideration is expected to resume tomorrow, March 22nd. **Pages H2267–75**

Considered the Rosen motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on the Judiciary with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment. **Pages H2274–75**

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–8 shall be considered as adopted, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill. **Page H2267**

H. Res. 209, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 372) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 234 ayes to 182 noes, Roll No. 177, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 231 yeas to 185 nays, Roll No. 176. **Pages H2252–59**

Recess: The House recessed at 3:31 p.m. and reconvened at 4:12 p.m. **Page H2275**

Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2017—Rule for Consideration: The House agreed to H. Res. 210, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1101) to amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to improve access and choice for entrepreneurs with small businesses with respect to medical care for their employees, by a recorded vote of 233 ayes to 186 noes, Roll No. 180, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 233 yeas to 186 nays, Roll No. 179. **Pages H2260–67, H2275–76**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Four yea-and-nay votes and two recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H2258–59, H2259, H2259–60, H2275, H2275–76, and H2276–77. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Committee Meetings

THE NEXT FARM BILL: NUTRITION DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS

Committee on Agriculture: Subcommittee on Nutrition held a hearing entitled "The Next Farm Bill: Nutrition Distribution Programs". Testimony was heard

from Diane Kriviski, Deputy Administrator, Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs, Food and Nutrition Service; and public witnesses.

THE NEXT FARM BILL: LIVESTOCK PRODUCER PERSPECTIVES

Committee on Agriculture: Subcommittee on Livestock and Foreign Agriculture held a hearing entitled ''The Next Farm Bill: Livestock Producer Perspectives''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

AMERICA'S ROLE IN THE WORLD

Committee on Armed Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''America's Role in the World''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES OF THE MILITARY SERVICES

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing entitled ''Social Media Policies of the Military Services''. Testimony was heard from Lieutenant General Mark A. Brilakis, Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, U.S. Marine Corps; Vice Admiral Robert P. Burke, Chief of Naval Personnel, U.S. Navy; Major General Jason Evans, Director, Military Personnel Management, U.S. Army; Lieutenant General Gina M. Grosso, Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services, U.S. Air Force; and Anthony M. Kurta, Performing the Duties of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Office of the Secretary of Defense.

IMPROVING FEDERAL STUDENT AID TO BETTER MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development held a hearing entitled ''Improving Federal Student Aid to Better Meet the Needs of Students''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

BROADBAND: DEPLOYING AMERICA'S 21ST CENTURY INFRASTRUCTURE

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Broadband: Deploying America's 21st Century Infrastructure''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

FENTANYL: THE NEXT WAVE OF THE OPIOID CRISIS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Fentanyl: The Next Wave of the Opioid Crisis''. Testimony was heard from Matthew Allen, Assistant Director, Homeland Security Investigative Programs, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security; William Brownfield, Assistant Secretary of State, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Department of State; Kemp Chester, Acting Deputy Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy; Wilson Compton, Deputy Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health; Debra Houry, Director, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and Louis Milione, Assistant Administrator, Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration.

THE BUREAU OF CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION'S UNCONSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''The Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection's Unconstitutional Design''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

ENDING THE DE NOVO DROUGHT: EXAMINING THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR DE NOVO FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit held a hearing entitled ''Ending the De Novo Drought: Examining the Application Process for De Novo Financial Institutions''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

PRESSURING NORTH KOREA: EVALUATING OPTIONS

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific held a hearing entitled ''Pressuring North Korea: Evaluating Options''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security held a business meeting on adoption of the Subcommittee's Rules of Procedure and Statement of Policy for Private Immigration Bills; Statement of Policy on Federal Charters; and Request DHS Departmental Reports on the Beneficiaries of H.R. 349, H.R. 780, and H.R. 461. The subcommittee's Rules of Procedure and Statement of Policy for Private Immigration Bills; Statement of Policy on Federal Charters; and Request for DHS Departmental Reports on the Beneficiaries of H.R. 349, H.R. 780, and H.R. 461 were adopted.

EXAMINING SYSTEMIC MANAGEMENT AND FISCAL CHALLENGES WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Examining Systemic Management

and Fiscal Challenges within the Department of Justice''. Testimony was heard from Michael Horowitz, Inspector General, Department of Justice; and Diana Maurer, Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues, Government Accountability Office.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DOMESTICALLY SOURCED RAW MATERIALS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing entitled ''The Importance of Domestically Sourced Raw Materials for Infrastructure Projects''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

$125 BILLION IN SAVINGS IGNORED: REVIEW OF DOD'S EFFICIENCY STUDY

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''$125 Billion in Savings Ignored: Review of DoD's Efficiency Study''. Testimony was heard from David Tillotson III, Acting Deputy Chief Management Officer, Department of Defense; Michael Bayer, Chairman, Defense Business Board; and public witnesses.

EXAMINING GAO FINDINGS ON DEFICIENCIES AT THE BUREAU OF SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy and Environment held a hearing entitled ''Examining GAO Findings on Deficiencies at the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement''. Testimony was heard from Richard T. Cardinale, Acting Assistant Secretary for Lands and Minerals Management, Department of the Interior; and Frank Rusco, Director, Natural Resources and Environment-Energy Issues, Government Accountability Office.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION PART II: FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR SCIENCE

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Research and Technology held a hearing entitled ''National Science Foundation Part II: Future Opportunities and Challenges for Science''. Testimony was heard from Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Acting Chief Operating Officer, National Science Foundation; and Maria Zuber, Chair, National Science Board; and public witnesses.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing on H.R. 1461, the ''Veterans, Employees, and Taxpayers Protection Act of 2017''. Testimony was heard from Kimberly Perkins McLeod, Acting Executive Director, Labor Management Relations, Department of Veterans Affairs; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Defense, to hold hearings to examine defense readiness and budget update, 10:30 a.m., SD–192.

