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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 11, 2017, at 2 p.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2017

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, You are our strength and always ready to help us. Uphold our lawmakers with Your powerful hands. Lord, let Your presence be felt by them as You guide them in these challenging times.

Give them the wisdom to do Your will, finding nourishment and reassurance in their fellowship with You. Help them to do their best in life's daylight, for the night comes when no one can work.

Empower our Senators to grow in grace and in a deeper knowledge of You. May they continue to prosper and be in health, even as their souls prosper. Inspire them to be strong and full of courage, ever confident in Your grace and mercy.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PAUL). The majority leader is recognized.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE OF THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to H.J. Res. 36.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] moves to proceed to H.J. Res. 36, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Bureau of Land Management relating to "Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation."

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Democratic leader and I be allowed to give our leader remarks at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WELCOMING KENTUCKY VETERANS TO OUR NATION'S CAPITAL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today it is my privilege to welcome a distinguished group of Kentuckians to our Nation's Capital. Because of the incredible work of the Honor Flight Program, over 80 World War II, Korea, and Vietnam veterans from across my home State will travel to Washington.

Here they will see the memorials built to honor their service.

The Bluegrass Chapter Honor Flight has brought hundreds of veterans, most of them Kentuckians, to Washington for this purpose. Despite the significant logistical and financial planning that goes into these trips, Honor Flight works to make sure veterans have the opportunity to travel at no cost to themselves.

The program organizes travel and food for these veterans, many of whom would never be able to visit our Nation's Capital or see the memorials at all without Honor Flight.

The national monuments built on the Mall pay tribute to those who sacrificed for the cause of freedom. I wish to add my voice to those who welcome these veterans and thank them for their service to our country.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, I am glad to see many of our Democratic friends here with us today. Yesterday they sent me a letter indicating they want to participate as we work on legislation that can bring relief from ObamaCare. In that letter, they acknowledged the need to "improve and reform the health care system."

After 8 years of defending this failing law and its higher costs, reduced choices, and dropped coverage, I am glad to hear that Senate Democrats are finally willing to concede that the status quo is simply unsustainable. I appreciate their willingness to acknowledge that ObamaCare hasn't lived up to its promises.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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That is certainly a reality that Senate Republicans entirely agree with. It is why we are working to keep our commitment to the American people to move beyond the failures of ObamaCare.

If our friends on the other side of the aisle want to join us in replacing ObamaCare with commonsense reforms, I welcome their input. It is disappointing that it has taken our Democratic colleagues this long to come around, but I look forward to hearing their ideas now, and I look forward to joining in a robust debate on the Senate floor as we pursue smarter healthcare solutions.

As we continue working to address this critical issue, it is important to remember why we need to act in the first place. Across the country, more and more Americans are feeling the pain of ObamaCare. Listen to these recent headlines.

Thousands of Obamacare Customers Left Without Options As Insurers Bolt.

More Insurers Abandon Obamacare: Who Might Be Next?

Obamacare Choices Could Go From One to Zero in Some Areas.

ObamaCare is failing the American people, and it keeps getting worse. Families face skyrocketing premiums, fewer choices, and the risk of losing the doctors or plans they like. Just this week, we saw even more troubling news out of States like Maryland, where one major insurer proposed a premium increase of more than 50 percent, warning that the ObamaCare market is “in the early stages of a death spiral.”

We saw similar stories out of Connecticut too. There, insurers have also requested double-digit increases, which could top out at 52 percent amid worries that the last two insurers on the exchanges “may leave.”

These States aren’t alone. I continue to hear from Kentuckians who are desperate for relief from ObamaCare. Take this Campbellsville woman who purchased insurance on the ObamaCare exchanges after researching the best policy to fit her needs. Only then did she find out how hard it would be for her to actually get care. Here is what she had to say.

Today I am making payments for a health care plan that does not cover my doctors, [and] does not cover all my prescriptions. It is almost totally useless.

I am only one person but I’m sure I speak for many people who are finding themselves in this difficult situation.

ObamaCare is a failed law that continues to hurt Americans every single day. It is taking a bigger bite out of their budgets while, as too many have discovered, covering fewer services they actually need.

We have all received letters from our constituents like the one I just shared. These families are the ones shouldering the burdens of ObamaCare. They are the ones counting on us to act and move past the failures of ObamaCare. If we don’t, this situation will only get worse.

That is why we continue to engage in productive conversations with each Member of our caucus on the way forward on providing relief from ObamaCare. I look forward to continuing these talks and welcoming our Democratic colleagues to the conversation if they are ready to join us. It certainly is an important step for the entire Democratic caucus to acknowledge that the status quo is failing the American people and that Congress cannot sit by while Americans suffer the consequences of this failed law.

REMOVAL OF JAMES COMEY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, one final matter, whatever one thinks of the manner in which Director James Comey handled the investigation into Secretary Clinton’s unauthorized use of a private server and her mishandling of classified information, it is clear what our Democratic colleagues thought of it—both at that time and consistently thereafter.

Last year, the current Democratic leader said it appeared to be an “appalling act,” one that he said “goes against the tradition of prosecutors at every level of government,” and the prior Democratic leader, when asked if James Comey should resign given his conduct of the investigation, replied “[o]f course, yes.”

It is also clear what our Democratic colleagues think of the man who evaluated Mr. Comey’s professional conduct and concluded that the Bureau needed a change in leadership. The Democratic leader just a few weeks ago praised Mr. Rosenstein for his independence and said he had developed a reputation for integrity.

What we have now is our Democratic colleagues complaining about the removal of an FBI Director whom they themselves repeatedly and sharply criticized; that removal being done by a man, Rod Rosenstein, whom they repeatedly and effusively praised—when Mr. Rosenstein recommended Mr. Comey’s removal for many of the very reasons they consistently complained about.

Two investigations are currently ongoing: The Senate Intelligence Committee’s review of Russian active measures and intelligence activities and the FBI investigation disclosed by Director Comey.

Today we will no doubt hear calls for a new investigation, which could only serve to impede the current work being done to not only discover what the Russians may have done but also to let this body and the national security community develop the countermeasures and warfighting doctrine to see that it doesn’t occur again. Partisan calls should not delay the considerable work of Chairman BURR and Vice Chairman WARNER. Too much is at stake.

Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein was just confirmed on a bipartisan vote, 94 to 6—94 to 6—and that sort of fair consideration should continue when the Senate receives an FBI Direc-

tor nominee. As I said yesterday, once the Senate receives a nomination to fill this position, we will look forward to a full, fair, and timely confirmation process. This is a critical role that is particularly important as our country continues to face serious threats at home and abroad.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

FIRING OF JAMES COMEY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday the President fired the Director of the FBI, Jim Comey, who was leading an active investigation into the Trump campaign’s possible collusion with Russia.

The President provided no reasoning for the firing other than he had the recommendation of his Attorney General—who has already had to recuse himself from the Russia investigation for being too close to the President—and his Deputy Attorney General, Rod Rosenstein.

There is little reason to think Mr. Rosenstein’s letter is the true reason President Trump fired Director Comey. Why? Because if the administration truly had objections to the way Director Comey handled the Clinton investigation, they would have had them the minute the President got into office, but he didn’t fire Director Comey then.

The question is, Why did it happen last night? We know Director Comey was leading an investigation into whether the Trump campaign colluded with the Russians, a serious offense. Were those investigations getting too close to home for the President?

The dismissal of Director Comey establishes a very troubling pattern. This administration has now removed several law enforcement officials in a position to conduct independent investigations of the President and his administration—from Acting Attorney General Sally Yates to Preet Bharara and now Jim Comey.

What should happen now, what must happen now is that Mr. Rosenstein appoints a special prosecutor to oversee this investigation. Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein sat in the Judiciary Committee and promised to appoint a special prosecutor at the appropriate time. He said: “I’m willing to appoint a special counsel whenever I determine that it’s appropriate.”

My colleague Senator COONS asked him: “Would you agree that it’s vital to the assurance of confidence in our democracy and law enforcement system that any investigation into these matters be fair, free, thorough and politically independent?”

Mr. Rosenstein answered: “Yes, I do.”

If there was ever a time when circumstances warranted a special prosecutor, it is right now.

Mr. Rosenstein already expressed concern that Director Comey damaged the integrity of the FBI. The Attorney General has already had to recuse himself from the investigation for being too close to the President.

If Mr. Rosenstein is true to his word, that he believes this investigation must be “fair, free, thorough and politically independent,” if he believes, as I do, that the American people must be able to have faith in the impartiality of this investigation, he must appoint a special prosecutor and get his investigation out of the hands of the FBI and far away from the heavy hand of this administration.

Mr. Rosenstein has the authority to appoint a special prosecutor right now. He needs no congressional authorization. This would simply be a step that he could take, as outlined in the Department of Justice guidelines and in a law passed after Watergate, to get an independently minded prosecutor who would be insulated from various pressures.

A special prosecutor is not subject to day-to-day supervision by the Attorney General or anyone else at the Justice Department. That means the special prosecutor would have much greater latitude in whom he can subpoena, which questions they can ask, and how to conduct an investigation. The special prosecutor can only be removed for good cause, such as misconduct, not to quash the investigation.

Third, there is built-in congressional oversight. Congress is notified whenever a special counsel is appointed, removed, or has finished with the investigation. The appointment of a special prosecutor would be a welcome step in the right direction, but it is not the only action that should be taken.

There are a great many outstanding questions about the circumstances of Director Comey’s dismissal, the status of the executive branch investigation into the Trump campaign ties to Russia, and what the future holds for these investigations.

So I will be requesting that the majority leader call a closed, and if necessary, classified, all-Senators briefing, with the Attorney General separately at which, and the Deputy Attorney General separately, at which they can be asked questions.

Some of the questions: Why was Attorney General Sessions, who had recused himself from the Russia investigations, able to influence the firing of the man conducting the Russia investigation? Did Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein act on his own or at the direction of his superiors or the White House? Are reports that the President has been searching for a rationale to fire the FBI Director for weeks true? Was Director Comey’s investigation making significant progress in a direction that would cause political damage for the White House? Why didn’t the President wait for the Inspector General’s investigation into Director Comey’s handling of the Clinton email investigation to conclude before making his decision to fire him? Was this really about something else?

No doubt, we will have an opportunity to question Mr. Comey, now a

private citizen, about what happened, but we need to hear from this administration about what happened and why, and what is going to happen next. That is why, again, I am requesting that the majority leader call a closed, and if necessary, classified, all-Senators briefing with the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General separately, at which they can be asked these questions.

I hope the majority leader agrees with me that we need to get to the bottom of this and get a handle on all the facts so that we can grapple with them. I remind him and my Republican friends that nothing less is at stake than the American people’s faith in our criminal justice system and the integrity of the executive branch of our government.

I yield the floor.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

Mr. McCONNELL. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.
The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 125 Leg.]

YEAS—49

Alexander	Flake	Portman
Barrasso	Gardner	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Hatch	Rounds
Burr	Heller	Rubio
Capito	Hoeven	Sasse
Cassidy	Inhofe	Scott
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johnson	Strange
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Enzi	Murkowski	Young
Ernst	Paul	
Fischer	Perdue	

NAYS—51

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murphy
Bennet	Graham	Murray
Blumenthal	Harris	Nelson
Booker	Hassan	Peters
Brown	Heinrich	Reed
Cantwell	Heitkamp	Sanders
Cardin	Hirono	Schatz
Carper	Kaine	Schumer
Casey	King	Shaheen
Collins	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cooms	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Udall
Donnelly	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCain	Warner
Durbin	McCaskill	Warren
Feinstein	Menendez	Whitehouse
Franken	Merkley	Wyden

The motion was rejected.
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 52, Robert

Lighthizer to be United States Trade Representative.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert Lighthizer, of Florida, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I have 13 requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They include the Armed Services Committee briefing on capabilities to counter Russian influence in cyberspace, a Banking Committee hearing on North Korea, and a Homeland Security Committee hearing on cyber threats facing America. These committees and all the other committees are doing important work; therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the 13 committees be allowed to meet.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN addressed the Chair.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object, because of the decision last night of the President of the United States to terminate the Director of the FBI and the questions that has raised, we gathered together—the Democratic Senators—on the floor and listened as our leader at least suggested a path for us to follow as an institution facing this constitutional question. We believe it is timely, and as a result of that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTION

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to speak against the Congressional Review Act resolution to over-run an important rule that has been put in place to protect the American taxpayer and to protect the health of American citizens.

For almost 100 years, the Federal Government has regulated undue waste in oil and gas fields. The story of oil and gas waste is as old as the story of oil and gas.

Early oil gushers, like Spindletop in Texas, revealed two things about oil as an emerging source of energy: First, there was a huge amount of it. Second, without rules in place, it could be easily wasted. That is why, way back in 1915, Attorney General Thomas Gregory issued a report to the public about this issue. Gregory wrote that the law at the time allowed oil companies to “occupy and operate any number of tracts of public oil land without restraint upon the quantities of oil produced or the methods of production and

without rendering to the . . . government anything in return.” One can imagine that concern. Gregory went on to point out that “the incentives to speculative occupation, negligent and wasteful operation, and excess production become obvious.”

Some of my colleagues who are not on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee may not be familiar with the law Congress passed after Attorney General Gregory put his finger on the waste problem. The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 established our modern leasing program for oil and natural gas. More than anything else, the leasing act enshrined the principle that the public should benefit from mineral production on public lands. This seems like a no-brainer today, but it took over a decade of debate to pass the leasing act.

One of the main parts of the leasing act was a requirement to avoid wasting oil and gas. There are many environmental reasons to avoid wasting this resource, but let's be clear: It was dollar signs that led to the waste provision. Overproduction would glut the market and damage the oil reserves, and wasted oil provided no return to the owners—the taxpayers.

The leasing act is still the law, and the law says that oil and gas operators must “use all reasonable precautions to prevent waste of oil or gas developed in the land.” The law says that Federal leases must include “a provision that such rules . . . for the prevention of undue waste as may be prescribed by [the] Secretary shall be observed.” The BLM's methane rule is entirely in keeping with that history. The rule says that the outdated 1979 version of this rule needed to be updated.

The rule was put in place before the fracking took place that revolutionized the industry, before the shale plays opened, and before infrared imaging became commonplace. What has not changed since 1920 is that oil and gas companies cannot waste public resources on public lands.

When equipment is leaky or old, oil and gas producers vent natural gas directly to the sky. If they do capture the gas but have nowhere to send it, the gas just gets burned on site. This venting and flaring causes a big problem. This photograph shows that actual problem happening.

I am sure there are many citizens across the United States who have witnessed this and have been concerned about what pollutants might be entering the atmosphere. The hazardous health impacts of this are tremendous—benzene, which causes cancer—and I will talk more about that in a minute.

The amount of venting that is happening is enough gas to supply 6.2 million American households for a year. According to more recent research, even higher estimates are coming in. That is enough gas to supply every home in the interior West—Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Ne-

vada, Arizona, New Mexico—with gas left over for the Dakotas. Every home. The amount of gas we waste every single year on Federal lands would be enough to supply Tennessee forever, and there could be some left over for West Virginia.

On Federal lands, operators have more than doubled how much gas they have flared and wasted between 2009 and today, and that is the practice we are trying to stop. Under the old 1979 rule, operators had to apply to BLM every time they wanted to vent or flare. In practice, BLM, because they did not have a new rule in place, basically just had a “yes” or “no” answer. In 2014, the Bureau of Land Management received 25 times more applications to vent or flare than in 2005.

What was happening was that we as a Federal Government were failing in our responding and updating the act to make sure producers were living up to the intent of that earlier law, so government watchdogs got on the issue and started calling for a solution.

The Government Accountability Office and the Interior Department's inspector general concluded that the Bureau of Land Management needed to change these rules. The Government Accountability Office concluded in 2010 that about 40 percent of wasted natural gas on Federal leases could be economically captured with existing technology.

Some States had already taken action into their own hands. In Colorado, the State passed a strong venting and leak detection regulation, which really became the model for the national Bureau of Land Management, and oil and gas production has since increased.

There was a notion that in making sure that waste was not promulgated—that it somehow was going to slow down the industry, but it has been just the opposite. In fact, some of my colleagues and some ranchers and others in these areas have talked about how the United States should lead the way on new technology to stop the leakage and to prevent these flarings as a way for the industry to show technology leadership.

Also, in North Dakota, a Republican administration passed flaring restrictions after years of there being uncontrolled flaring in the Bakken. States took action, and various watchdog groups and investigators here in Washington said the Bureau of Land Management needed to act. The BLM finally acted, and its final rule is similar to the North Dakota approach. So States have already been leaders on this methane issue. But this patchwork of State rules is not what we need; we need a Federal baseline.

It is bad enough that wasted natural gas will never have an economic use. Making the issue worse is that every cubic foot that is vented or flared is another cubic foot we have to produce somewhere else. What does that mean for our wallets? Research by ICF International shows that \$330 million of nat-

ural gas is wasted intentionally on Federal lands every year. Over time, the public is losing billions of dollars. Over a decade, the lost royalties that have been calculated by the Government Accountability Office on wasted gas will add up to \$230 million. While the final amount, of course, depends on the price of natural gas, we cannot afford to give up this revenue.

A vote for disapproving the resolution will let the oil and gas industry roll back the clock to 1979. This resolution lets people continue avoiding giving the taxpayers their fair share. It is another example of special interests trumping the public interest.

Even worse than the taxpayer issue, though, is that wasted natural gas harms public health. That is why those States took action. One of the most prevailing problems on this issue is in the Four Corners States, and my colleague from New Mexico will be talking about this shortly.

When one looks at the entire United States on a map that shows the amount of waste of flaring, one can see all of this yellow coloring in the Midwest—in Ohio—and in other States, but one can see the hotspot in the Four Corners area. The Four Corners States have tried to take action—places like Colorado and New Mexico, with, obviously, Arizona and Utah being affected—because wasted natural gas basically releases a volatile organic compound. It creates ozone and smog. It also can make people sick. This pollution worsens asthma, emphysema, and increases the risk of premature death. It releases toxins, like benzene, that cause cancer. And the methane, the main constituent of the natural gas, is 25 times more powerful at trapping heat than carbon dioxide.

That is why a recent analysis by the Clean Air Task Force found that over 9 million people are exposed to these dangerous levels of air pollution from oil and gas production. That is why my colleague Senator BENNET of Colorado has been such an outspoken advocate of keeping this rule in place. It is because that corner of Colorado has faced so many impacts that they want to make sure their citizens are protected.

With the rolling back of this Federal rule, basically what one would be saying is that it is OK to continue this level of pollution—an anathema to what the people of Colorado have been asking for.

Oil and gas pollution can make rural areas seem like the middle of a city. A few years ago, NASA scientists discovered a massive cloud of methane over the Four Corners region. This is the highest concentration of methane in the Nation. After aerial surveys, NASA found that over half of the methane is from natural gas equipment, including tanks, wells, pipelines, and processing plants. The ozone pollution in the Four Corners is almost as bad on some days as in the city of Los Angeles—a city with 300 times as many people.

As bad as methane waste is on Federal land, this rule only targets 10 percent of that wasted by the oil and gas industry because we are targeting Federal land. It only affects a small minority of the oil and gas production. Ninety-five percent of that production is in other areas. But this rule is important to put in place because we cannot ignore the impacts on pollution, and we cannot ignore the costs to our Federal lands.

The Bureau of Land Management compared the costs and benefits of this rule without factoring in the reductions in ozone, particulate matter, or smog, and the BLM ignored the value of reducing carcinogens. We know that this particular conservative analysis shows a net benefit of between \$46 million and \$204 million each year. This makes economic sense to implement.

Under the very obsolete 1979 regulation that the methane rule replaces, oil and gas operators had to apply to the BLM whenever they wanted to vent or flare natural gas. The old rules also had no specific equipment requirements in place.

As I said earlier, the world has changed dramatically since 1979 when it comes to oil and gas production. The new rule takes commonsense approaches to stepping up our attempts to reduce this waste and prohibit the venting, except in emergencies and in some circumstances. They estimate that it will cut the venting by 35 percent. It also sets capture targets for flaring, allowing operators flexibility on how to meet those targets. The BLM estimates they will reduce flaring by 49 percent.

The rule requires operators to inspect their wells and their equipment. People may have heard unbelievable stories from California about a huge methane leakage that caused unbelievable amounts of damage. We know that we want the best equipment, that we want the best detection, and that we want a strong rule in place to stop wasting this natural gas, give the taxpayers a fair deal, and protect the American people from harmful levels of pollution. That is why we want this rule to stay in place.

With America's increased natural gas production, now is not the time to take a very solid rule off the books—a rule that protects the American people. The technology to conduct these inspections already exists. Infrared imaging and other technology has been sold commercially for decades. What we are really saying is that people just do not want to spend the money to implement them.

Fourth, the rule requires operators to replace leaky equipment, like the pneumatic controllers and pumps, and it is trying to make sure that we eliminate the methane waste.

So the final rule is in step with what the Government Accountability Office told us 7 years ago—that about 40 percent of the waste can be captured economically. BLM took those best prac-

tices and State examples, as I mentioned, including North Dakota and Colorado, and implemented a new rule.

It includes Colorado's venting and inspection and retrofitting requirements, and regulation 7. It includes North Dakota's capture targets for flared gas in it, and it includes Wyoming's venting and inspection requirements in the Upper Green River Basin.

Not only did the Bureau of Land Management adopt the best practices of States, but it also included a variance provision in the final rule. Any State or Tribe with equally effective regulation in place can minimize their methane waste and can apply for a variance from the Department of the Interior. There is a lot of flexibility there, I would say, for States that are trying to lead the way. But based on this careful approach, the final rule and its benefits are estimated, as I said earlier, to be \$204 million a year.

So the public in these States that are most affected certainly want this rule. As more Americans understand the level of natural gas production and the wasteful venting that continues to take place, they want this rule in place as well.

Passing the resolution just after a few hours of debate and trying to undermine this rule would go against the 330,000 public comments that were collected during the process of establishing this rule. So we certainly don't want to overturn what was a very long and elaborate process to put this very important rule in place.

Proposing more waste is not going to solve our economic challenges. Proposing more pollution is not a solution. We know that in the most recent annual poll by Colorado College, western voters said that 81 percent of them supported making sure that the Bureau of Land Management had strong methane rules. My colleagues appear not to understand how much the public wants to get this implemented. I hope my colleagues will continue to support the effort to turn down the Congressional Review Act resolution and instead keep this very, very important public health and economic taxpayer solution on the books.

As Mark Boling, an executive with Southwestern Energy, a major natural gas producer, said, this resolution and trying to turn back the rule is "a huge mistake." He pointed out that it could have "unintended consequences for oil and gas technology."

So I want to make sure this rule stays in place. Let's keep a strong rule on the books, as I said, for the health of the American people and to make sure that taxpayers get a fair deal with these companies that are producing on Federal lands.

I thank the Chair.

I yield to my colleague from New Mexico, who has been outspoken on this issue in making sure that Congress addresses the flaring and leakage of natural gas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, if I sound a little hoarse, it is because my allergies are acting up, but I feel just fine.

Let me start out by thanking Senator CANTWELL. Her leadership on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee is pretty incredible.

For this Congress, I think this is the very first CRA that has been turned down. We have been voting on many of them since the Congress came back in session in January. This is the very first victory we have had on denying the CRA.

When we talk about what a CRA does, it is a very blunt instrument that has only been used once until this Congress, and what it does is just blow out an entire area of the law. So if you talk about this BLM methane rule and you have a part of the law that says the government shall try to prevent waste, well, if you blow that provision of the law out, the agency can do nothing until we get to the point that the Congress acts again, and sometimes we move very slowly.

So I really appreciate the leadership of Senator CANTWELL, and I want to thank her so much and all of the members of her committee, in particular, Senator HEINRICH. Senator HEINRICH serves on that committee and has been very outspoken on this rule, and I believe his leadership has always been acknowledged by Senator CANTWELL as well.

This issue that we are debating and that we had this good vote on is about three things. First of all, it is about the waste of a natural resource that the public and the Tribes own. Let's talk about the resource here for a second. We are talking about, to start with, natural gas. So when we think of natural gas, as many people know, what we are talking about is when you turn on your stove, and it is a natural gas stove, that is how we cook our food. Many houses run and heat on natural gas, and we know now that many of our powerplants are converting over to natural gas because it is a very good fuel in terms of lowering carbon emissions. So natural gas is a big part of our energy economy. It is actually going up as coal is going down.

Look at this photograph which shows more than \$330 million of natural gas wasted. This just shows us the huge power of natural gas. What was happening is that natural gas was being flared. This depicts the top at one of these oil and gas operations. They are just burning that up. So rather than that energy being used at home or used in industry, it is just being wasted. On top of that, we know it has a massive climate impact.

This was a very commonsense rule. I think the thing people should understand is that several Western States, including Colorado and Wyoming, passed an almost identical rule to deal with this issue. All BLM tried to do was to use that common sense from the West, where it had already happened in several States, and put it in place for

the Nation. So this is a good, solid rule, and it is a commonsense rule, and I think it prevents waste, just like it was laid out to do.

The second point is that when we talk about this issue, it is about job creation. What we are talking about here is, when you have this kind of waste, how do you prevent the waste? Well, the thing we have seen in New Mexico that occurs is that many of these oil and gas industries reach out to people who maybe haven't been in business, and they say: How do we prevent this waste? Well, actually, we use infrared to focus on the oil and gas operations and all of their pipes, and we can detect the natural gas waste, and then we can go about actually fixing it at all the various fittings and places where that happens. Guess what. A lot of jobs are created in that process. This is growing in New Mexico, growing in Colorado, and with this rule in place, over time, it is going to continue to grow. So this is going to create some small businesses. It has already created small businesses, and it is going to be pretty dramatic on that front.

The third thing that we are here about has to do with public health. Obviously, if you are venting all of this—and as Senator CANTWELL showed, you have a methane cloud the size of Delaware over the Four Corners area; so it is really impacting New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona—what is the impact in terms of methane? Well, we know there are serious public health impacts. We know that asthma is impacted by this, as well as other respiratory diseases—the kinds of things that occur on a regular basis as we have that kind of methane pollution that goes into the air. As I mentioned just a little bit earlier, methane is a very, very powerful and potent greenhouse gas. So we know that by releasing it—the flaring that we talked about—we are wasting it and we are putting that methane into the atmosphere. We are also adding to the greenhouse gases, which are warming the planet and creating, in the Southwest, as we know, catastrophic forest fires, extreme weather events, impacts on water, and impacts on agriculture. So we know that it is here now and that the Western States are in the bull's-eye.

So let me just say that these are three commonsense things that we have done today by asserting this rule. We are preventing waste, we are moving job creation, and we are acting on the part of public health.

When we have a victory like this, there are just so many people that should be congratulated—people that pulled together. First of all, just to start, Senator CANTWELL just finished, and she is our ranking member on the committee. Senator BENNET, I think, was actually the 51st, and I hope he tweeted that out. When he came over, we were at 50, and it went to 51. So he and all of the Democrats hung together on this—every single one of the Demo-

crats. It just shows that when we get Democratic unity—and with our Independents—we come right up on about 48 votes. If we get a couple of Republicans—if we work in a bipartisan way—to come with us, we can have a big impact. Who are the Republicans who voted with us? They should be called out and congratulated for having courage, for having common sense, and for stepping forward. I would just like to say about my three friends on the Republican side—Senator MCCAIN, Senator COLLINS, and Senator GRAHAM—thank you so much for stepping forward and seeing the commonsense nature of this issue and standing to make sure that we didn't head in the wrong direction on this.

Thinking a little bit about some of the groups that voted with us and worked with us and helped us and advised us out in the field, the groups that stood with us shoulder to shoulder include the Environmental Defense Fund, the Wilderness Society, and the Ceres business group. We had a lot of businesses—understanding that this is a business issue and a job creator—like Taxpayers for Common Sense. We don't always see them weigh in on regulations like this. The Center for Methane Emissions Solutions, and so many environmental and public health groups, including Earth Justice, the National Parks Association, the League of Conservation Voters, the Sierra Club, and many, many others, including the Western Environmental Law Center, are also a part of that.

I thought we should talk for a second about—in addition to all of those groups—some other groups that joined us, and they are these medical and public health groups that abhor natural gas waste. Look at all of these groups in addition to the ones I mentioned. These are people who have real expertise in public health: Allergy & Asthma Network, American Lung Association, American Public Health Association, Center for Climate Change and Health, and Physicians for Social Responsibility. I have always been impressed by that group. Here you have docs who are stepping up, wanting to be socially responsible on things. There are many wonderful physicians like that in New Mexico and across the Nation, and they have organized themselves as PSR. We also have the Public Health Institute and the National Medical Association.

So we have a lot of these medical and public health groups that have stepped forward and said: We are not going to waste natural gas. Let me thank them.

Also, the Western Environmental Law Center, which is in New Mexico and works on this issue, has been a pretty incredible group, hard-working, headed up by a gentleman by the name of Doug Meiklejohn, and Doug really makes a difference on all of these issues in New Mexico and, in particular, really helped us out here.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention some of the groups that have pulled together—groups of ranchers, Tribes, and

public health groups. We just talked about the public health groups. But there is one rancher in New Mexico whose sole focus has been this issue. His name is Don Schreiber. He appeared at a press conference yesterday here in Washington with Senator BENNET and Senator CANTWELL. I was at my own press conference, and more or less as a Senator there, speaking out on methane. I know if Don is ever at a press conference, he is going to say what I would have said on this methane issue, which is that we have to prevent waste. Don Schreiber is his name. He is a rancher from Northwestern New Mexico. He is actually up under that methane cloud, and he talks about his family and his ranching operation and what the impact is.

We also have Tribes in that area. I want to congratulate and thank President Begaye of the Navajo Nation. He sent in a very persuasive statement and made a very strong statement against wasting natural gas.

We also had the Western Organization of Resource Councils. This is another group that has been very active in the West. They stepped forward on this natural gas waste issue, and we are incredibly thankful to them.

Also, we never get anything done around here on the Senate floor without our wonderful staff. I want to thank Jonathan Black, who has worked on this issue for many years. Jonathan actually worked for Senator Bingaman on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, so he brought a lot of that expertise. We have a young man from the office sitting here with me on the floor, Sean MacDougall, helping me with these charts. Sean is a congressional fellow in our office on loan from the Bureau of Land Management, and he has brought a lot of knowledge to the table.

Mr. President, to reiterate, I oppose H.J. Res. 36—the Congressional Review Act resolution to disapprove the Bureau of Land Management's methane and waste prevention rule. BLM's rule prevents the unnecessary waste of a public resource and makes sure New Mexicans—and all American taxpayers—get fair value in return for commercial use of that public resource.

The rule requires oil and gas facilities operating on public and Indian lands to prevent unnecessary flaring, venting, and leaking of methane. Rigorous analysis shows that the overall benefits to the American public far outweigh the costs, and technology to implement the rule is readily available and cost-effective to industry.

The current BLM rules on natural gas waste are over 35 years old, issued in 1979. Federal watchdog agencies have been issuing reports for almost a decade—recommending that the BLM update its rules and prevent waste wherever possible.

With new technologies like horizontal drilling, the amount of gas wasted in recent years has increased significantly. From 2009 to 2013, the total

amount of natural gas flared on BLM land doubled.

We throw the phrase “common sense” around a lot these days when we talk about laws or regulations we like, but the BLM’s waste prevention rule really is a commonsense rule.

Over the past 4 months, Congress has repealed 13 Federal rules using CRA authority. These regulations involved years of work by the agencies and were developed transparently through the public notice and comment process. Congress overturned these rules without public input, hearings, or debate.

I understand repeal of “burdensome” Federal regulations is a strong rallying cry, and I wholeheartedly agree that Federal regulations should not be overly burdensome.

The BLM’s waste prevention rule is good for the American public, and the cost to industry is de minimus. In fact, there is benefit to industry from increased production and the resulting increase in revenues. The BLM’s rule is one rule that should not get swept up in the political tide of CRA repeal.

Congress has spoken loud and clear that the BLM has an obligation to prevent waste of oil and gas on public and tribal lands starting with the 1920 Mineral Leasing Act.

That act—governing leases on BLM lands—requires every lease to contain provisions for “the prevention of undue waste. . . .”

Federal law obligates the BLM to make sure the public gets a fair return from profits generated by oil and gas leases on public lands. The 1976 Federal Lands Policy and Management Act requires that “the United States receive fair market value of the use of the public lands and their resources. . . .”

The 1982 Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Management Act obligates these same oil and gas companies to pay the Federal Government “royalty payments on oil or gas lost or wasted.”

Congress has determined that oil and gas companies extracting resources on public lands can’t waste the resource, and, if they do, they must pay fair market value to the American public.

Despite Congress’s prohibition against waste, tremendous volumes of oil and gas under BLM lease are wasted each year through flaring, venting, and leaks.

Operators do not always use best practices when they flare and vent. Some even abuse the practice. As a result, operators vent and flare significant amounts of oil and gas that are economically recoverable.

Natural gas is colorless and odorless, so you can’t see leaks with the naked eye. Operators do not always use best practices to detect and prevent leaks either, but we now have readily available technology, like infrared cameras, that quickly and easily identify leaks. We don’t let leaky pipes in our homes go unattended. For-profit companies shouldn’t be given a free pass to let gas leak on public lands.

Oil and gas operators under BLM leases reported flaring and venting 462

billion cubic feet of natural gas from 2009 through 2015. That is enough gas to supply over 6.2 million households for one year. That is every household in the States of New Mexico, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

An independent study by ICF International estimates that, in 2013 alone, 65 billion cubic feet of gas was wasted. That includes over 18 billion cubic feet from tribal lands, with an estimated loss to the American public of \$27 million in royalties.

The amount of oil and gas waste is rising dramatically. Oil and gas operators report flaring has increased over 1,000 percent between 2009 and 2015. The number of applications to vent or flare royalty free has gone from 50 in 2005 to 622 in 2011 to 1,246 in 2014.

The BLM’s outdated rules and the loss of royalties caught the attention of the Government Accountability Office years ago.

A 2010 GAO report estimated that approximately 128 billion cubic feet of natural gas was vented or flared from Federal leases in 2008 and that approximately 50 billion cubic feet was economically recoverable. That recoverable gas represented \$23 million in lost royalties in 1 year.

The 2010 GAO report highlighted real world experiences, where operators made money by putting in technologies to recover gas instead of venting or flaring. One large producer in the San Juan Basin installed equipment that reduced venting by 99 percent. That same company reported increased revenues of \$5.8 million, from a \$1.2 million investment in technology to reduce emissions during well completion. That is money well spent.

The San Juan Basin is one of the oldest and most productive gas-producing areas in the United States. It lies in the Four Corners area, where my home State of New Mexico touches Arizona, Colorado, and Utah.

That area is home to a methane “hot spot,” with the highest concentration of methane in the Nation.

In 2010, the GAO pointed out what was obvious, that the BLM’s decades-old guidance did not take account of current technology to reduce venting and flaring. The GAO recommended that the BLM update its regulations to address the avoidable loss of gas on public lands.

There are other GAO reports, but I will talk about one more.

In 2016, the GAO issued a report entitled, “Interior Could Do More to Account for and Manage Natural Gas Emissions.” It detailed the BLM’s highly inconsistent practices approving royalty-free venting and flaring incidents.

Looking at a random sample of operator requests to vent or flare from fiscal year 2014, the GAO found that fully 90 percent had inadequate documentation, but, despite the bad documentation, the BLM approved 70 percent of the requests, almost half of which were

for royalty-free venting or flaring. That is a lot of Federal, State, and tribal royalties lost based on incomplete records.

The GAO is charged with helping Congress make sure Federal agencies are doing the best job they can for the American public. We should not disregard repeated GAO recommendations—spanning almost a decade—for the BLM to modernize its oil and gas royalty program.

If we pass this disapproval, the BLM is foreclosed from updating these rules. In the face of the GAO report after another telling us that the BLM must do better, that would be just irresponsible to taxpayers.

Secretary Zinke has been charged to review the BLM rule as part of the President’s “Energy Independence” Executive order. If, after review, the Secretary concludes that the BLM rule should be modified, the Department of the Interior can proceed to amend the rule through the public rulemaking process, but, when we have been told time and time again that there is unnecessary waste and the BLM rules need updating, Congress should allow the DOI review to go forward and not permanently prevent DOI from considering how to prevent unnecessary waste by oil and gas facilities.

Let’s not forget that half the royalties from Federal leases go to State treasuries. States use these royalties for schools, roads, and infrastructure projects.

My home State of New Mexico has the second highest number of acres under BLM lease in the country, after Wyoming—over 4.6 million acres—and the second highest number of BLM oil and gas leases—over 8,000.

New Mexico has a lot at stake in the BLM’s waste prevention rule.

ICF International estimates that the natural gas in New Mexico that could have been captured and marketed under the BLM’s rule between 2009 and 2013 would have been worth more than \$100 million a year and would have produced \$43 million in royalty payments for our State.

In New Mexico, those royalty payments are used in part for educational materials in the public schools. That is textbooks, digital materials, science supplies, art supplies, and accessible materials for students with disabilities. That \$43 million would have gone a long way for New Mexico schoolkids.

Many of you may be aware of the methane “hot spot” over the Four Corners area that I talked about earlier. The hot spot covers about 2,500 square miles—the size of the State of Delaware.

This single cloud comprises nearly 10 percent of all methane emissions from natural gas in the United States. The San Juan Basin is ranked No. 1 in per capita methane pollution in the U.S.

Scientists have been researching the sources of this methane plume. When the hot spot was discovered, oil and gas companies claimed the high concentrations were caused by “natural”

sources, but researchers have found out this is wrong. They have identified 250 sources—the majority of which are oil and gas operations and include gas wells, storage tanks, pipelines, and processing plants.

Of the four States, only Colorado has robust rules to prevent methane emissions. Colorado's rules are proving successful, and the BLM incorporated provisions from those rules.

It is important for my State that the BLM's waste prevention rule stay on the books. We don't need that methane hot spot in our backyard and New Mexico sorely needs the royalty payments owed.

The BLM's rule is also important for tribes. As vice-chair of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, I work to make sure the Federal Government upholds all its trust responsibilities. One of those responsibilities is making sure tribes get the royalties they are entitled to from private oil and gas companies operating on Indian lands.

Tribes receive 100 percent of the royalties from the oil and gas leases on their lands. The BLM estimates tribes will get up to \$12 million more in royalties over 10 years under the rule. That is money we have a trust responsibility to make sure tribes get.

The BLM estimates the rule would reduce emissions of volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, by 310,000 tons over 10 years on tribal lands. Reducing VOC emissions means cleaner air for tribes.

The Federal Government will not be upholding its trust responsibility if the BLM rule is repealed.

I have a statement from the Navajo Nation president, Russell Begaye, detailing the reasons the tribe supports the BLM's rule. President Begaye states, "It would be contrary to BLM's trust responsibility to allow Navajo Nation resources to be unreasonably wasted, particularly when best practices can be cost-effectively employed and are not overly burdensome to industry."

A really important cobenefit of the rule is protection of public health. Toxic chemicals like benzene—harmful to the public, carcinogenic—are emitted with methane. Reducing methane emissions will reduce these toxic emissions.

Similarly, other VOCs—that contribute to ozone or smog—are emitted with methane. Reducing methane emissions will reduce smog formation. Smog irritates the respiratory system, reduces lung function, and aggravates asthma—among other public health problems.

Without the Rule, not only do we lose royalties for hospitals, schools, and roads, but citizens pay more for their hospital visits and healthcare.

Industry arguments against the rule do not hold up.

Industry argues the rule costs too much and will kill jobs.

That is not true. Here are the facts. First, the rule will result in increased production and increased reve-

nues, and the technologies and practices to prevent waste are economically feasible.