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Airland, to hold hearings to examine Army modernization, 3:30 p.m., SR–222.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: to hold hearings to examine the promises and perils of emerging technologies for cybersecurity, 10 a.m., SD–106.

Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard, to hold hearings to examine the state of the Coast Guard, focusing on ensuring military, national security, and enforcement capability and readiness, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: business meeting to consider S. 512, to modernize the regulation of nuclear energy, 10 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the state of global humanitarian affairs, 10 a.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of R. Alexander Acosta, of Florida, to be Secretary of Labor, 9 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine perspectives from the DHS frontline, focusing on evaluating staffing resources and requirements, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: to continue hearings to examine the nomination of Neil M. Gorsuch, of Colorado, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: to hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of multiple veterans service organizations, 10 a.m., SD–G50.

House

Committee on Agriculture, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The Next Farm Bill: Dairy Policy'', 10 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Appropriations, Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, oversight hearing on Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General, 10 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The Evolution of Hybrid Warfare and Key Challenges'', 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Readiness, hearing entitled ''The Current State of the U.S. Air Force'', 2 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Environment, hearing on H.R. 806, the ''Ozone Standards Implementation Act of 2017'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Examining FDA's Prescription Drug User Fee Program'', 10:15 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Ethics, Full Committee, organizational meeting for the 115th Congress, 1:30 p.m., 1015 Longworth.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade, hearing entitled ''Examining Results and Accountability at the World Bank'', 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Securities, and Investment, hearing entitled ''The JOBS Act at Five: Examining Its Impact and Ensuring the Competitiveness of the U.S. Capital Markets'', 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled ''Anti-Semitism Across Borders'', 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats, hearing entitled ''U.S. Policy Toward the Baltic States'', 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''A Borderless Battle: Defending Against Cyber Threats'', 10 a.m., HVC–210.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1393, the ''Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act of 2017''; H.R. 695, the ''Child Protection Improvements Act of 2017''; H.R. 883, the ''Targeting Child Predators Act of 2017''; and H.R. 1188, the ''Adam Walsh Reauthorization Act of 2017'', 11 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs, hearing entitled ''The Status of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority Restructuring Support Agreement'', 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Law Enforcement's Use of Facial Recognition Technology'', 9:30 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Healthcare, Benefits, and Administrative Rules, hearing entitled ''Examining the Impact of Voluntary Restricted Distribution Systems in the Pharmaceutical Supply Chain'', 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on the ''American Health Care Act of 2017'', 10 a.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Space, hearing entitled ''The ISS after 2024: Options and Impacts'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Making Washington Work For America's Small Businesses'', 11 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Healthy Hiring: Enabling VA to Recruit and Retain Quality Providers'', 2 p.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Oversight; and Subcommittee on Social Security, joint hearing entitled ''Examining the Social Security Administration's Representative Payee Program: Who Provides Help'', 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Joint Meetings

Joint Hearing: Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, to hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of multiple veterans service organizations, 10 a.m., SD–G50.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD

Week of March 22 through March 24, 2017

Senate Chamber

During the balance of the week, Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Senate Committees

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: March 23, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Sonny Perdue, of Georgia, to be Secretary of Agriculture, 10 a.m., SR–325.

Committee on Appropriations: March 22, Subcommittee on Department of Defense, to hold hearings to examine defense readiness and budget update, 10:30 a.m., SD–192.

Committee on Armed Services: March 22, Subcommittee on Airland, to hold hearings to examine Army modernization, 3:30 p.m., SR–222.

March 23, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine United States European Command, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

March 23, Subcommittee on Personnel, to hold hearings to examine Department of Defense civilian personnel reform, 2:30 p.m., SR–232A.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: March 23, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Jay Clayton, of New York, to be a Member of the Securities and Exchange Commission, 9:30 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: March 22, to hold hearings to examine the promises and perils of emerging technologies for cybersecurity, 10 a.m., SD–106.

March 22, Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard, to hold hearings to examine the state of the Coast Guard, focusing on ensuring military, national security, and enforcement capability and readiness, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

March 23, Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security, to hold hearings to examine FAA reauthorization, focusing on perspectives on improving airport infrastructure and aviation manufacturing, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: March 22, business meeting to consider S. 512, to modernize the regulation of nuclear energy, 10 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Foreign Relations: March 22, to hold hearings to examine the state of global humanitarian affairs, 10 a.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: March 22, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of R. Alexander Acosta, of Florida, to be Secretary of Labor, 9 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: March 22, to hold hearings to examine perspectives from the DHS frontline, focusing on evaluating staffing resources and requirements, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: March 22, to continue hearings to examine the nomination of Neil M. Gorsuch, of Colorado, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: March 22, to hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of multiple veterans service organizations, 10 a.m., SD–G50.

Select Committee on Intelligence: March 23, to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2 p.m., SH–219.

House Committees

Committee on Armed Services, March 23, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, hearing entitled ''High Consequences and Uncertain Threats: Reviewing Department of Defense Strategy, Policy, and Programs for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction for Fiscal Year 2018'', 10:30 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, March 23, Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law, hearing on the ''Financial Institution Bankruptcy Act of 2017'', 9 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, March 23, Full Committee, hearing entitled, ''Legislative Proposals for Fostering Transparency'', 9 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, March 23, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Energy, and Trade, hearing entitled, ''The Future of America's Small Family Farms'', 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Joint Meetings

Joint Hearing: March 22, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, to hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of multiple veterans service organizations, 10 a.m., SD–G50.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 22

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, March 22

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Complete consideration of H.R. 372—Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017. Consideration of H.R. 1101—Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2017.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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