In fact, many oil and gas operations will see a net benefit. Like the company in the San Juan Basin that got almost a fivefold return on its investment.

The BLM conducted an exhaustive cost-benefit analysis of the rule.

Looking at the average cost to a company to implement the rule, the BLM found that profits would be reduced by only 0.15 percent, a bit over one-tenth of 1 percent. That is minimal.

That cost does not even count the savings to industry from increased production and increased revenues.

In fact, the BLM found that net economic benefits to industry could be as much as \$47 million per year—taking into account the savings from increased revenues.

If the benefits of reducing methane are included, the overall net benefit is huge—up to \$204 million annually.

That number does not even count the public health benefits from reduced ozone and hazardous pollutants.

Opponents have exaggerated the costs to industry, and they have not taken into account the benefits to States, tribes, and the public.

Finally, there is no evidence anywhere that the rule will cost even one job.

In fact, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has recorded 2,700 new jobs since November 2016, while the price of oil has stayed flat. This month, the Baker Hughes rig count showed 300 more rigs drilling for oil and gas since the BLM rule came into effect. This is an increase in production of over 50 percent.

Colorado issued the most comprehensive rules to date to decrease methane emissions, and not only have no jobs been lost, but jobs have been gained as new companies and technologies focused on inspection, monitoring, and compliance have opened. These are good American jobs.

In New Mexico, we have at least 11 new companies in the methane mitigation business, and I want to see that number grow.

Even if the rule were to force an operator to shut down, that company would be eligible for exemption from the requirements.

So job loss is not an issue.

Second, we hear that the BLM's rule is duplicative and unnecessary, that the EPA's methane rule is adequate, and that States are already regulating methane.

Here are the facts.

The EPA's rule only applies to new and modified oil and gas operations. The BLM's rule applies also to existing facilities. This is a big difference between the rules. Making sure all current operations prevent waste is critical to making sure taxpayers get the benefit owed.

The BLM's rule covers areas not covered by other Federal or State rules, like wasteful routine flaring.

Not all States have passed methane waste prevention rules. My home State of New Mexico has not. New Mexico needs to reduce methane emissions.

Also, States and tribes may get a variance if they have similar rules that achieve the same results.

The BLM worked with the EPA and States to ensure the rule works for them and does not impose conflicting or redundant requirements.

Just last week, the EPA announced a 90-day delay on its own methane control rule based on industry's objections to regulation. More concerning, the EPA withdrew its information request from industry that was intended to help EPA determine how to address methane emissions from existing oil and gas sources. These EPA actions mean the BLM rule is needed more than ever to reduce natural gas waste and the proper collection of royalties.

Third, we hear that the BLM lacks the authority to regulate methane waste.

In January of this year, the U.S. District Court of Wyoming denied a preliminary injunction to block the rule. The court found that the rule "unambiguously" was within the BLM's authority.

The Congressional Review Act is a blunt tool, and it is the wrong tool for Congress to use to change provisions in BLM's methane waste prevention rule. Disapproval under the CRA would permanently block the BLM's authority to reform outdated rules, reforms that the GAO began recommending almost a decade ago.

The BLM should not be prevented from making sure the Federal Government meets its obligations to States, tribes, and taxpayers—the obligation not to waste public resources and to make sure the public gets a fair return on the for-profit use of public resources.

For these reasons, I oppose the CRA to disapprove the BLM's waste prevention rule.

Just as a final word to summarize why we are here and why this victory was so important and why we need to hang tough on this: This could be changed if they decide to do another vote or if they try to do another piece of legislation or something. The core of this needs to be protected. We are here because we don't want to waste our natural resources, which belong to the people of America and belong to the Tribes. We want to create jobs, which is what this BLM methane waste prevention rule does. It creates jobs, and it protects the public health.

I believe we are going to have a couple other speakers. I know Senator HEINRICH is going to be here.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. 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. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET REQUEST

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, all of us, every Member of the U.S. Senate, all 100 of us, whether we are Republicans or Democrats, want the U.S. Senate to function. We ought to want the Senate to be able to accomplish its work. It is a challenge all the time but learning what transpired this morning on the Senate floor, in my view, reaches another low for the Senate.

It is hard to explain, but it takes unanimous consent for committees to meet while the Senate is in session, and that is a request that is made on an ongoing basis when the Senate convenes, and it happened again this morning. Almost without exception, it is routine. The rules require that 2 hours after the Senate convenes, no committee can then meet unless there is agreement. So the majority leader today requested that the unanimous consent be granted, just like in almost every other day in the Senate, but what was different today was an objection was raised by the minority whip, and apparently the explanation is it is because of the firing of the Director of the FBI last night.

Now, how the Senate is functioning or not functioning seems to me to be unrelated to what transpired last night relating to the Director of the FBI. So in this place, where we are trying to do the people's work and make decisions and do good for America, the spillover over partisan politics, the spillover about playing a political game, highlighting a point has now caused the Senate to not be able to conduct hearings today. In fact, the minority Members of the Senate were instructed, requested, on their own volition—all left the hearings that were already being conducted this morning in protest over what transpired last night.

I am of a view that this is a diverse country. I am of a view that people of the U.S. Senate represent folks from across the country with different philosophies, different political parties, different people, different backgrounds. We all bring to the Senate a set of characteristics that are different, one from another, but I have great regard and respect for every Senator's point of view, and I would say that every Senator ought to have the ability to express their views on behalf of their constituents, but we can only do that if we allow the Senate to function.

I was on the Senate floor not long ago praising the fact that we finally were successful in the appropriations process; that we passed the fiscal year 2017 appropriations bill. For too long, the appropriations process has been broken down, and we have conducted business in the United States by continuing resolution. I thought we were

back on a path in which there was enough agreement, respect among Members, enough setting aside of partisan differences to actually accomplish legislation. I was pleased that we did that, but today we fall back into the pattern of when something happens we want to make a political point. We then obstruct the ability of others in the Senate to conduct their work, to express their opinion, to gather the information they need.

This came to my attention—what transpired today—because this afternoon at 2:30 was scheduled a hearing by the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. That hearing has absolutely nothing to do with the FBI. We have the new Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs scheduled to testify about the Department's plan for modifications to a program called Choice that is important to me, my constituents, and to the veterans of Kansas. I was so pleased the hearing had been scheduled, and I was looking forward to the questioning and having a conversation with the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs about how to make this system of Choice work for veterans who live in Kansas, from the rural side of our State to the suburban and urban side of our State, but because of a pique of anger, political posturing, and partisanship, the hearing is apparently no longer able to take place. The hearing this morning, which could only last for an hour and a half and which I guess the minority members walked out—seemed to me, at least sounded like, to be things that would be very important for us to pursue.

The Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities was to have a closed briefing this morning. The Homeland Security Committee was to examine cyber threats facing America, focusing on an overview of the cyber threat landscape. The list is significant in the things that we ought to be paying attention to, and yet, because of an objection, those hearings will not take place or were shortened or disrupted by only one party's participation.

I am not here trying to create further partisanship between Republicans and Democrats. I am here trying to remind ourselves that there is value in allowing cooperation between the minority and majority, not for our own benefits but for the benefit of the country and the citizens we represent. Everything does not have to be partisan. Everything does not have to be political.

Today we see the Senate sliding back into the habit of making things that we have really nothing to do with and weren't the cause of taking place—apparently to make a political point and perhaps to score votes for support in a political way. We ought to all, as U.S. Senators, respect the opinions, values, and the positions of others, but we do that in a setting in which we all come together, not in which we cancel meet-

ings as a result of a political statement.

I appreciate the opportunity to express my concerns about what has transpired and to ask for us to go back to the time in which we worked together on a daily basis and we don't use an excuse to shut down the committee hearing process.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I rise to speak briefly about the American Health Care Act that was passed last week in the House of Representatives. I thought a lot about this bill over the past few days and over the weekend. I talked to friends, I read about it, and I did as much analysis as I possibly could, given the fact that we don't have a Congressional Budget Office analysis of this complicated and important piece of legislation. I have concluded that it is the most ill-conceived, damaging, and downright cruel piece of legislation that I have ever seen a legislative body pass in my adult life.

It drastically cuts support for Americans' ability to obtain health insurance. In Maine—again, as near as we can tell, because we don't have the final analysis—the preliminary numbers are this. Maine, under the Affordable Care Act, through the payments to individuals and other support, is receiving about \$354 million a year coming via the Affordable Care Act. After this bill, it appears that the number is \$80 million a year—\$364 million to \$80 million. That is almost an 80-percent cut. No one can tell me the people of Maine are going to have better healthcare with an 80-percent cut in the funds going to support their ability to do so. It just doesn't make sense.

The way this bill works is, it is a tax on the elderly. Under the Affordable Care Act, there is a rule that policies for older people, 50, 55, 60, cannot exceed three times the rate of policies for younger people. We all know that younger people's policies do in fact cost somewhat less because they tend to be healthier, but the rule was no more than 3 to 1. Under the bill that was passed by the House last week, it is now 5 to 1. That is an elder tax, and Maine happens to be the most elder State in the United States. If they had taken a blank sheet of paper and said: We want to write a bill to harm the people of Maine, it would have been this bill.

There also is a massive cut to Medicaid—\$880 billion—and the sponsors to this bill claim that they are helping the deficit. How are they doing it? By

shifting the cost to the States—shift and shaft. Balancing the Federal budget by simply taking costs that are now borne by the Federal Government and passing them off to the States is not responsible fiscal policy.

Why don't we just have the States fund the U.S. Air Force? That would save us billions of dollars a year—probably \$100 billion a year. Shift that to the States—and \$880 billion shifted to the States.

Then there is what I call the figleaf—the preexisting condition provision which talks about the Maine plan, which was a plan that preceded the Affordable Care Act, which did give protection for preexisting conditions, but it was adequately funded. It cost about \$64 million a year to fund our preexisting plan. Again, because we don't have the precise figures—but it looks like under this new bill, that \$64 million would be \$20 million, one-third as much, a two-thirds reduction. It is not a real preexisting condition plan; it is a figleaf. It is to say to people: We are covering preexisting conditions—nonsense, not true.

Of course, the final piece of this bill is a massive tax cut for the top one-tenth of 1 percent of people in this country. They will not even notice it, but the people who lose their healthcare will notice.

Now, under the Affordable Care Act, there is a list of essential benefits which includes mental health and substance abuse. That is a big deal. That allows and assures people to have coverage for these very damaging and dangerous, in the case of substance abuse, conditions. Under this bill that passed in the House, States can waive those provisions and the waiver is very easy. The standards for the waiver are very easy, and if the Federal department doesn't respond in 60 days, the waiver is automatically provided. In those States when they have a waiver, mental health and substance abuse services could be covered under a specialized plan which would be very expensive. By the way, this waiver covers both the individual market and employer-based coverage. How many people will be impacted? We do not know because we do not have an analysis from the Congressional Budget Office.

I want to talk for the remainder of my time about opioids and what this bill would do on that.

We are in the midst of a crisis in Maine and across the country. It is the most serious public health crisis in my adult life. In Maine, with regard to substance abuse and overdose deaths, you can see what has happened in the last 5 years. More than one person a day is dying of an overdose. Across the country, it is four an hour. We have turned ourselves inside out in this country in order to deal with the threat of terrorism, for example, which was entirely appropriate. Yet what if we had a terrorist attack that was killing 37,000 people a year across our country, and we were just sort of going along, business as usual?

I have been working on this issue since I got to the Senate. I have been meeting with people throughout Maine—in hospitals and in recovery—and meeting with families and parents and law enforcement. The one thing that comes through loud and clear is that treatment works and that we need it and that we do not have enough available beds in Maine and across the country.

This is a terrible disease, but the most tragic thing of all is when someone finally reaches the point at which he is ready to ask for help and he is told “Sorry, there is a 3-week wait” or “There is a 3-month wait.” That is when lives are lost and families are destroyed.

Treatment does work. I have met with people for whom it has worked and changed their lives. I have a friend in Portland named Andrew Kiezulas, who I believe is graduating this weekend from the University of Southern Maine. He has been through this. He has been to the bottom, and he is now on the mountaintop. He knows treatment works, and it has made a difference in his life. Without it, he would not be where he is today. Justin Reid, another young man from Southern Maine, was in the throes of addiction and escaped. He now runs a sober house and volunteers for a program with his local police department.

Access to treatment is much easier with health insurance and with sufficient Medicaid support. The House bill simply makes it more difficult to access treatment. It penalizes the very people who have taken the hard step to say that this is what they need.

Let me tell you a story. Matt Braun is from Cape Elizabeth, ME, right outside of Portland. In 2009 Matt entered treatment for opioid addiction. His parents, who were strong, middle-class, professional people, purchased what they thought was good health insurance for their family. After 5 days of treatment, they received a call that the insurer was not going to pay for any more. We have decided your son only needs 5 days. His parents argued, and the medical staff argued. They finally won. They got 7 days of treatment. Those extra 2 days made a difference.

The insurance company said that it was not going to help, that he was going to be a chronically relapsing, drug-addicted person, so they were going to stop at 7 days. They said he would not make it. His parents did not give up.

Matt stayed in treatment and has been sober ever since 2009. He is successful. He is getting ready to take the MCAT. He wants to go to medical school. His goal is to approach addiction from the perspective of a health professional and offer care and support to people who are struggling in the way he did.

“It is frustrating how insurance companies dictate what treatment looks like and what a life is worth,” said Matt.

Getting treatment for substance abuse disorder is not easy, but this bill, the American Health Care Act, which is a misnamed bill—it should be the American Take Away Health Care Act—only makes it worse.

On top of all of this, the administration has recently indicated that it is talking about essentially dismantling the Office of National Drug Control Policy—the highest level to be working on this problem in a coordinated way in the Federal Government. Here we are, in the midst of the most serious drug crisis in the history of this country, and the administration is talking about gutting the very office that is supposed to lead the fight. It would have been as if, in the middle of World War II, we had abolished the Department of Defense. It makes no sense. It is moving in absolutely the wrong direction.

By supporting this healthcare bill—or non-healthcare bill—in the House of Representatives, which will drastically cut Medicaid, drastically cut reimbursements for health insurance, drastically limit the availability of coverage for preexisting conditions—by the way, drug addiction could be one—and drastically eliminate the essential benefits provisions of the Affordable Care Act, we are just making it worse.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy has things like the Drug-Free Community Support Program, which administers small grants to small towns. That can make a real difference. Last fall, 18 Maine programs each received \$125,000, and the DFC's 2014 national evaluation report said that there was a significant decrease in the 30-day use of prescription drugs for youth in communities with one of these programs.

Prevention is one of the things we need to work on, and it is one of the things we need to understand. Yet talking about this problem is not going to solve it. Treatment is going to solve it. Money for treatment is going to solve it. Beds for treatment are going to solve it. Detox centers are going to solve it. More resources to law enforcement are going to solve it. More resources to the Coast Guard, in order to interdict drug shipments coming into this country, are going to solve it.

There is no single answer, but at the core is commitment. Passing this bill from the House, which drastically undermines all of those elements of treatment and prevention, and then talking about dismantling the office that has led this fight in the entire Federal Government, is beyond comprehension in the midst of where we are.

If this graph were doing this, if it were going down, I would be OK with it. But it is not going down; it is going up. It is getting worse, and we have to deal with it.

As we work through this issue of healthcare—hopefully we are going to start with a blank sheet of paper over here—I hope we will bear in mind that one of the most serious health problems in the country today is opioid

abuse. This is not all about ideology, and it is not about policy. It is about people. It is about Matt, and it is about Andrew. It is about the thousands and millions of people across this country who are struggling, who want to lead productive lives, and who want to contribute to their communities. All they need is to have that moment when treatment is available, when a helping hand is available, when caring is available to help them escape the throes of this terrible disease and rejoin their communities and their families. That is what we have to keep in front of us as we work here in this body. We can make a difference in people's lives, but in leaving them behind, we will certainly not do so.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is considering the Lighthizer nomination.

Mr. LEAHY. I thank the Chair.

FIRING OF JAMES COMEY

Madam President, I couldn't help but think, with the discussions earlier today, that the President's dismissal of FBI Director James Comey is so inappropriate that it is hard to know where to begin.

In less than 4 months, this President has pushed our country to the edge of a constitutional crisis—a crisis that in many ways seems more complex, and potentially more threatening, than the one instigated by President Nixon's order to fire the special prosecutor who was investigating Watergate.

First, I think we can easily dismiss President Trump's transparent pretext for dismissing FBI Director Comey.

President Trump claims to have removed the FBI Director because of his unfair treatment of Secretary Clinton. This does not pass the laugh test, and we know it is not true. President Trump celebrated Director Comey's mistakes in handling the Clinton email investigation. He encouraged leaks from the FBI. He pressed Director Comey to release more embarrassing evidence. He even praised Director Comey after the Director's misguided letter to Congress last October. Yet, now, the President would have us believe that these same events compelled him to fire the FBI Director more than 6 months after it occurred. This unbelievable claim, if it was not so sad, would be laughable.

The truth is that the President removed the sitting FBI Director in the midst of one of the most critical national security investigations in the history of our country and, certainly,

one of the most critical in my 42 years in the Senate—a sprawling inquiry that implicates senior officials in the Trump campaign and administration.

The press is now reporting that President Trump weighed firing the FBI Director for more than a week, after he became enraged at Director Comey's statements and actions in the Russia investigation. There are even reports that his firing may have been precipitated by grand jury subpoenas issued to associates of President Trump's former National Security Advisor. I have no doubt that we are going to learn more disturbing details as to the President's true motivations. I am willing to bet anything that none of them will be because of the feeling that the FBI was too tough on Secretary Clinton.

I am also troubled that Attorney General Sessions played a role in Director Comey's firing. The Attorney General had supposedly recused himself from the Russia investigation—and for good reason: He was a central figure in the Trump campaign that is now under investigation. And he provided false testimony to the Judiciary Committee to hide his own contacts with Russian officials. Having done that, it is beyond inappropriate for him to then recommend the firing of the official overseeing the Russia investigation.

I ask: Does anyone really believe that President Trump is interested in getting to the bottom of Russia's interference with our elections? Based on his past performance, does anyone believe the Attorney General is interested in getting to the bottom of Russia's interference with our elections? Does anyone believe that the White House will allow investigators to follow the facts without interference or obstruction at every turn?

In fact, a quick review of President Trump's Twitter account, where he does most of his deep thinking, would dispel any such illusions.

This is the same White House that interfered with the House Intelligence Committee's investigation—interference so strong that the Republican chairman in the House investigation had to recuse himself.

This is the same White House that reportedly sought access to the highly classified FISA Court surveillance order that purportedly authorized surveillance of Trump associates.

This is the same White House that demanded the FBI Director and the Department of Justice issue perfunctory statements to clear President Trump's name.

Even the President's letter informing FBI Director Comey of his dismissal indicated the President had directly asked the FBI Director whether he was under investigation—three times. That should never happen. No President should be asking such a question. It is stunning, but it should also be informative. It is clear that any credible investigation must take place outside the political chain of command.

That is why I and others have said for months that a special counsel must be appointed to lead the Russia investigation. A special counsel, unlike an FBI Director or a Deputy Attorney General, cannot be fired by the President. The American people must have confidence that ours is a government of laws, not of the whim of a President—any President.

Frankly, our Nation is at a precipice. There is a counterintelligence investigation into the campaign and administration of a sitting President. There is evidence that that campaign colluded with a foreign government that is an adversary of ours to sway our Presidential election. Now the President has fired the lead investigator, FBI Director Comey, under what any fairminded person would say is absurd and false pretenses.

There are several inquiries underway into Russian interference and collusion with Russia in the elections, but the President has fired the head of the only investigation that could bring criminal charges. In fact, it has just been reported that this came just days after Director Comey asked for additional funding for the investigation. None of this is normal—it is something I have never seen in Republican or Democratic administrations—and we cannot treat it as such.

President Putin's goal, as we now know, last year was to undermine our democratic institutions, to corrode Americans' trust and faith in government, and to sway the outcome of the election in favor of Donald Trump. If we do not get to the bottom of Russia's interference in our democracy, Putin will be successful. The President appears to be content with that result. But I know, in talking with many Republican Senators as well as Democratic Senators, that they are not content with it.

We have to understand, in our great democracy, in the greatest Nation on Earth, that we cannot allow any country to try to interfere in our elections. We know the Russians wanted to do that. We know President Putin wanted to do that. We know he wants to do it in many other countries. I think we owe it, not only to ourselves but all these other countries, to stand up and say: We know what you are trying to do; here is how you tried to do it. America won't stand for it, and we hope none of our democratic allies will.

We 100 Senators may disagree on policy matters and we may have supported different candidates last November, but I respect all Senators, and I believe we all agree on the supremacy of the rule of law. No person, no President should be above the supremacy of the rule of law. I believe we fulfill our duty to the country if we stand united in calling for a truly independent investigation. There simply is no avoiding the fact that this cascading situation demands the prompt appointment of an independent special counsel to pick up the pieces of these investigations. How we respond at this moment

is a test of our commitment to the separation of powers. It is a test of whether the Senate can truly be the conscience of the Nation, as it should. This is not just a scandal. The President's actions are neither Republican nor Democratic. They are authoritarian. This is an effort to undo the ties that bind our democratic form of government. All of us—both sides of the aisle—must now put country over party.

In my years here, I have worked with both Republican and Democratic Presidents. I have worked with them and supported them, notwithstanding their parties, in what I felt was in the best interest of this country. I feel privileged that Vermont has allowed me to serve long enough to become, as my predecessor was, dean of the Senate. But I have also, in deciding to stay here as a Senator, always had the abiding faith that you can and should be the conscience of the Nation. This great Nation deserves no less. That means we set aside party labels and adopt just one label—United States Senator.

With that, let us make sure there is a clear, full, credible, honest investigation of how Russia tried to influence our elections; a full, clear, thorough, honest investigation into if Russia has ties to anybody in our government; and, a full, clear, honest understanding of how we make sure that never happens again, to either Republicans or Democrats.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEE TO MEET

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, this afternoon, the Senate Special Committee on Aging is scheduled to hold the second part of a two-part series of hearings that we are holding to explore the impact of isolation and loneliness on the health and well-being of our seniors. The name of our hearing for this afternoon is Aging With Community: Building Connections that Last a Lifetime.

In other words, under the first hearing that we had 2 weeks ago, we learned that isolation of our seniors is associated with a greater incidence of depression, diabetes, and heart disease. We also learned that the health risks of prolonged isolation are comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes today.

Well, this afternoon is the second part of our investigation of this issue, and we had planned to hear from four experts who were going to tell us how you can build a better sense of community for our seniors, how you can make

sure that our seniors are connected to community. I want to indicate that we have four witnesses who, at their own expense, have flown in to participate in this hearing this afternoon. One of them, Lindsay Goldman, is the director of healthy aging from the Center for Health Policy and Programs from Rye Brook, NY. Another is from Dover-Foxcroft, ME. A third is from Spring Grove, PA. The fourth is from Miami, FL.

Each of these witnesses was chosen in connection with my staff's consultation with the Democratic staff of the committee. As you can see, they represent the States of New York, Maine, Pennsylvania, and Florida, and they incurred great expense in order to come here.

I am very disappointed to learn that, due to issues that are totally outside the purview of the Aging Committee—completely disconnected with this non-partisan, bipartisan look at an issue that ought to concern all of us—we are going to be prohibited from holding this official hearing this afternoon. I am baffled by this. This has nothing to do with the firing of Jim Comey. It has nothing to do with the Intelligence Committee's ongoing and successful investigation of Russian influence on our investigations. It has nothing to do with the healthcare debate that is roiling this Congress.

This is a hearing that has to do with the health and well-being of America's seniors. It is not political in any way, and to ask these four witnesses, who have come from four different States, including the State of the Democratic leader, to go back home and waste all this travel money and not help us better understand how we can deal with an issue that affects the health and well-being of our seniors is just plain wrong.

Therefore, Mr. President, I make a request that the Aging Committee be permitted to meet at 2:30 p.m. today for its hearing, Aging With Community: Building Connections that Last a Lifetime. I ask unanimous consent that the committee be allowed to meet.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Given that we have no path forward on the horrible and momentous events of last night from the majority, I am constrained to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I see the Democratic leader is rapidly leaving the floor, so he obviously does not want to hear anything more about our hearing, but this makes no sense whatsoever.

This is an example of the dysfunction of the Senate. How does it make sense that the Aging Committee, which operates in a completely bipartisan manner, is being prohibited from holding a hearing that is important to our seniors and that has nothing to do with the issues that are in the news today?

I just don't understand why we are being prohibited from proceeding to do our work, to do our important jobs on an issue where we have four experts from four different States, including the State of the Democratic leader, including a witness chosen by the ranking member of the committee, and none of that matters. We are being prohibited from holding this hearing.

Mr. President, it is a great disappointment to me—and I am sure it is going to be a great disappointment to our witnesses and our committee members—that we are going to have to cancel this hearing for reasons that are totally unrelated to the subject of this hearing.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Seeing no one seeking recognition, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FIRING OF JAMES COMEY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I was, to say the least, shocked last night when I heard that President Trump had dismissed FBI Director Comey from his position as the Director of the FBI. To me, this decision by President Trump crossed the line. I have tried to understand what was going through the President's mind at the time he dismissed Mr. Comey. It is clear that he had memorandums written by the Department of Justice that were released at the time, but there is also a clear indication that President Trump had been considering this decision for over a week and that after he had reached the decision to fire Mr. Comey, he needed grounds from the Department of Justice and that that information was supplied to Mr. Trump for his decisionmaking. This was Mr. Trump's decision.

At the time he dismissed Mr. Comey, President Trump's associates had been involved in the investigation being done by the Department of Justice. This is a criminal investigation that is being done by the Department of Justice because of Russia's interference that involved Mr. Trump's associates in the U.S. election system. We do not know where that investigation is going—we do not—but we do know now that the President of the United States has compromised the ability of that investigation by firing Mr. Comey. That should not happen in American politics. No one is above the law.

The timing of Mr. Comey's firing is extremely suspicious. If the President were really concerned about the FBI Director's conduct in the Hillary Clinton email investigation, why didn't the President fire Director Comey when he took the oath of office in January? It just does not add up. No one is above the law.

According to news reports, President Trump was also upset over the amount of media coverage that the FBI Director and the investigations were attracting, and the White House asked DOJ officials to come up with reasons.

It is clear to me that the decision to fire Mr. Comey was a personal decision that was reached by President Trump and that it was known by him at the time that it would compromise the investigation that is being done by the Department of Justice.

I have been approached by others in their saying that Mr. Comey was not popular with Democrats or Republicans and that he had done things during his term as Director that had upset a lot of us, which is true, but the Director of the FBI has a 10-year term for a reason—a term that is longer than the two terms of the President of the United States. This is not a partisan position. The FBI is not required to be popular with either Democrats or Republicans. What he is required to do is to uphold the law of the land for all Americans, and no one is above the law. That is what we expect from the Director of the FBI.

President Trump has compromised the integrity and independence of the FBI. At this point, what can we do? I would suggest, with regard to the criminal investigation that is being done by the Department of Justice, that there is only one course of action that will maintain the credibility of that investigation, which is that it is incumbent upon the Department of Justice to name, as soon as possible, a special prosecutor to take over that role.

If that is not done, in my view, it will be difficult to have the confidence of the American people that that investigation is not being directed by those who were supposed to be the subject of that investigation.

I think it would also compromise the nomination process of the next Director of the FBI. If we do not have a special counsel named, then there will be so much focus on how that next Director will handle this investigation that we really will not have attention paid to the other responsibilities and talents of that individual to be able to handle the FBI's broad jurisdiction.

If that is not resolved—the investigation and the appointment of a special prosecutor—it is difficult to see how we are going to have a truly bipartisan process for maintaining support for the FBI.

I urge the Deputy Attorney General to name, as soon as possible, a respected person as an independent prosecutor to take over this investigation.

There are deeper concerns than just the President of the United States' hampering a criminal investigation in which associates of his are involved because it also involves a country that is not a friend to the United States. All of this was triggered by Russia's involvement in our democratic election system. We know that Russia was directly

engaged in trying to compromise our election system by calling into question the confidence of our system and trying to tilt the scales in favor of one of our candidates. Russia made contact with Americans in order to further its game at bringing down our democratic system of government.

This is not unique to the United States. Russia has used similar tactics in other elections of democratic countries. In the Montenegro election, we saw that Montenegrins were voting on their government's accession into NATO and that Russia exported individuals into that country to try to disrupt that election. They were not successful, but they tried. Just recently, in the French election, we saw how Russia got directly involved in trying to help one of the candidates who it believed would help pull France away from the EU and create a vacuum for Russia's influence, but the French voters turned that down. It was not successful, but that does not mean Russia will not continue to try to bring down democratic systems of government.

Mr. Trump's casual and consistent dismissal of the facts, as laid out by the entire Intelligence Committee, about Russia's engagement in the United States should set off alarm bells. It cannot be business as usual. Yet, today, President Trump and Secretary Tillerson met with Foreign Minister Lavrov. Today of all days, they decided to meet like nothing has happened, but a lot has happened. Did we see any indication that the purpose of that meeting was to raise our strong objections to Russia's interference in our election system or Russia's compromising Americans to try to help in regard to its campaign against our free election system or Russia's engagement and encroachment into other countries? Did we really hear a commitment by the President of the United States that we would not tolerate that type of behavior by Russia? No. Business as usual. The President wants to establish a friendlier relationship with Russia.

Russia has not just tried to bring down free elections systems; they have invaded other countries. We know about the active campaign in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea, the Russian presence in Moldova and Georgia. I met with the Prime Minister of Georgia with Senator WICKER earlier today, and he can tell you firsthand about how their country is trying to deal with the Russian presence in their sovereign country.

We all know about Russia's engagement in other parts of the world. Their engagement in Syria is bringing about serious challenges to trying to resolve the crisis in that country. The Russian Government supporting the Assad regime, war crime activities targeting humanitarian convoys, targeting hospitals, the use of chemical weapons—all of that is facilitated by Russia. That is well known, but it might be not as well known that Russia is ambitious

in going into many more parts of the world. Russia is now engaged in Afghanistan. We have had one of our longest wars ever in Afghanistan and our commitment to the people of Afghanistan to have a democratic government. So Russia is now engaged with the Taliban, trying to upset our ability to bring all of the parties together in unity in the government.

That, to me, is totally counter to history. We know about Russia's presence in Afghanistan. Does anyone believe Russia is really sincere in maintaining peace in that country?

Then we see Russia's fingerprints in Yemen, trying to get a naval base on the Yemeni coast, showing no concern for the humanitarian crisis that has been created in that country. We see Russia's presence in Libya, supporting General Haftar, who has committed his own human rights violations and war crimes and has disrupted the Government of National Accord, which is our best chance for peace in Libya.

We see Russia's presence in Nicaragua, sending troops and equipment to that country and now building a major compound that many believe is being built to spy on the U.S. compound. That is Russia.

So to President Trump: It is not business as usual with Russia. There is a reason we need an independent commission to investigate what Russia was doing in the United States because Russia is trying to create space where they can expand their influence, and expanding their influence is for values that are just the opposite of ours—a corrupt government, no respect for human rights, no respect for democratic institutions, and opposition to a free press. That is what Russia is trying to expand. We know that in their involvement in the United States, they are trying to find a way to expand that opportunity.

So it is for all of those reasons it cannot be business as usual, and when the President of the United States interferes with a criminal investigation that was precipitated by Russia's engagement in the United States, every American should be alarmed. Every American should be asking what we can do to make sure we have an independent review so we can take steps to protect our national security.

It is not acceptable for the Senate to say business as usual. We need to come together and facilitate the independent review of potential criminal involvement of Americans in facilitating the Russians and what they were doing, and we need to have an independent review of all of what Russia was doing in this country so we can take the necessary steps to protect our national security.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to display water samples from the State of Montana on the Senate floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEE TO MEET

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today our friends across the aisle have decided to hold up Senate committee meetings. Because the Democrats object to the dismissal of James Comey from the FBI, they have chosen to play politics and prevent scheduled hearings from occurring. That means everyone who has taken time to fly to Washington, DC, to testify before Congress—per our request—and update us on important issues that face the Nation will not be heard.

One of those scheduled hearings is in the Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power, of which I am a member. This hearing was going to investigate the Dry-Redwater and the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water Systems. This is a critically important issue to Montana.

This hearing was going to focus on water from Circle, MT. These are water samples from different families in the Circle, MT, area. This is from the Arensons' tap. This yellow-tinted water here is from the Goods' tap. This cloudy sample here is from the Hances' tap.

These are all from Circle, MT. This is from the Carlsons' tap. You probably can't see it—perhaps on camera and on the floor—but there is particulate in here, floating, something you wouldn't want to drink. This is water from the Rosaens' tap. These samples all came from a small town in Eastern Montana, Circle, MT, and the image here to my left is from Roundup, MT. This unacceptable, unclean tap water is in the homes of Montanans and North Dakotans right now as we speak.

The mayor of Harlowton, MT, a town of about 1,000 in rural central Montana, is here today to testify. I met with him just yesterday. He came to our Montana coffee this morning. He spent over \$1,000 on a flight. He spent almost \$600 on hotel accommodations, not to mention the cost of other incidentals. Now the Democrats will not let him speak.

Why? As the chairman of the Senate Western Caucus, it is shameful—as other witnesses have flown and spent thousands of dollars—to prevent improving water quality in our States. The Arizona witness, for example, spent \$2,400 and 3 days out of the office to come back and testify today. The North Dakota witness spent \$1,300.

Yes, the FBI needs to regain the trust of the American people. In fact, Senator SCHUMER on November 2 said:

“I do not have confidence in [Comey] any longer,” and on that very same day, House Minority Leader NANCY PELOSI said: “Maybe he's not in the right job.”

But this water, as we can see these samples in front of me, has nothing to do with the FBI. There are over 36,000 Americans spread across Montana and North Dakota without access to clean water. If the mayor of Flint, MI, flew here to testify about the quality and challenges facing their water system, no one would have blocked that hearing. Frankly, this is just another sign of the marginalization of rural Montana and rural America. I was sent here to fight for rural Montana, to stand for rural America, and that is what I will continue to do. This hearing needs to happen today.

Mr. President, I have a request for the Energy Committee to meet at 2:30 p.m. today. I ask unanimous consent that the committee be allowed to meet.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, these are not usual times. Representing the State of Hawaii, of course, we care about clean water. So with all due respect to my colleague from Montana, we understand the importance of this issue to the people of his State. However, as I said, these are very unusual times, and, on the President's decision to fire Director James Comey in this manner, under this pretext, and at this time, it is also a total disservice to the American people.

This attempt, intended to derail and disrupt the FBI's ongoing investigation into Russia's attempt to disrupt or interfere with our democracy and the Trump team's ties to those attempts, should be a matter of national concern, not a Republican or Democratic concern. We need a bipartisan call for a special prosecutor who will conduct an impartial, thorough investigation, untainted by political consideration.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, if I could respond to my colleague from Hawaii.

The folks who have been derailed today are the men and women who have traveled thousands of miles to be here from very small communities across our country. They have taken time away from work and their families to be here to show our committees what is going on in rural America and the unacceptable quality of water.

Water is a basic need. We have water samples here that I think would be shocking to most Members in this body. I am just saddened to see that Democrats are going to derail these hearings this afternoon. Yes, let's have a fight about the FBI and the firing of Comey. We can have a good-spirited debate about that. But why are we preventing these folks from rural Amer-

ica, who have traveled thousands of miles, to testify today at our request.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEE TO MEET

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I have a request for the Indians Affairs Committee to meet today at 2:30 p.m.

First, we have a markup in the Indian Affairs Committee. The two bills we are marking up are Democrat-sponsored bills. The first one is Senator TESTER's bill, from the State of Montana, which would provide support for Native languages. I guess the summary is that it would support the education of Indian children. I believe it relates to Native languages in that educational capacity. So that is one of the bills, Senator TESTER's bill.

The other bill we are marking up is Senator TIM KAINE's bill, also a Democrat-sponsored bill. The short narrative I have is this: To extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahonock Tribe, the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe.

The reason that is significant, that is something that both Senator KAINE and Senator WARNER—both Senators from Virginia—have been working on for some time. The reason it is timely is that they have Pocahontas's birthday celebration coming up, which I think is going to be a large celebration in the Commonwealth of Virginia. They were hoping to have these Tribes recognized before this birthday celebration for Pocahontas. It is a timely issue.

Obviously, we can't advance the bill to the Senate floor unless we mark it up. At the request of those two Democratic Senators from the Commonwealth of Virginia, we are scheduled to mark up those bills and get them to the floor and try to do it in a timely way because of the celebration they are trying to get prepared for. Everybody knows the story of Pocahontas and why that would be a big celebration and certainly a big deal in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Again, as we debate this on the Senate floor, I think Senator DAINES made some strong points, and I would certainly appeal to our colleagues across the aisle to consider what I just described as far as those markups.

In addition to those markups, we also have a hearing on several bills. The first one is a McCain bill, and it is to amend the PROTECT Act to make Indian Tribes eligible for AMBER Alert grants.

Everybody knows what the AMBER Alert Program is and how important that program is to protect our young people when they get abducted. The reason Senator MCCAIN, from Arizona, is bringing this bill forward is because there was an abduction in Arizona, and the AMBER Alert went out late. I

think the AMBER Alert went out a day late.

Senator McCAIN has this PROTECT Act so we can make sure the AMBER Alert is working in Indian Country, and you certainly can understand how important it is that we do that. We have to have a hearing on the bill again so we can advance the bill to the Senate floor for consideration.

The final bill that we would have a hearing on in committee, if we are allowed to meet, is a Murkowski bill, Senator MURKOWSKI from Alaska. It would provide the conveyance of certain property in this State.

You have to realize that the witnesses—and I think certainly the good Senator from Hawaii will appreciate this—had to come here from Alaska, which is quite a lengthy trip. When the Senator travels back home to Hawaii, that is a long trip. It is certainly a beautiful place but a long trip to get there. Of course, it is not inexpensive to travel from Alaska to Washington, DC.

Those witnesses will be out their costs to come here if we are not able to have the hearing, and we would have to reschedule it. That certainly creates a cost burden for them, which is certainly unfair and not what they would want to have had happen on the part of their government.

I am putting that in human terms. Again, we are talking about two Democratic bills, and we are talking about two Republican bills. We are talking about constituents who have traveled a long way to come here to have the hearing and the markup.

Again, these are issues we should be able to work on in a bipartisan way. I would certainly ask for that consideration. At this point, I ask for unanimous consent that our committee be allowed to meet.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, of course we acknowledge the importance of the matters raised by my colleague from North Dakota and, representing my State, the State of Hawaii, yes, there is support for education of Native people, of Native children, which I hope will include Native Hawaiian children. That is important as well as recognizing various Indian Tribes and the other matters that were raised by my friend from North Dakota.

However, as I mentioned, these are not business-as-usual times. The untoward firing of the FBI Director, who was conducting an ongoing investigation into Russian attempts to interfere with our Democracy and the Trump team's ties to those attempts, should be a matter of national concern, should be a matter of concern to every single Member of the Senate.

This is not a Republican or a Democratic concern. This is a threat to our democracy. We know Russia did this. We know we need to get to the bottom

of this. We need to get to the bottom of the Trump team's ties to these efforts, and this thinly veiled attempt by President Trump to derail or disrupt these investigations cannot be sustained or supported.

We continue to ask for a bipartisan call for a special prosecutor who will conduct an impartial, thorough investigation, untainted by political considerations into the Russia-Trump matter. Therefore, Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Minnesota.

FIRING OF JAMES COMEY

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise to address President Trump's stunning dismissal of FBI Director Comey yesterday evening. We know the Russians interfered in the 2016 election. We know the Russians did so in order to undermine confidence in our democracy. We know the Russians carried out this attack with the goal of benefiting the campaign of Donald Trump, whom the Kremlin preferred to see win the election. These facts have been confirmed by our intelligence agencies.

What we don't fully yet understand is all of the reasons why, all the reasons why the Russians favored Donald Trump and whether associates of the President or members of his campaign assisted in the Russian operations to sway the election in his favor.

These questions are the subject of an ongoing counterintelligence investigation, an investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and, until last night, an investigation led by James Comey.

As former Director Comey recently testified to the House Intelligence Committee, "[T]he FBI, as part of [its] counterintelligence mission, is investigating the Russian government's efforts to interfere in the 2016 presidential election—and that includes investigating the nature of any links between individuals associated with the Trump campaign and the Russian government and whether there was any coordination between the campaign and Russia."

The timing of Director Comey's dismissal raises serious questions, and President Trump's decision to abruptly fire the man leading an investigation that could implicate the Trump administration should shock the conscience of every American who believes that no man or woman is above the law and who has faith in the fair and impartial pursuit of justice.

The White House attempted to preemptively dispel any suspicion by announcing that President Trump fired the Director "based on the clear recommendations" of Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein. The White House released several documents to back up that claim: a letter from President Trump to Director Comey, firing him; a letter from Attorney General Sessions to President Trump, recommending that Comey be fired; and a

memo written by Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein, which cited the Director's handling of the Hillary Clinton email investigation as damaging the FBI's reputation and credibility. These documents create more questions than they answer.

First, the letter from President Trump to Director Comey firing him. President Trump, ever eager to put distance between the Russian inquiry and himself, wrote: "While I greatly appreciate you informing me, on three separate occasions, that I am not under investigation, I nevertheless concur with the judgment of the Department of Justice that you are not able to effectively lead the Bureau."

Again, we know the FBI is conducting a criminal investigation into whether members of the Trump campaign coordinated with the Russians in their efforts to influence the election. Director Comey confirmed that before he was fired. Whether President Trump is personally under investigation by the Bureau or whether investigators are merely scrutinizing his advisers and associates, the President's clumsy attempt at misdirection does little more than remind us of the many unanswered questions about his and his people's connections to Russia.

Second, Attorney General Sessions' letter to President Trump. The Attorney General writes that based on his review of Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein's memo, which cites the Director's handling of the Clinton email investigation, that Attorney General Sessions has concluded that the FBI requires new leadership and a fresh start. Attorney General Sessions recommended that Director Comey be fired.

Attorney General Sessions should not have had any involvement in this decision at all. On March 2, the Attorney General called a press conference to announce: "I have now decided to recuse myself from any existing or future investigations of any matter relating in any way to the campaigns for president of the United States."

The reason Attorney General Sessions made that announcement was because news reports revealed he had provided misleading testimony in response to a question that I asked during his confirmation hearing; that Attorney General Sessions had falsely stated: "I did not have communications with the Russians." In fact, he did meet with the Russian Ambassador during the campaign twice.

Having provided misleading testimony under oath about a matter that could potentially be the subject of a criminal investigation by the FBI, Attorney General Sessions was forced to recuse himself.

I find it deeply troubling that Attorney General Jeff Sessions—who misled the Judiciary Committee about his own communications with the Russian Ambassador and who pledged to recuse himself from this investigation as a result—betrayed that pledge by involving

himself in the decision to fire the Director of the FBI, who was leading the investigation into Russia's interference in our elections, including whether members of President Trump's campaign were involved in that interference. Attorney General Sessions was a member of that campaign, and he misled the committee on whether he had met with the Russians, and he did that under oath. That is why he recused himself, and yet he inserted himself in this firing.

Finally, there is Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein's memo, which asserts that Director Comey's handling of the Clinton email investigation caused the public to lose confidence in the Bureau. Director Comey spoke publicly about the Clinton email investigation twice, in July and October of last year.

Setting aside whether Director Comey's decision to discuss the investigation was unorthodox or broke with Justice Department and FBI protocols, his actions were well known to both President Trump and Attorney General Sessions, and both of them celebrated his actions at the time. After Director Comey wrote to Congress on October 28, informing us that the FBI had discovered additional emails and would therefore reopen its investigation into Secretary Clinton, then-Candidate Trump praised his decision. He said: "What [Comey] did was the right thing," and "It took guts for Director Comey to make the move that he made in light of the kind of opposition he had."

Appearing on FOX Business Network, then-Senator Sessions said that Director Comey "had an absolute duty, in my opinion, 11 days [before an election] or not, to come forward with the new information that he has and let the American people know that, too."

If President Trump or Attorney General Sessions truly objected to the way that Director Comey conducted the investigation into Secretary Clinton's emails, I suspect they would have said so at the time rather than heap praise upon him. But their previous statements lauding Director Comey's handling of the Clinton email probe cast suspicion on the extent to which they relied on the Deputy Attorney General's purported rationale.

Further, and this is important, if Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein were truly concerned that Director Comey's handling of the Clinton email investigation had damaged the reputation of the Bureau, then why not wait for the conclusion of an investigation by the very respected DOJ inspector general into Comey's decision during the election—his decisions—an investigation that had been underway since January?

The shifting positions of President Trump and Attorney General Sessions lead me to believe something else is going on here, that this is not about Hillary Clinton's emails but about turning the page on Russia. In fact,

last night, a White House spokesman said so. Appearing on FOX News, White House Deputy Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders was asked how Director Comey's firing would affect the Russia investigation. She replied:

When are they going to let that go? It's been going on for nearly a year. Frankly, it's getting kind of absurd. There's nothing there. It's time to move on. Frankly, it's time to focus on the things the American people care about.

The American people care about whether a hostile foreign government influenced our election. They care about whether advisers and associates of the President helped that foreign government do that.

The events that have occurred over the past 24 hours are deeply, deeply unsettling. As my Republican colleague Senator FLAKE said last night:

I've spent the last several hours trying to find an acceptable rationale for the timing of Comey's firing. I just can't do it.

And I can't either. In my view, the timing and the circumstances surrounding Director Comey's dismissal are very suspicious. For example, just this morning, it was reported that Director Comey recently asked the Justice Department to provide additional resources for the Russian investigation—a request that purportedly he made personally to Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein. This raises grave concerns about the Trump Justice Department's ability to conduct a full, fair, and impartial investigation. In order to address these concerns, Attorney General Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein should come to the Senate and explain their involvement to all of the Senators in this body.

In the wake of what I believe was a politically motivated decision to remove Director Comey, I no longer have confidence that the Department of Justice can fulfill its obligation to resolve this matter impartially. The situation now calls very clearly for the appointment of a special prosecutor to oversee the investigation into whether associates of the Trump organization or former members of the Trump campaign had knowledge of or participated in the Russian attack on our democracy.

I join my colleagues' calls for an independent inquiry so the American people can have confidence that the individuals who conduct this investigation will follow the facts no matter where they lead.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I am here today to speak on a different topic, but before the Senator from Minnesota leaves, I want to thank him for his statement and for his observations, which are dead-on about the need now more than ever to have an independent special counsel take a look at what has happened here. I am very grateful for that, and I believe that is the conclu-

sion others in this Chamber, Republicans and Democrats working together, will reach as well, as they let sink in what has actually transpired over the last 24 hours.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTION

Mr. President, earlier today, in a piece of good news around here, a bipartisan majority voted to block an effort that would have wasted taxpayer resources, polluted our air, and accelerated climate change. I thank my colleagues who voted that way, in particular the Republican Senators who crossed the aisle to join us in this vote. Today, we showed that Washington can still come together to put the public above the powerful. Today we showed that, in the Senate at least, a majority still exists for common sense, for public health, and for good stewardship of public resources.

Before this morning, the Trump administration and some Members of Congress sought to undo a rule from the Bureau of Land Management that had been a win for taxpayers, for businesses, and the environment. Across the country, oil and gas companies pay royalties to extract from Federal and Tribal lands. Each year, these companies waste around \$330 million worth of gas because of inefficient operations, from leaky pipes to excess burning, to faulty vents.

By preserving this rule, we will give taxpayers roughly \$800 million in new royalties over the next decade—resources our communities could use to invest in schools or to build roads, bridges, and tunnels. Actually, the idea that we are giving the money is not right. The taxpayers will earn the royalties to which they are entitled as a result of these public lands.

This is a win all the way around. For public health, it reduces toxic pollutants in the air we breathe. For businesses, it cuts waste and expands their bottom lines. For the planet, it curbs leaking methane, which is up to 80 times more potent than a greenhouse gas and accelerates climate change. In fact, without the proper protections, natural gas can burn as dirty as coal, and the benefits that we have gotten from natural gas would be dramatically reduced.

Thanks to bipartisan cooperation, this rule will remain in place. I want to recognize Colorado's leadership in bringing us to this moment. In Colorado, we led the Nation to adopt the country's first-ever rule to reduce methane waste and pollution. The rule enjoys support from environmental groups, the oil and gas industry, and 83 percent of Coloradans.

Our approach was so successful that the Bureau of Land Management drew on it as a model for all Federal and Tribal lands. In my State, when we were thinking about passing this rule, critics said that it would stifle energy production, but the opposite has happened. Colorado's natural gas production has continued to rise, while oil production has nearly doubled.

Critics also argued that Colorado's rule would kill jobs. Once again, the facts tell a very different story. In Colorado alone, 41 different companies put people to work to repair pipes, monitor pollution, and develop technologies to reduce emissions. Our experience showed that the rule spurred new jobs and technologies, reduced pollution, and protected the planet, all while failing to reduce energy production as critics alleged. Those facts were critical in preserving the rule this morning.

Because of what we did this morning, the national standard we preserved, our State will not suffer from higher methane pollution coming across the border from other States. That would have hurt Colorado's economy. That would have hurt tourism in one of the most visited States in the country, and it would have been deeply unfair to the people of Colorado, to kids with asthma and seniors who need clean air to breathe, to the next generation of Americans, of Coloradans who deserve a healthy planet.

Now that Congress has spoken, the administration should listen. My colleagues and I will vigorously oppose any attempts by the Department of the Interior to bypass, somehow administratively, the decision that has been made today. All of us need to remain vigilant to ensure that this common-sense protection remains in place, protecting Americans, protecting our environment, and I am grateful that today, at least, we can come together and put fact over ideology and put the public good over narrow interests.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. 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. SCHUMER. Thank you, Mr. President.

First, I want to thank my colleague from Colorado for his outstanding remarks and, even much more important, the work on the methane CRA. Much is happening today, and not many people paid much attention, I guess, because they were so busy, but this is the first CRA to go down, and it is probably the most important one that came before us. So the fact that it wasn't voted on means the people of America and the people of the world can breathe a sigh of relief because methane—one of the great causes of global warming—will not be released into the atmosphere as easily.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. President, now on the topic of the day, this morning the Democratic caucus met to discuss the circumstances of Mr. Comey's dismissal by the White House. There are many questions to be answered and many ac-

tions to be taken. We will be pursuing several things in the coming days and weeks that we decided in our caucus, and we will have more to say about those next steps in the days ahead, but there are three things our caucus agreed must happen right away.

First, Mr. Rosenstein should not be the one to appoint the special prosecutor. That responsibility should go to the highest serving career civil servant at the Department of Justice.

Second, Mr. Comey is needed more than ever to testify before the Senate.

Third, Attorney General Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein should brief all Senators on these events separately and in a classified setting, if necessary, and they should do it soon because the questions are just swirling about, and there are more every day, almost every hour.

Let me go over each.

First, it is the overwhelming view of my caucus that a special prosecutor should now be appointed to conduct the investigation into the Trump campaign's ties to Russia. Mr. Rosenstein cannot be the person to appoint him.

Serious doubts have been cast on Mr. Rosenstein's impartiality for two reasons: First, there are many reports that Director Comey met with Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein last week to make a request for more resources or help with the investigation into the Trump campaign's ties to Russia. That would make the timing of this firing even more suspect. Second, Mr. Rosenstein signed his name to a highly political memo arguing for Director Comey's dismissal and made no complaint about the involvement of the Attorney General, who had recused himself from all matters relating to the Russia investigation, in recommending the firing of the man who was leading it.

It is hard to believe that a seasoned prosecutor without bias would have allowed Sessions to be a part of this. It is also hard to believe that a seasoned prosecutor would write such a memo, which seems highly political—not in the kind of language and not with the kind of annotation that prosecutors normally write.

These facts make it clear that the decision to appoint a special prosecutor should go to the highest ranking civil servant at the Department of Justice. Mr. Rosenstein and other political appointees appointed by the President, whom they are supposed to investigate, should not be the ones making a special call on a prosecutor, lest that decision be seen as influenced or, worse, made at the direction of the administration.

We need to assure the American people that they can have confidence in our criminal justice system to conduct the Russian investigation impartially. The best and only way to do that now would be for a career civil servant at the Department of Justice to be the person who decides on a special prosecutor. It should not be a political appointee who makes such a decision.

My friend, our great senior Senator from the State of California, brought this up in our meeting. Senator FEINSTEIN's call that the appointment be made by someone who is a career civil servant, not a political appointee, has the widespread support of our caucus and is the only fair thing to do.

Second, we have also learned that Mr. Comey will no longer be appearing before the Intelligence Committee tomorrow. In his stead will be the Acting FBI Director, Andrew McCabe. There are so many unanswered questions that only Mr. Comey can answer. We Democrats hope and expect that he will still come before the Senate in some capacity.

I for one salute Senator BURR and Senator WARNER for inviting him to testify next week before the Intelligence Committee. It is the right thing to do. We ought to hear from Mr. Comey. At this moment of profound doubt about the reasons and timing of FBI Director Comey's firing by the President and about the status and progress of a very serious investigation into the Trump campaign and Russia by his agency, we require answers.

Third, the recent revelations about the Rosenstein and Comey meeting demand that the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General—Attorney General Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein—brief the Senate and answer questions because of so many things swirling about from last night's firing. That briefing could be classified if necessary—it may be part classified, part not—and each briefing should be done separately.

Let me speak plainly. The prospect that a campaign for the Presidency of the United States colluded with a foreign power in order to win our Nation's highest office is as grave a topic for an investigation as there could be. It gets right to the heart of the pillar of our democracy: the fair and free elections of our representatives. And the fact that Mr. Rosenstein and Attorney General Sessions were involved in this firing when there are so many questions swirling about means they must come before us to answer questions. I hope Leader MCCONNELL will understand the need for that and answer the plea I made this morning about this.

Furthermore, the fact that Mr. Rosenstein—which came out after I made my request—the fact that Mr. Rosenstein, by all reports, had a meeting with Director Comey where Comey asked for more resources makes it all the more important for Rosenstein to come because that might be the reason Comey was fired—because he was pursuing the investigation in an accelerated way that was very much needed.

So what we are seeking—the only thing we are seeking—are assurances that this investigation will be carried out in an impartial, independent way; that we get all the facts; that we get to the very bottom of this. All we are seeking is some assurance that the subject of this investigation is not able to

influence it or, God forbid, quash it. The topic of this investigation itself is very serious. The possibility that the investigation is being impeded or tampered with is even worse. That threatens the integrity of our criminal justice system and the hallowed American belief in rule of law. I believe this rises far above party labels. I believe it rises far above partisan politics.

I have been heartened that several Republicans have expressed concerns. I hope and expect our Republican friends will join us in these efforts to make sure this investigation is conducted in the manner it deserves. We want Congress's role to be nonpartisan, looking at the good of neither political party but, rather, the good of our dear country.

These are tough and serious times. We cannot shirk from our responsibilities, neither Democrats nor Republicans. I hope everyone in this Chamber will rise to the occasion.

I thank my good friend from Minnesota for allowing me to speak.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

FIRING OF JAMES COMEY

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I join in the minority leader's remarks and his plan for moving forward, which is a bipartisan plan and a plea for our colleagues to work together.

America is not like some countries where people are all of the same ethnic background or practice the same religion. America is an idea. America is an ideal. America is something that is grounded in our democracy.

Way back centuries ago, our Founding Fathers were concerned about foreign influence on our democracy. They were concerned at the time about Great Britain. Well, now we have another concern, and that concern is Russia. It is not just the Democrats' concern. As one of our colleagues, Senator RUBIO, has noted in the past, maybe this election was an attack on one political candidate in one party, but next time it will be the other party. That is why we must join together and handle this correctly and in the spirit of our democracy and our Constitution.

I have known Director Comey for a long time. We were classmates at the University of Chicago Law School. He was well liked in our class, and he earned the respect of the agents he supervised and the law enforcement he worked with. I made it clear to him that I didn't agree with how he handled the email investigation regarding Secretary Clinton, but nevertheless this man is a hard worker and someone of integrity. Just because someone doesn't agree with how an investigation is handled, even if it is in a big way, doesn't mean this person should be fired.

FBI Directors have 10-year terms for a reason; that is because we want them to be independent from political influence.

All Americans, including those who have criticized Director Comey for

whatever reason in the past, should be very troubled by the timing of this firing.

Let's look at the past week. We started the week on Monday, when Former Director Clapper testified in great detail about the Russian threat to our democracy and the fact that the Russians feel empowered and that he believes they will do it again and again. We also were on the heels of the French cyber attack, where their elections were attacked and where Russia was trying to get involved in their elections.

Former Acting Attorney General Sally Yates testified, and she made very clear that she had not just given a heads-up to the administration that their National Security Advisor was compromised by the Russians—no. She had two formal meetings over at the White House. She outlined in detail how she had gone over to the White House and voiced her concerns.

When I asked both Former Director Clapper and former Acting Attorney General Yates whether this was material for blackmail—when you have a high-ranking official saying one thing on a tape recording that the Russians knew he had said and then another to the Vice President of the United States—if that was material for blackmail, they said yes, definitively yes, that he had been compromised.

Yet, as it became clear, the White House then allowed the National Security Advisor, General Flynn, to stay on for 18 days, including being part of an hour-long conversation between the President of the United States and Vladimir Putin. So that is what happened on Monday.

We know what was going to happen tomorrow, Thursday, which is that Director Comey was going to testify in his capacity as the FBI Director in front of the Senate Intelligence Committee. We know questions were going to be asked about Russia. Of course, I commend Senators BARR and WARNER for inviting him again next week in his capacity now as a private citizen.

Yet, when you look at what has happened here—the Yates and Clapper testimony on Monday, the Comey testimony expected on Thursday—what is sandwiched in between? It is the firing of the FBI Director. By the way, this is the same FBI Director who had the audacity to tell the truth before Congress when he was asked whether President Obama had wiretapped the Trump Tower, as alleged by President Trump in a tweet at 6 in the morning. The FBI Director truthfully answered, no, that it did not happen. That is also something that has happened in the past month.

Today we learned that just days before he was fired, Mr. Comey asked senior officials at the Justice Department for more resources in order to carry out the Russia investigation.

Now, what are my colleagues saying about this? I think it is very important to note that the two Senators who are

privity to the most classified information—Senator MCCAIN, as chair of the Armed Services Committee, and Senator BARR, as chair of the Intelligence Committee—have both expressed serious concerns about what has happened.

Senator MCCAIN said he was disappointed, and Senator BARR, the Republican chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said:

I am troubled by the timing and reasoning of Director Comey's termination. I have found Director Comey to be a public servant of the highest order, and his dismissal further confuses an already difficult investigation by the Committee.

Senator FLAKE said:

I have spent the last several hours trying to find an acceptable rationale for the timing of Comey's firing. I just can't do it.

The reasoning the White House is using for Director Comey's firing is bizarre, and that is why I believe Senator BARR said that his dismissal further confuses an already difficult investigation.

The memo provided by Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein cites old justifications. These are quotes from letters that I remember from the Presidential campaign, and they are used in the letter as a justification.

If the administration found Director Comey's conduct during the election to be so problematic, why now—right, smack in the middle of the advancements of this Russia investigation?

The answer, I believe, is that the justification that is provided in the memo is a pretext. The fact that President Trump's termination letter to Director Comey strangely discusses the fact that Director Comey informed the President that he was not under investigation in the context of the Russia investigation sheds light on what this is really about; that Director Comey was seeking the truth.

Senator BARR said that Director Comey has been more forthcoming with information than any FBI Director he can recall in his tenure on the congressional intelligence committees. In firing Comey, President Trump has cast doubt about the independence and viability of any further investigation into the foreign interference of our democracy.

Why was Attorney General Sessions, who had recused himself from the investigation on Russian interference, able to influence the firing of the man at the helm of the Russia investigation?

That is one of the questions we want answered and why, by the way, we believe it is important to have a closed-door briefing with the Deputy Attorney General and his predecessor.

Did Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein act on his own or at the direction of Attorney General Sessions or the White House?

Are reports that the President had been searching for a rationale to fire the FBI Director for more than a week true?

Was his firing influenced by any recent developments in the investigation, like the issuance of grand jury

subpoenas or Director Comey's recent request for more resources for the Russia investigation?

Why didn't the President wait for the inspector general's investigation into Director Comey's handling of the Clinton email investigation to conclude before making his decision to fire him?

I am a former prosecutor. I believe in facts, and I believe in evidence. These decisions should not have been made without these facts and without this evidence and while in the middle of a major investigation of Russian influence in our election. Answers to these questions are essential in getting to the truth and in ensuring that an independent investigation at the FBI can continue.

For months, U.S. intelligence agencies—17 of them—have said that Russia used covert cyber attacks, espionage, and harmful propaganda to try and undermine our democracy. Reports show it. The facts prove it. When former Director of National Intelligence Clapper testified, he said Russia will continue to interfere in our election system.

This is what he said exactly:

I believe [Russia is] now emboldened to continue such activities in the future, both here and around the world, and to do so even more intensely. If there has ever been a clarion call for vigilance and action against a threat to the very foundation of our democratic political system, this episode is it.

I was in that hearing and asked questions of Clapper when he said this: "Vigilance." That is what he said—vigilance.

How can we call it vigilance, when the FBI Director, who is conducting the investigation, has been fired? What message does that send to Russia? Does that make them think we are serious about this investigation; that we want to get to the bottom of it and that we do not want it to happen again? No. It sends the opposite message.

Aides and surrogates of the Trump administration, during the campaign and the transition, were in contact with officials from a foreign government that was actively working to tear our democracy apart. We need to know why and when and how. In the first question, that is what I really want to know—the "why."

This week, former Acting Attorney General Sally Yates, as I mentioned, and Director Clapper reminded us that on the very day President Obama imposed sanctions on Russia for its unprecedented attacks on our democracy, a member of the Trump transition team spoke to a senior Russian official regarding those sanctions. Michael Flynn, the National Security Advisor—the person charged with the most sensitive matters of U.S. national security—was not truthful with the Vice President. He lied to the Vice President about contact with Russian officials. In turn, the American people were misled.

After the Department of Justice warned the administration that the National Security Advisor had lied and

may be vulnerable to blackmail by the Russian Government, what did the administration do? It continued to allow General Flynn to handle top secret information for 18 more days. They let him participate in an hour-long phone call between President Trump and Vladimir Putin. In fact, decisive action was not taken until the Washington Post revealed what was happening.

We have now seen two people resign—Trump's campaign manager and his National Security Advisor. The one thing they have in common is Russia and the President. We have also seen three people fired—Sally Yates, the Acting Attorney General of the United States, who was simply doing her job; Preet Bharara, the U.S. attorney in New York City; and Jim Comey, the FBI Director. The one thing they have in common is that they were all investigating links, and they were doing their jobs.

Think about that. Let that sink in. The independent government officials who were or could have been charged with getting to the truth, no matter where it led, were fired.

We owe it to the American people to get to the bottom of what is going on here. It is our job to get to the bottom of this because the President of the United States—President Trump—cannot fire Congress. We need to know the full extent of the Trump campaign's contact with the Russian Government during the campaign and transition, including what was said and what was done and who knew about it.

That is why, on January 4, I stood with Senator CARDIN and with ADAM SCHIFF and ELIJAH CUMMINGS, of the House of Representatives, and called for an independent commission. Now, this is different than the special prosecutor whom we need to handle the criminal investigation. This is also different than the good work that is being done by the Senate Intelligence Committee under the leadership of Senators BURR and WARNER.

To me, an independent commission would help us because it could get to the bottom of what has happened, with the intent of making sure it does not happen again, in order to protect our democracy. It could have recommendations, just like the 9/11 Commission had, on how we could improve our laws. It could have recommendations on what we could do if the media gets hold of information that is the result of a cyber attack from a foreign government. It could have recommendations of what political parties and campaigns could do—perhaps even in agreement—when they get access to information that is a result of a cyber attack against the opposite party.

It was not that long ago when campaigns would come upon debate information and other things and would simply put it in an envelope and send it back to the other side. We can do this, but that is not going to come out of some simple piece of legislation or from the work that the Intelligence Committee is doing.

That is why I believe we need this independent commission as well as a special prosecutor to look into all contacts between Trump aides and surrogates and Russian officials during the campaign, transition, and administration. This prosecutor must be fair and impartial and completely unattached to either political party.

In addition to the independent commission, we also need our congressional committees, as I mentioned, to continue to exercise their oversight authority.

Since the election, we have heard a lot about the three branches of government and our system of checks and balances. One of Congress's fundamental jobs, as I told a group of students in my office today, is to closely oversee the executive branch in order to ensure that the law is being properly followed and enforced. This shouldn't just be things that students learn from their Senators when they come in during school trips or be what they learn from a textbook. This is actually our job.

This means that in addition to this independent, 9/11-style Commission, we must make sure our congressional committees continue to investigate Russian interference in our political system. We have subpoena power. We need to use it.

Some of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle understand the importance of doing our jobs in order to get to the bottom of this. As I mentioned, we have the Intelligence Committee investigation, but we also have the Judiciary subcommittee, on which I serve, led by Senators GRAHAM and WHITEHOUSE. They are the ones who held the hearing with Sally Yates and Director Clapper this week.

This is an unprecedented time in our country's history. We are witnessing a singular moment of constitutional and democratic unease. In recent months, foundational elements of our democracy, including the rule of law, have been questioned, challenged, and even undermined.

Several of my colleagues have compared the President's action to President Richard Nixon's firing of special prosecutor Archibald Cox, who was investigating Watergate. Even then, Mr. Cox was replaced by a new special prosecutor. Today, we have no special prosecutor to determine whether the President's campaign colluded with a hostile foreign power. Some in Congress are continuing to resist any serious investigation. For that reason, our democracy may be in even greater peril. The night he was fired, Mr. Cox defended his decision to conduct the Watergate investigation as he saw fit rather than to yield to the President's order that he limit his request for tape recordings.

Cox said: "Whether ours shall continue to be a government of laws and not of men is now for Congress and, ultimately, the American people."

He is right. The American people deserve a thorough, independent investigation into the extent of Russia's interference in the 2016 Presidential election.

This is not a partisan issue. Americans deserve answers now. And where should they get those answers? They should get those answers from this Chamber, because we, as Members of the Senate, cannot be fired.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The Senator from Texas.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I was listening with interest to our friend and colleague from Minnesota talk about the Russia investigation. I agree with her 100 percent that it is our responsibility to get to the bottom of what exactly happened with respect to Russian involvement in our elections, much as they got involved in the elections in France, using the combined process commonly known as active measures. Active measures are a combination of cyber espionage, propaganda, and a use of social media through paid trolls who can then actually try to raise the visibility of some of this propaganda such that it then becomes part of the mainstream media and becomes accepted as part of the debate in democratic societies.

I believe we share a bipartisan and universal commitment to get to the bottom of what happened in our last election.

I would note that there are two members of the Senate Judiciary Committee who actually serve as members of the Senate Intelligence Committee, which is actively involved in a rigorous bipartisan investigation. That would be myself and Senator FEINSTEIN, the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who is also the former chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Senator FEINSTEIN has said recently that there is no evidence of collusion between the administration and Russia. I think she would share with me a commitment not to stop there but to find out where the facts take us. Indeed, thanks to Chairman BURR and thanks to Vice Chairman WARNER, our bipartisan Senate Intelligence Committee has unprecedented access to raw intelligence, from the National Security Agency, the CIA, and from all sources of the intelligence community. We have access to some of the most sensitive intelligence gathered by the U.S. Government. I think that is due to the credit and leadership of Chairman BURR and Vice Chairman WARNER that our committee has remained bipartisan and we are leaving no stone unturned to get to the bottom of what exactly happened.

So I know people are concerned, and I share that concern. We need to come up with a program of countermeasures to deal with this because the Russian Government has been amping up their game for some time now, and now they

are operating at certainly dangerous levels when it comes to trying to interfere in our most basic democratic institutions, like our elections.

I would say, as far as the Department of Justice is concerned, that Rod Rosenstein was confirmed by this body by a vote of 94 to 6. That is probably the only Trump nomination so far since he has been President that has enjoyed such broad bipartisan support. It is because of his distinguished record, most recently as the U.S. attorney in Baltimore.

I remember hearing from our Senators from Maryland, for example, Democrats who were praising Rod Rosenstein and saying he was exactly the kind of person we needed in this sensitive job as Deputy Attorney General.

But now our colleagues seem to forget their very own conviction and vote on Rod Rosenstein, and now they say that he can't be fair, that he has somehow an appearance of a conflict of interest, making it necessary to appoint a special counsel, which, by the way, also then reports to the leadership at the Department of Justice.

I think we ought to give Mr. Rosenstein a chance to demonstrate that he is capable of leading that investigation at the Department of Justice, understanding that our role here in the Congress is not to pursue a criminal investigation and case. That is the job of the Department of Justice. Our job, in parallel fashion, is for oversight reasons and to let the American people and ourselves know exactly what happened. That is why the investigation of the bipartisan Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is so important, in addition to the hearings we are having in the Judiciary Committee, on which the Senator from Minnesota and I happen to serve as well.

So we do need to get to the bottom of what happened, and I am confident we will. It is our duty, and we will get the job done.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

On another topic, Mr. President, last week our colleagues in the House took the first necessary step to deliver on our campaign promises for the last three elections to repeal and replace ObamaCare. Why is that important? Well, because of the impact of ObamaCare on premiums and deductibles for many people, millions of people, literally, are now being priced out of the insurance market, and their insurance, even though they have the policy, is really unavailable to them because they have, for example, such high deductibles. We know insurance companies continue to pull out of the marketplace, and people are reduced to little or no choices when it comes to where to buy their insurance, because, frankly, ObamaCare was oversold and underdelivered.

The President said: If you like your policy, you can keep it. Well, that proved to be false. He said: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor.

Well, that didn't turn out to be true, either. He said that a family of four would save an average of \$2,500 on their premiums, and that didn't prove to be true, either.

So like most command and control from Washington, DC—notwithstanding, perhaps, the aspirations of our colleagues across the aisle to deliver affordable healthcare to the American people—it simply failed to do so, and it is in serious distress—even a meltdown.

So we would invite our colleagues across the aisle—our Democrat friends—to join with us to help rescue the American people from this failure of the Affordable Care Act.

The House passed a bill last week—the American Health Care Act. It is not a perfect bill. I dare say the Senate is going to take up a bill of its own, and we will try to work with our House colleagues to try to get legislation to the President and signed into law that will rescue the American people and will finally deliver on our promise of more affordable premiums, better access, and real choice.

But it is really not enough to just stand back and criticize those who are actually trying to rescue those who are in harm's way as a result of the failures of ObamaCare. That, so far, is what our friends across the aisle are doing. They are not lifting a finger to help the people hurt today by ObamaCare. We would challenge them to get involved and to work with us.

Many of our colleagues have come to the floor and talked about stories they have heard from their constituents back in their States and the harm that the Affordable Care Act has caused. Premiums have skyrocketed. Millions have been kicked off their healthcare plans. The economy is saddled with billions of dollars in new regulations. Employers are laying people off or not hiring new people because, frankly, they don't want to suffer the additional financial burdens of ObamaCare.

Instead of having more access to more health insurance options, Texans—the people I represent—have less of both.

The bottom line is ObamaCare has failed, and it is up to us to provide some relief to the people who are being hurt by the failure of ObamaCare. We invite our colleagues to work with us to do that.

Since the creation of ObamaCare, I have been hearing regularly from my constituents back home in Texas how they need relief from the healthcare law and they need it now. Every letter, phone call, or conversation produces similar themes. One of my constituents, for example, is a woman who was paying about \$300 a month for her health insurance, but under a span of just a few months, that premium skyrocketed to \$800—\$300 to \$800. I don't know many people who can withstand that kind of increase in their expenses for healthcare.

She wrote to me and said: "This has to stop—and quality, flexible plans need to return for individuals."

I agree with her.

Another wrote in to say that before ObamaCare her daughter was getting what she considered to be adequate healthcare insurance for about \$190 a month with just a \$500 deductible. Now that has gone up to a payment of almost \$400 a month—roughly, doubled—with a deductible of more than \$6,000. What are people supposed to do with a deductible of \$6,000 which says you have to pay \$6,000 before your insurance pays a penny? It is essentially no good to most hard-working, middle class families.

So ObamaCare does not equal healthcare that is affordable or better for Americans. It is simply not working.

In fact, in Texas, if you have a gross income of about \$24,000 a year, under ObamaCare, you could end up spending about 30 percent of your total income on healthcare costs alone—30 percent of your gross income on healthcare and related costs.

Fortunately, thanks to the passage of the American Healthcare Act, or the AHCA, which passed the House last week, we have the beginning of a path forward to provide a lifeline to those people who are simply priced out of the market today—the 30 million people who don't have insurance—and those who simply can't use the health coverage they have under ObamaCare.

So I look forward to working with our Senate colleagues—hopefully, all of our Senate colleagues, if they are willing—to help improve the House bill and to get it passed in this Chamber and signed by the President.

This is not something we can do without the support of every Republican Senator, but my hope is that we would do this with the help of more than just Republicans.

Our goal to repeal and replace this bill has been, of course, no secret.

We need legislation that will reform Medicaid. With the American Healthcare Act, we have the first major healthcare entitlement reform in a generation, without eliminating anybody who is currently covered by Medicaid today.

We also need to do away with ObamaCare's job-killing taxes, like the individual and the employer mandate. I remember, in Tyler, TX, a few years ago, meeting with a single mom who worked in a restaurant who told me that her hours had been cut from 40 hours a week to less than 30 hours a week because her employer didn't want to pay the employer mandate and so basically had to cut people from full-time work back to part-time work. So what did she do? She had to get another job as a single mom, working in a restaurant in Tyler, TX. That is the sort of unintended consequence of ObamaCare.

Then there is the medical device tax—something the Presiding Officer

has led on—which is a tax on innovation. This isn't even a tax on income. It is a tax on gross receipts. I have had some medical device companies from my State tell me they have had to move their operations to Costa Rica in order to avoid the medical device tax, which has crippled their ability to innovate and invest in their business. Then there is the tax on investments and the tax on prescription drugs. Middle-income Americans and our job creators need and will get massive tax relief when we repeal and replace ObamaCare.

So that is what 52 Members of the Republican conference are working on and what we would like to work on with our colleagues across the aisle, if they are willing to help. We welcome their ideas. Actually, a bipartisan solution would be preferable to one done strictly along party lines. But all Members of the Republican conference are at the table working on that today. There is no denying that our country can't afford another one-size-fits-all approach to healthcare. The American people need relief from the unworkable, unsustainable system that President Obama promised—or delivered, which is very different from what he promised. I am confident that we can get there by working together to responsibly provide relief and, in doing so, empower individuals to deliver more options and competition and responsibly help those who need care to have more access to it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 37, Jeffrey Rosen to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Jeffrey A. Rosen, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Jeffrey A. Rosen, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, Dan Sullivan, Shelley Moore Capito, John Barrasso, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Rounds, Orrin G. Hatch, Bill Cassidy, Pat Roberts, Mike Crapo, Lamar Alexander, Richard Burr, John Thune, Jerry Moran, James E. Risch.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the cloture motion be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 35, Rachel L. Brand to be Associate Attorney General.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Rachel L. Brand, of Iowa, to be Associate Attorney General.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Rachel L. Brand, of Iowa, to be Associate Attorney General.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, Jeff Flake, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Mike Crapo, John Barrasso, Chuck Grassley, Mike Rounds, John Kennedy, John Thune, Pat Roberts, James E. Risch, Orrin G. Hatch, Shelley Moore Capito, Lindsey Graham, John Cornyn.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the cloture motion be waived.

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. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTION

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I am proud that the Senate voted to reject an effort to overturn commonsense protections to reduce methane waste. It was 3 years ago that satellite images from NASA revealed that there is a giant cloud of methane—about the size of the State of Delaware—sitting over the Four Corners region in Northwestern New Mexico and Southwestern Colorado.

Although evidence had shown that there was methane air pollution in the Four Corners as early as 2003, the image of NASA data is truly striking. This is a warning of a potentially major threat to public health for communities in the region.

The San Juan Basin in the Four Corners region has long been a leading producer of oil and natural gas. With the natural gas boom of the mid-2000s, production in the basin grew by leaps and bounds, and that created hundreds of new high-paying jobs and a major new domestic source of an important energy resource.

Unfortunately, amid all this growth, some producers developing natural gas on our public lands and on Tribal lands released harmful air pollution and wasted these publicly owned resources by allowing methane to leak into the air from faulty equipment and pipes, and even by burning off valuable natural gas in the process called flaring.

Following the discovery of the methane hotspot, researchers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory joined Caltech and University of Michigan scientists to conduct a detailed study into the cause of the methane cloud. Some producers claimed that the hotspot was caused primarily by natural seeps of gas from underground geologic formations and by gas venting out from an old coal mine in the region.

The NASA researchers, using instrumentation mounted on aircraft that flew close to the ground and throughout 1,200 square miles of airspace in the Four Corners region, identified leaks from natural gas wells as the major methane emitters contributing to the methane air pollution.

As greenhouse gas, methane has over 80 times the global warming potential as carbon dioxide over the short term. We have a moral obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to mitigate our contributions to climate change.

Even absent its consequences for climate change, methane leaks waste valuable energy resources, and they harm public health. When methane leaks from oil and gas wells, harmful carcinogens such as benzene leak into the air alongside it.

Because of the air pollution over the Four Corners region, the American

Lung Association gave San Juan County in New Mexico an F rating for ozone pollution in 2016. That means children suffer more asthma attacks and seniors have more difficulty breathing.

I want it to be clear that this is not a case of pitting development of our energy resources against human health. We have a golden opportunity to apply innovative, existing technologies to this problem, grow our economy, and improve air quality for the people of the Four Corners region. That is because minimizing the amount of methane that leaks, vents, or flares out of the oil and gas wells isn't just good for air quality, it is good for business and the bottom line.

When oil and gas companies modernize their equipment to reduce leaks, they are able to capture more gas that they can sell, as well as increase worker safety at their wells. When we capture more gas, that also means we see more royalties and revenues for States, Tribes, and local communities. By updating oil and natural gas production equipment and infrastructure to reduce wasted natural gas, we create new jobs for energy workers and manufacturers.

When we reduce wasteful leaks, it means that instead of having a giant methane cloud over the northwest corner of New Mexico and over the Navajo Nation—a major public health hazard—we put our publicly owned natural gas resources to beneficial use. That is the definition of a win-win situation.

I say all this because that is exactly what the Bureau of Land Management's methane waste prevention rule is designed to do. These commonsense and cost-effective protections in the rule were put in place to reduce harmful methane and benzene pollution and to ensure that oil and gas operations are using technological advances that minimize emissions and maximize the amount of natural gas we produce.

Between 2009 and 2015, the BLM estimates that oil and gas producers on our public and Tribal lands vented, flared, and leaked 462 billion cubic feet of methane. They wasted enough natural gas to supply over 6 million American households for a year. Instead of heating our homes or fueling powerplants, powering buses, that gas was leaked into the atmosphere, wasting millions of dollars of this limited resource.

It is estimated that the oil and gas industry wastes about \$100 million worth of natural gas every year. That also means \$6 million each year of lost State revenue, revenue that pays for schools, roads, and emergency services in New Mexico. That is quite a figure.

A recent report found that New Mexico taxpayers have lost out on over \$42 million of royalty revenues since the year 2009—\$42,728,949 to be exact. The BLM's methane waste prevention rule will help put a stop to this wasted resource.

While developing the rule, the BLM held public meetings, it held Tribal consultations, and it factored in feed-

back from over 300,000 comments submitted during the public comment period. The agency also coordinated with States like Colorado, Wyoming, and North Dakota that have already created similar protections to reduce methane leaking and flaring at the State level.

The BLM rule will have minimal costs for oil and gas producers, and, in fact, leak detections and repairs required by the rule will help companies make more money selling the gas that they save. Meanwhile, this rule will grow our economy by investing in innovative companies that have developed the technologies to minimize leaks and protect our public health. This rule should not have been controversial.

The overwhelming majority of my constituents in New Mexico support reducing wasted natural gas. A recent poll by Colorado College conducted after the election found that 74 percent of New Mexicans support the BLM's methane waste reduction rule.

I am proud that enough Senators shared that view and voted to reject an attempt to repeal this commonsense protection of public health, air quality, and responsible development of our natural resources. There is nothing conservative about making it easier to waste a precious public energy source.

We should be focused on reducing waste, capturing critical royalties for New Mexico communities, and putting our natural gas resources to beneficial use. This repeal effort of the methane rule would have represented a major step backward.

Today's vote was a major victory for responsible development of our natural gas resources and our Nation's decades-long commitment to protect the air we breathe. On behalf of my constituents and theirs, I want to say a special thank-you to all 51 Senators who supported our efforts today. Thank you very much.

Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FIRING OF JAMES COMEY

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss President Trump's decision to fire FBI Director James Comey. During his campaign, then-Candidate Trump regularly talked about how he would be the law and order President. "Law and order" means different things to different people, but all of us should be able to agree that we cannot have law and order without the rule of law.

The rule of law is not a new or even uniquely American idea. It dates back to the Magna Carta of 1215. This document—a pact between King John of

England and his barons—established that the Nation's people have certain rights and that even the monarch is subject to the laws of the land. Centuries later, as we cast off the British monarchy, declared our independence, and established our own form of government, our Nation's founders enshrined the rule of law in our Constitution.

Our system of checks and balances was designed to hold all levels of the Federal Government accountable but especially the President. Without the rule of law, law and order becomes merely order imposed by an unaccountable government. We know what order without the rule of law looks like. Last century it looked like the regimes of the Axis Powers. Now it looks like North Korea, Egypt, the Philippines, and, yes, Russia. These are all nations led by strongmen whom our President has praised in some manner, strongmen who hold democratic institutions in contempt and exercise disproportionate control over their nations' military, government institutions, and the media.

While the press here in the United States remains independent, we have a President who has chosen to regularly do battle with what he derides as the "fake news media." He has even called our cherished, constitutionally protected free press "the enemy of the American people."

It is often said that the news is the "first rough draft of history." While the President can attempt to wage war with the news media, none of us can truly fight history. But here in the Senate, we can help shape it. History has its eyes on our Chamber now.

Some of my colleagues across the aisle have said they are "troubled" or "disappointed" by the President's decision to fire Director Comey, but it appears that many are taking a wait-and-see approach. They are taking a wait-and-see approach to Director Comey's firing. They are taking a wait-and-see approach to how the administration replaces him. They are taking a wait-and-see approach to the ongoing investigation into the Trump campaign's potential collusion with Russia. The problem here is that this administration won't let us see anything. The Trump administration is actively working to cover up everything that we, as the independent legislative branch, need to see to get to the bottom of the Trump campaign's potential collusion with Russia.

Director Comey was investigating this potential collusion at the time that he was fired, and it has been reported that Director Comey recently asked Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein for an increase in money and personnel for this very investigation. Within a matter of days, the Deputy Attorney General wrote a memo recommending that President Trump fire Director Comey for actions he took last year. So was Director Comey fired on May 9, 2017, for his actions back in

2016? Are we to believe the President and the Attorney General were carefully weighing the merits of Director Comey's service since the inauguration, or was he fired because he was ramping up his investigation into Russian collusion? Let's not forget that this is the same collusion investigation from which Attorney General Sessions recused himself before recommending to the President that he fire Director Comey.

This is clearly a President who is more than happy to fire people, and he does so in a hasty fashion. Director Comey is not the first public servant to be fired while investigating this administration. In fact, he is in pretty good company. Acting Attorney General Sally Yates was fired while overseeing the collection of intelligence related to meetings between the Russian Ambassador and members of the Trump team. The U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York was fired while investigating HHS Secretary Price's financial investments, in addition to leading a separate investigation into corrupt Russian businessmen and officials. One firing is an incident, two is a coincidence, but three is a pattern.

The past 4 months suggests that our President thinks he can simply tweet and fire his way out of this problem, while continuing to cozy up to the Russians. Earlier today, less than 24 hours after firing Director Comey, President Trump hosted the Russian Ambassador and the Foreign Minister in the Oval Office.

I am deeply concerned that the President is unable or unwilling to grasp what the underlying problem here actually is. When the President hears Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle discuss the Russian attack on our election and the very foundations of our democracy, he hears sour grapes stemming from people who would have liked the Republican primary or the general election to have ended differently. But let me be very clear: This is not about scoring political points. This is not about winning the news cycle or the back-and-forth on Twitter. This is not the newest iteration of partisan politics.

Now is the time for all of us to put country above party. Throughout our Nation's history, Senators have come together to tackle some of the Nation's most difficult problems. Our Union has survived other challenges, and I am confident we can navigate this together, but we need to know exactly what we are up against. This is about properly diagnosing and curing a possible Russian infection in the White House and inoculating our government and elections for the future. Firing your doctor won't take your illness away, and taking a wait-and-see approach won't do that either.

We need an independent special prosecutor to diagnose potential collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. We cannot wait for the President to handpick a new FBI Director who

will owe his or her nomination for this unexpected job opening to the very people he or she will be charged with investigating.

Our democracy is resilient and our democracy is strong, but if we have a festering foreign infection that is left untreated, our democratic system will certainly weaken. We need a special prosecutor to either identify and address any malfeasance or issue this White House a clean bill of health.

Democracies are built on trust in civic institutions—a trust that has eroded in recent years, and I am deeply concerned that this erosion is accelerating. As Americans and as elected officials, we must come together and restore our constituents' trust in the Federal Government. We cannot just wait and see any longer. Now is the time for an independent special prosecutor.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The clerk will call the roll. The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KENNEDY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, this is a critical moment in our Nation's history—a moment when partisanship should be set to the side, politics should be put on hold, and every Member of this Chamber should focus on what they can do to ensure the integrity of our justice system and the integrity of our executive branch. Nothing less is at stake, and none of us here should forget that.

For months, the questions surrounding President Trump's campaign's ties to Russia—what happened, who was involved, and why—have gone unanswered. The more information that comes out, the more suspicious it all looks. And the more that President Trump tries to douse the flame by firing the people looking at where the smoke is coming from, the more we are going to keep paying attention, because the bottom line is that there are so many questions—real questions, legitimate questions—that absolutely need to be answered.

Many of us have pushed for these answers. We have called for an independent investigation. We had hoped that President Trump would resist the urge to slow them down or stop them or cover anything up. But the time for the back-and-forth is over. The time for hoping is behind us, and the time for all of us to come together and speak with one voice for truth and against any kind of coverup is now.

What happened yesterday was truly shocking, and this is coming from someone who didn't think that was possible anymore with this President.

But if anyone was wavering before, if anyone wanted to give this administration just a bit more time, I am hoping they have been paying attention to the events of the past 24 hours because it is hard to stay on the fence now.

President Trump's firing the head of the FBI like that—in such a haphazard way—in the middle of an investigation into his own campaigning activities should be the last straw for anyone. So right now it could not be more clear.

It is time for a special prosecutor who can run an independent investigation, far from the reach of President Trump and his administration, to take the case and finally get the answers the American public deserves.

At the same time, our efforts here in Congress—especially the investigation in the Intelligence Committee—have to continue, and they need to continue in an independent and bipartisan way.

As I mentioned before, this isn't about politics. It shouldn't be, anyway. This is about the integrity of our election, of our national security, of our justice system, of our Presidency, of America's standing in the world.

No Member of Congress, no matter what their political affiliation, should stand in the way of a thorough investigation, and neither should the President of the United States.

Mr. Trump may think he can bully his way to a lucrative real estate deal or bully the press or bully his way into the White House; that he can fire anyone, including the Deputy Attorney General, a U.S. attorney, or the FBI Director, if they dare to get in his way or investigate his wrongdoing, but President Trump should not—he cannot—bully his way out of an investigation, especially not when so much is at stake.

More than 100 days into his term, President Trump may have forgotten that he promised to be a voice for millions of people across our country. But I haven't forgotten whom I represent, and I stand here today to lift up the voices of so many people in my home State of Washington who are calling on us to get the answers—people who care about our country, who know we can do better, who hate to see us spiraling toward situations we have not seen since President Nixon.

As of noon today, my office had been flooded with hundreds of calls. The phones are ringing off the hook. On the other end of the line are the people we represent. They are picking up the phone and trying to get through to every one of us in the Senate. They want answers, and they deserve them.

So let's get to the bottom of this, once and for all, for the people we represent and for the integrity of our elections and our very democracy.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this is a photograph taken today of our President Donald Trump and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. This photograph was taken in the Oval Office today, where President Trump met with Mr. Lavrov. The meeting was closed to the American press. The photo was released by the Kremlin in Moscow.

The second photo is of Mr. Trump and the Russian Ambassador to the United States. His name is Sergey Kislyak. He was also in the Oval Office today to meet with President Trump, and this picture was also released by Moscow and the Kremlin.

Ambassador Kislyak's name is familiar to many Americans now—it is familiar to me—because President Trump's National Security Advisor, Michael Flynn, resigned because of communications he had with Ambassador Kislyak which he tried to keep secret and misrepresented not only to the American people but to the Vice President of the United States.

The warm smiles and hearty handshakes President Trump gave to these Russian officials stand in stark contrast to the way the White House has treated three American Department of Justice officials: Sally Yates, Preet Bharara, and James Comey.

After President Trump was elected President, he asked Ms. Yates to serve as Acting Attorney General, and he asked Mr. Bharara to stay on as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and indicated that Mr. Comey could stay on as Director of the FBI. But then it appears that each of these three Justice Department officials were in charge of investigations that started to become a concern in President Trump's White House.

We heard on Monday from Sally Yates how she had informed the White House Counsel's office on January 26 this year that Michael Flynn, the National Security Advisor to the President of the United States, had been compromised and could be blackmailed by the Russians for lies he had told publicly. President Trump kept Michael Flynn on for 18 days after that express warning by the Acting Attorney General to the White House Counsel. He only asked for his resignation hours after the Washington Post reported on General Flynn's false statements about his Russian communications.

The President fired Sally Yates, the Acting Attorney General, on January 30—4 days after she warned the White House about this connection between General Flynn and this Ambassador.

Then there was Preet Bharara, whom the President invited to Trump Tower to tell him he wanted him to stay on as

U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York. Mr. Bharara's jurisdiction, of course, included Trump Tower. The President then, in a sudden Friday evening announcement on March 10, fired all the U.S. attorneys, including Mr. Bharara. Mr. Bharara said he was blindsided. Why was he fired? We don't know. But we do know that Mr. Bharara was well known as a dogged and independent prosecutor. News reports indicate that Mr. Bharara was investigating one of President Trump's Cabinet members, HHS Secretary Tom Price, for insider trading.

Yesterday, President Trump fired FBI Director Comey while the Director was in Los Angeles giving a speech to FBI agents. The Director was not told directly of his firing. He thought initially it was a joke.

At the time he was fired, Director Comey had confirmed that the FBI was conducting an investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 election and possible connections between the Russians and individuals in the Trump campaign and administration. Last night, CNN reported that Federal prosecutors have begun a new phase of this Russian investigation, issuing grand jury subpoenas to associates of Michael Flynn's, seeking business records.

Director Comey was supposed to testify before the Senate Intelligence Committee later this week.

According to news reports, last week Director Comey went to the Justice Department and requested more money and resources to devote to the Russian investigation.

Sally Yates, Preet Bharara, James Comey—three Justice Department officials who led investigations that appeared to be getting close to the President and his inner circle. All three were then fired by President Trump.

President Trump's firing of Director Comey made history. Not since Watergate, on the evening of October 20, 1973—a Saturday, known affectionately as the Saturday Night Massacre—has a President dismissed the head of an investigation into his own administration. In its 190-year history, only one FBI Director had been fired. FBI Director William Sessions was dismissed for serious ethical violations, and the FBI at that time was not investigating the Clinton administration.

I have had my disagreements with Director Comey, judgments he has made, statements he has made. I am not exactly his greatest fan. But I didn't question his competence when it came to investigating. I never called on him to be fired.

There are so many questions that need to be answered: Why was Director Comey fired now, just as the FBI investigation of the Russian interference of the Presidential campaign seemed to be reaching a critical point?

Today, the White House spokesperson said that the President has been considering firing Director Comey since the day he took office. Did the President or anyone else in the White House

ask or direct the Justice Department to recommend the firing of Director Comey? Press reports quote Trump administration aides saying Attorney General Jeff Sessions was charged with coming up with the reasons why the President should fire Comey. President Trump told my colleague Senator FEINSTEIN he had asked the Justice Department to review Comey's performance. And Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Deputy Press Secretary to the President, acknowledged today that the President asked the Justice Department to put the recommendation in writing.

Why was Attorney General Sessions involved in this decision at all? Remember, Attorney General Sessions was forced to recuse himself from the investigation of Russian collusion with the Trump administration because of his close connections with the Trump campaign and communications he himself had with Mr. Kislyak and other Russian officials.

When they made the decision to fire Director Comey, was the White House aware that Director Comey had reportedly just asked the Justice Department for more resources for an adequate investigation?

Perhaps the most important question of all: When will Republicans in Congress agree to support a special prosecutor and an independent commission to get to the bottom of this Russian collusion in our last Presidential election?

November 8, 2016, is a day that will live in cyber infamy. It was that election in which the Russians set out to change the results. It is the first time we have seen an overt effort by a foreign power to do this, and many on the other side of the aisle have taken a hohum attitude—it is just another example of kids being kids. I don't think so. When one of our major adversaries in the world decides to try to impact the choice of the leader of the free world, the United States should stand up take notice, and fight back. Let's not forget that a week ago there was a hacking attack on another democratic election in France and that all signs point again to Russia as perpetrator.

Russia has acted with impunity since its attack on our election, in part due to the administration's refusal to acknowledge Russia's responsibility for an act of cyber war on America and to respond accordingly and the majority party's refusal to take serious actions here in Congress.

In these pictures, President Trump is shaking hands with Russians, and the Kremlin is gleefully tweeting these pictures around the world. The President kept out the American press, but it turns out the Russians got the photos they needed to send around the world.

The American people need some answers about what is going on here. When will the Republicans join us in a bipartisan effort to have an honest investigation, to follow the facts and follow the evidence wherever it may lead,

and to hold those accountable who may have been guilty of collusion with a foreign government trying to impact the outcome of an election?

If we read the memo that has been prepared by Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein giving the reasons for the dismissal of James Comey, it focuses almost exclusively on Comey's treatment of Hillary Clinton in the last Presidential campaign. I am incredulous to think that some 10 months after the fact, the Trump administration took such pity on the treatment of Hillary Clinton, they couldn't wait to fire the Director of the FBI. That is the so-called good reason they are giving us, but there is a real reason. The real reason is that it seems that James Comey was engaged in an investigation into the Russian collusion in the last election; that he was looking at members of the Trump administration—specifically, General Flynn in this circumstance—and he was also looking at whether any other individuals, involved with the Trump campaign or not, were engaged in this activity. He clearly needs more resources, and he wants to get to the bottom of it, and for that, he was fired last night.

The question obviously is, What happens next? Will the American people sit still for this? Will they accept this kind of effort to close down an investigation that might reach into the President's own White House? If they are willing to step back and let that happen, then we have surrendered an important principle.

In 1973, President Nixon tried to make it clear that he could not be held accountable to the rule of law when it came to the Watergate break-in and coverup. He fired Archibald Cox. Others resigned because of that firing, and the public sentiment across America was so strong against President Nixon for trying to intervene in this legal process that ultimately he paid a heavy price for his conduct.

I don't know whether there is any involvement by President Trump in this collusion. I am not going to assume that. I shouldn't. In fairness, there should be an investigation—a credible investigation—by professionals. But shutting down the investigation by the FBI at this point closes the door to gaining valuable information so that we understand who was involved in this effort to undermine the American Presidential election.

I am not standing here in defense of James Comey as a person. I do stand here in defense of this Director of the FBI who believed, as our intelligence agencies believed, that this was a credible threat to the democracy of the United States and deserves a professional prosecutor's investigation. For that reason, Comey's efforts should continue. But, having dismissed him, let's at least hope that Mr. Rosenstein will stand up for the integrity of the Department of Justice and do two things:

First, give a public assurance that the investigation of Russian collusion

in our last Presidential election will continue, and at the time, name a Department of Justice career official who will be in charge of it until a new Director of the FBI is found.

Second, Mr. Rosenstein, as well as Senator Sessions—now Attorney General Sessions—should not be party to choosing a special prosecutor. Let's have career Department professionals choose someone from outside government, without a party label, who has demonstrated the expertise necessary to prosecute such challenging situations as this. Put them in charge, let them investigate, and let the facts lead us to a conclusion.

To try to stop this or short-circuit it by dismissing Mr. Comey is ineffective in terms of serving justice and, sadly, is a sad reflection on American ideals and values.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BENNET. 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. BENNET. Mr. President, as you know, last night President Trump fired FBI Director James Comey. He did this in the middle of an active FBI investigation into possible links between the Trump campaign, Trump associates, and the Russian Government. This action should worry every Member of the Senate. I know it worries the people we represent. My office has been flooded with calls since this decision became public. Americans are asking why this firing happened now, why the firing happened at all—and they are right to ask.

Officially, President Trump said the FBI Director's dismissal was necessary to restore the "public trust and confidence" in the FBI. That is laughable. Anybody who knows Director Comey or knows the FBI knows that statement is completely false. I had my issues with the decisions that Director Comey had made over the past months. I never called for his removal, but I know that he did not have a negative effect on morale at the Justice Department or in the FBI.

I worked for a Deputy Attorney General of the United States. I am so disappointed in the tone of the letter written by this Deputy Attorney General—we learned this afternoon—at the request of the President of the United States. This is not a letter that came up through the chain at DOJ, but a conversation—as the public reports are tonight—that happened at the White House, where the Deputy Attorney General and the President agreed mutually that it was time for Director Comey to go.

The President, apparently, asked the Deputy Attorney General to put it in writing. Then he wrote a letter, the

type of which I have never seen come from the Deputy Attorney General's office. I worked on reports that we made with the Office of Professional Responsibility at the Department of Justice. I never saw a report like this before. But what I really find amazing about this decision—and I don't know why the decision was made; I am the first to say that I don't know—is that, having been in the Senate, having worked in the Deputy Attorney General's office at the Department of Justice, that nobody at the White House said to the President: Maybe the best thing to do is not to fire the FBI Director when he is in the middle of an investigation about ties of your campaign to Russia, because maybe that will undermine Americans' confidence in the rule of law, and maybe that will undermine Americans' confidence in this administration and worry people that the FBI isn't treating this fairly. The idea that not a single member of the administration was successful in making that case to the President is really worrisome to me tonight, and it is one of the reasons why people think the answer to why this firing occurred is simply not credible.

President Trump, unlike some, has repeatedly praised Director Comey over the past months. He said he had guts. He said: "I respect him a lot." Now, overnight, based on a completely nonroutine letter written at the request of the President, he has turned 180 degrees.

The American people deserve an explanation for this unprecedented action. They deserve an explanation tonight. They deserved one this afternoon. They know this isn't how our government is supposed to work. I think the reason why people in Colorado and in other parts of the country, I am sure, are concerned is that this dismissal is not the first action the President has taken that raised concerns about his commitment to the rule of law or his commitment to the independent judiciary or to the freedom of the press under the First Amendment when he doesn't like the scrutiny he or his administration are getting from a free press. He does not have a fundamental appreciation for the basic institutions and traditions of this country.

It is a great irony, I think, at this moment in our politics, that the President represents a radical view of American history and American traditions. It is my hope that this Senate—Republicans and Democrats working together—can express together a conservative view of those traditions, a view that says: We need to preserve the sanctity of the rule of law. We need to preserve and elevate the idea that the judicial branch is an independent judiciary, separate from the legislative branch, separate from the executive branch.

The Founders knew that when they wrote the Constitution. One of their biggest concerns was that somehow the

judiciary and the executive branch might reach some sort of unholy alliance that would all of a sudden call the rule of law into question.

I think that is why people are worried. They are worried because they remember this President slandered a judge because of his ethnicity and said that he wouldn't be able to decide a case fairly because of where his parents came from. They remember his attacks on the free press, as well, when he doesn't like their reporting, and his resorting to talking about fake news when he doesn't like the reporting.

I have had to talk with so many high school students and middle school students in Colorado over the last 4 or 5 months about this whole question of fake news and what the importance of edited content is to our society and, again, to our commitment to the rule of law—the importance that middle school students and high school students place on edited content and on curated content; their ability to distinguish between something that is science or something that is real, something that is edited versus somebody shooting their mouth off on the internet.

The President has a hard time making that distinction, as well. He has shown little regard for the traditions and norms that our Founders established when they created this separation of powers.

So I say to my colleagues tonight, the Senate must stand firm and speak with one voice—Democrats and Republicans. We now have a vacancy in the FBI Director, and we need to make sure that whoever that is, whoever replaces James Comey, pledges to continue the ongoing investigation and reinforce the FBI's independence from undue influence from the White House. That needs to be nonnegotiable. In my view, that is the least that must happen.

In order for the American people to learn the full truth, the Deputy Attorney General must immediately appoint an independent special prosecutor to investigate Russian interference in the 2016 election, which, by the way, everybody I know up here believes happened. But the President continues to say: Maybe it was the Chinese; maybe it wasn't the Russians. No intelligence agency in America believes that. No Senator believes that.

The President, who has access to all of that intelligence, is saying: It might not have been the Russians; it might be the Chinese.

We need to know. I am not prejudging the result, but we need to know what these links were, if there were links, between the Trump campaign and the Russian Government. These are serious questions that need answers. I worry a lot about what the President has said about our allies in Europe, what the President has said about NATO, what the President has said about the European Union—none of which serves the national security

interests of the United States but is an invitation to the Russians to continue to meddle in elections, not just here but in Western Europe and in Eastern Europe as well. It is hard for me to see how that is in anybody's national security interest, except for the Russians or President Putin.

Our intelligence agencies have been crystal clear to the Members of Congress that the Russian Government tried to influence the 2016 election in President Trump's favor. The American people deserve to know what the truth is. What is the extent of these relationships? It goes to the core of our security. It goes to the heart of our democracy. That is why preserving this investigation's integrity is so vital.

I can tell you that the American people are not going to relent. I understand there will be some time here when people want to collect their thoughts and gather their thoughts. The American people are not going to relent. They are going to want an independent investigation here. For all Americans and, I would say, most of the time, but certainly at moments like this—this is a moment in the course of our politics when they say to us: Partisanship needs to give way to patriotism. This is one of those moments.

I urge every Member of this body, every Member of Congress, to rise above the pressure of the moment and see this not as just another skirmish in our endless and often pathetic feuding but as a test of the resilience of these institutions and of our Republic, a test of whether we as Congress stand for something more than winning praise from our base in a cable news cycle or in the next election or whether we take seriously our oaths to put our institutions, our security, and our country first.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTION

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I oppose this blatant giveaway to the oil and gas industry at the expense of public health and the environment. We are now at the eleventh hour of expedited consideration of resolutions to overturn Obama-era rules, and the majority is bringing forward this legislation to overturn a Bureau of Land Management rule on methane waste.

The BLM methane rule is a reasonable, achievable way to limit emissions of methane—a particularly potent greenhouse gas—and save taxpayer money. The rule would prevent the oil and gas industry from excessive venting and flaring of methane into the air and ensure that they work more quickly to address methane leaks. As we have seen in Colorado, which has a similar rule, the technology to meet these requirements exists and is not prohibitively expensive.

The BLM rule is a tremendously effective way to address greenhouse gases. Simply limiting these methane emissions would be the equivalent of taking nearly 1 million cars off the roads. Reducing methane leaks also prevents the leak of volatile organic compounds and other pollutants that contribute to ground-level ozone and damage public health.

By overturning this rule, the Senate would not just have given the oil and gas industry the green light to keep polluting, it would essentially be paying them to do it. Right now, companies don't pay royalties on wasted gas from public lands. If we allow them to continue their inefficient practices, they will avoid more than \$800 million in royalties over the next decade. Because States where operations are located get a large share of the royalties, western States like Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and Montana would lose out on millions of dollars. Oil and gas companies will be taking public resources, wastefully venting them into the atmosphere, and avoiding any cost for that behavior.

Stakeholders like sportsmen, conservationists, tribal leaders, and consumer groups support the methane rule. The only voices asking for its repeal are the oil and gas industry and the Koch brothers. We should stand for our constituents and taxpayers instead.

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. 17-21, concerning the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of the United Arab Emirates for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$2.0 billion. 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. 17-21

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: Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

(ii) Total Estimated Value:
Major Defense Equipment* \$1.0 billion.
Other \$1.0 billion.
Total \$2.0 billion.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):
Sixty (60) Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3) Missiles with canisters.

One hundred (100) Patriot Guidance Enhanced Missile-Tactical (GEM-T) Missiles.

Non-MDE includes:

Also included are canisters, tools and test equipment, support equipment, publications and technical documentation, spare and repair parts, U.S. Government and contractor technical, engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Army (AE-B-ZUG, Amendment 8).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: AE-B-ZUG.

(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: May 10, 2017.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—Patriot PAC-3 and GEM-T Missiles

The Government of the United Arab Emirates has requested the possible sale of sixty (60) Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3) missiles with canisters and one hundred (100) Patriot Guidance Enhanced Missile-Tactical (GEM-T) missiles. Also included are canisters, tools and test equipment, support equipment, publications and technical documentation, spare and repair parts, U.S. Government and contractor technical, engineering and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated cost is \$2 billion.

This proposed sale will contribute to the foreign policy and national security of the United States by improving the security of an important ally which has been, and continues to be, a force for political stability and economic progress in the Middle East. This sale is consistent with U.S. initiatives to provide key allies in the region with mod-

ern systems that will enhance interoperability with U.S. forces and increase security.

The proposed sale will enhance the UAE's capability to meet current and future aircraft and missile threats. The UAE will use the capability as a deterrent to regional threats and to strengthen its homeland defense. The UAE has fielded the Patriot system since 2009 and will have no difficulty absorbing these additional missiles into its armed forces.

The proposed sale of these missiles will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The prime contractor for the PAC-3 Missile is Lockheed-Martin in Dallas, Texas. The prime contractor for the GEM-T missile is Raytheon Company in Andover, Massachusetts. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will require additional contractor representatives to the UAE. It is not expected additional U.S. Government personnel will be required in country for an extended period of time. U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Life Cycle Management Command (AMCOM) currently maintains a field office in UAE in support of UAE Patriot systems.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-21

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The Patriot Advanced Capability-3 Missile Segment Enhancement/Configuration-3 Ground Support Equipment (PAC-3 MSE/C-3) Air Defense System. The Patriot Advanced Capability-3/Configuration-3 Ground Support Equipment (PAC-3/C-3) Air Defense System contains classified CONFIDENTIAL hardware components, SECRET tactical software, and critical/sensitive technology. The PAC-3 Missile Four-Pack and Guidance Enhanced Missile (GEM-T) hardware is classified CONFIDENTIAL and the associated launcher hardware is UNCLASSIFIED. The items requested represent significant technological advances for UAE. The PAC-3/C-3 Air Defense System continues to hold a significant technology lead over other surface-to-air missile systems in the world.

2. The PAC-3/C-3 sensitive/critical technology is primarily in the area of design and production know-how and primarily inherent in the design, development and/or manufacturing data related to the following components:

- a. Radar Enhancement Phase III (REP-3) Exciter Assemblies
- b. Radar Digital Processor
- c. Modern Adjunct Processor
- d. REP-3 Traveling Wave Tube
- e. Classification, Discrimination, and Identification-3 (CDI-3) Digital Signal Processor
- f. CDI-3 Analog/Digital Converters
- g. Hardware-in-the-Loop and Digital Simulations
- h. Surface Acoustic Wave (SAW) Oscillators
- i. PAC-3 Missile Guidance Processor Unit
- j. PAC-3 Seeker
- k. PAC-3 Missile Software
- l. PAC-3 MSE Software
- m. GEM-T Fuze
- n. GEM-T SAW Oscillator
- o. Selected areas of the Patriot Ground Equipment software
- p. Multiband Radio Frequency Datalink (MRFDL)

3. Information on vulnerability to electronic countermeasures and counter-countermeasures, system performance capabilities and effectiveness, survivability and vulnerability data, PAC-3 and GEM-T Missile seeker capabilities, non-cooperative target recognition, low observable technologies, select software/software documentation and test data are classified up to and including SECRET.

4. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of the specific hardware and software elements, the information could be used to develop countermeasures which might reduce weapons systems effectiveness or be used in the development of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.

5. A determination has been made that the Government of the UAE can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This proposed sustainment program is necessary to the furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the policy justification.

6. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal are authorized for release and export to the Government of the UAE.

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. 17-08, concerning the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of India for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$75 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. RIXLEY,
Vice Admiral, USN, Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-08

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: Government of India.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:
Major Defense Equipment* \$0 million.
Other \$75 million.
Total \$75 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE): None.
Non-MDE include:

Thirty-eight thousand thirty-four (38,034) M50 General Purpose Masks.

Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology (JSLIST) consisting of: Thirty-eight thousand thirty-four (38,034) Suits, Thirty-eight thousand thirty-four (38,034) Pairs of Trousers, Thirty-eight thousand thirty-four (38,034) Pairs of Gloves, Thirty-eight thousand thirty-four (38,034) Pairs of Boots, Thirty-eight thousand thirty-four (38,034) NBC Bags, Eight hundred fifty-four (854) Aprons, Eight hundred fifty-four (854) Alternative Aprons, Nine thousand five hundred nine (9,509) Quick Doff Hood, One hundred fourteen thousand one hundred two (114,102) M61 Filters.

Also included is training, technical data, U.S. Government technical assistance, staging/consolidation, and transportation line.

(iv) Military Department: Army.
(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(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 Annex Attached.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: May 10, 2017.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Government of India—CBRN Support
Equipment

The Government of India (GoI) has requested a possible sale of 38,034 M50 general purpose masks; Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology (JSLIST), which consists of 38,034 each: suits, pairs of trousers, pairs of gloves, pairs of boots and NBC bags; 854 aprons; 854 alternative aprons; 9,509 Quick Doff Hoods; and 114,102 M61 filters. Also included in the potential sale is training; technical data; U.S. Government technical assistance; staging/consolidation; transportation; and other related elements of logistics support. The estimated cost is \$75 million.

This proposed sale will contribute to the foreign policy and national security of the United States, by helping to improve the security of a friendly country which has been, and continues to be, an important force for political stability and economic progress in South Asia.

The GoI intends to use these defense articles and services to modernize its armed forces. This will contribute to the Indian military's goal to update its capability while enhancing the relationship between India and the United States. The GoI will have no difficulty absorbing these defense articles into its armed forces.

The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The principal contractor involved in this program is Avon Protection Systems, Inc., Cadillac, MI. At this time, there are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 17-08

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The Joint Service lightweight Integrated Suit Technology (JSLIST) is a chemical and biological protective garment meant to be worn over the operational uniform of the user. It has an outer shell made up of a 50% nylon and 50% cotton poplin blend material with a water repellant finish. The liner layer consists of a nonwoven front laminated to activated carbon spheres and bonded to a tri-cot knit back that absorbs chemical agents. When the JSLIST coat and trousers are combined with boots, gloves, and a chemical protective mask, JSLIST provides protection against chemical and biological agents, radioactive fallout particles, and battlefield contaminants. The highest level of information that could be disclosed by the transfer of the JSLIST Suit is UNCLASSIFIED. JSLIST is considered a U.S. military uniform item, and as such, any unit being sold to Foreign Military Sales customers will not utilize an actively used U.S. military camouflage pattern in accordance with the Security Assistance Management Manual (SAMM), Chapter 4, paragraph 4.5.6. and 10 USC §771.

2. The M50 Joint Service General Purpose Mask is the U.S. Armed Forces' field protec-

tive mask. The system used two M61 filters integrated into the air inlet system to protect against nuclear, biological and chemical threats including select toxic industrial chemicals. The highest level of information that could be disclosed by the transfer of the M50 is UNCLASSIFIED.

3. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal are authorized for release and export to the Government of India.

NOMINATION OBJECTION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am placing a hold on the nomination of Sigal Mandelker to be Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. I will maintain that hold until the Treasury Department provides the Senate Intelligence Committee and Senate Finance Committee information and documents related to Russia and its financial dealings with President Trump and his associates. As announced by Senate Intelligence Committee Vice Chairman WARNER on Tuesday, May 9; the Intelligence Committee has made a request to the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, FinCEN.

I have stated repeatedly that we must follow the money if we are going to get to the bottom of how Russia has attacked our democracy. That means thoroughly reviewing any information that relates to financial connections between Russia and President Trump and his associates, whether direct or laundered through hidden or illicit transactions.

The office which Ms. Mandelker is nominated to head is responsible for much of this information. The Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence marshals the Treasury Department's intelligence and enforcement functions to combat financial crimes and threats, including money laundering.

TRIBUTE TO DANIEL K. AKAKA

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, today I wish to honor our former colleague, Senator Daniel K. Akaka, for his lifetime of distinguished leadership, service, and contributions to our Nation's veteran and Native Hawaiian communities.

Daniel Kahikina Akaka dedicated his life to serving the people of Hawaii. He served as a Member of the U.S. Senate for 22 years. Prior to that, he served Hawaii's 2nd Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives for 14 years.

However, his story of leadership and service begins well before his tenure on Capitol Hill.

On December 7, 1941, a young Senator Akaka witnessed Japanese fighter planes attacking Pearl Harbor from his dorm room at the Kamehameha Schools. The events of that morning were life-altering for him and many young men his age, and he joined the war effort.

Following his service in World War II with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Senator Akaka earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Hawaii. He later attained a master's degree as well. As he has relayed in the past, had it not been for the benefits received under the G.I. Bill, Senator Akaka's future in public service would not have been more than a dream.

A believer in the power of education, Senator Akaka made it a career. Before entering politics, he served as a teacher, principal, and educational administrator, making a difference in the lives of many students for over 15 years.

As a veteran himself, Senator Akaka dedicated his service in Congress to helping servicemembers, veterans, and their families. His commitment to these issues led to his service as chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs from 2007 to 2011. As chairman, he worked to expand VA services. He also authored and passed the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, which is making a difference to new generations of veterans as the original G.I. Bill did for his generation.

Not only was Senator Akaka a champion for education and veterans, he was also a champion for Native Hawaiians. He is the first person of Native Hawaiian ancestry to serve in the U.S. Senate, and he grew up in an era where the Hawaiian language and culture were heavily looked down upon. To help change this perception, he committed to protecting the language, culture, and traditions of indigenous peoples.

Senator Akaka advanced these priorities as chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs from 2011 to 2013. He also played a key role in ensuring the passage of legislation that enhanced Native Hawaiian education programs and authored a joint resolution that acknowledged the U.S. Government's role in the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1893, while recognizing the special trust relationship held with the Native Hawaiian community.

He also fought tirelessly for self-determination for Native Hawaiians.

During his time in Washington, DC, he served the people of Hawaii well and with distinction. Although he retired in 2012, Senator Akaka has continued down a path of leadership and service, speaking to students and mentoring some of Hawaii's up-and-coming leaders. We all appreciate his continued service.

Mahalo nui loa, my dear friend, for being a true champion of aloha.

HONORING CORPORAL GEORGE A. PERREAULT, JR.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I want to recognize George Albert Perreault, Jr., a Korean war veteran whose remains are being brought home to Vermont, 66 years after he was declared missing in action. CPL Perreault enlisted in the U.S. Army after graduating from Burlington High School, and he served bravely in the

Korean war. CPL Perreault was assigned to Headquarters Battery, 15th Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division, which was supporting a regiment of the Republic of Korea Army in the area known as the Central Corridor in South Korea. Tragically, CPL Perreault went missing in 1951, after the Chinese People's Volunteer Forces launched a massive attack against the regiment at Changbong-ni. He was declared killed in action in 1954.

CPL Perreault's family, including his sisters and their husbands, Pauline and Jim O'Brien and Lorraine and Edward Winkowski, devotedly preserved his memory over the years. Pauline and Jim also joined families of other missing servicemembers at Department of Defense meetings to discuss efforts to recover the remains of their loved ones.

Last December, the POW/MIA Accounting Agency at the Defense Department identified CPL Perreault's remains using family DNA and anthropological analysis.

While sisters Pauline and Lorraine and their spouses are now deceased, Pauline and Jim's children will be present to welcome their uncle home, including Karen O'Brien, James O'Brien, Jr., Patricia O'Brien, Mary Kay Wyand and her husband Daniel, John O'Brien and his wife Kathy, Anne Booska and her husband Joseph, Daniel O'Brien and his wife Angela, and Sheila O'Brien, as well as CPL Perreault's 18 great-nieces and great-nephews, and 23 great-great-nieces and great-great-nephews.

I have long believed that we have a responsibility to families like CPL Perreault's to account for those missing in action from all conflicts. I commend the POW/MIA Accounting Agency for their tireless efforts to locate and identify the remains of CPL Perreault, more than six decades after he first went missing.

I also want to thank the U.S. Army, the Vermont Army National Guard, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars for their assistance in returning CPL Perreault's remains to his family. Lastly, I also want to thank the staff at Delta Airlines and Burlington International Airport who made it possible for CPL Perreault's remains to be flown home to Vermont, where they will be received with full military honors, surrounded by his family.

At long last, George Albert Perreault, Jr., will be laid to rest in Vermont on Saturday, May 13, next to his parents, George and Yvonne Perreault.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME-BUILDERS

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, as a realtor and the former owner of a real estate company, it is my great pleasure today to congratulate the National Association of Home Builders on its 75th anniversary.

The National Association of Home Builders was established in 1942 to rep-

resent the interests of the Nation's homebuilding industry and to help create a business environment that facilitates homebuilding, enables more Americans to achieve homeownership, and provides for ample rental housing for all income levels. The National Association of Home Builders' membership includes not just builders, but professionals in a broad range of fields who are part of the homebuilding industry, including those who remodel, update, and help maintain existing homes.

For many years, the goal set forth in the Housing Act of 1949 of "a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family" has been a guiding principle for America's homebuilders, and they have made great strides in achieving that goal.

Since 1942, the total number of housing units in the United States has more than tripled, increasing from about 35 million to almost 136 million. Also the Nation's homeownership rate has increased from about 44 percent to almost 64 percent. Moreover, the Nation's standard of living has increased significantly thanks to the efforts of the National Association of Home Builders' members, who build about 80 percent of the new homes constructed in the United States each year.

The members of the National Association of Home Builders have served as a driving force behind the significant advances in the quality of the nation's housing and the resulting improvement in quality of life for Americans. America's homebuilders play important roles in the fabric of their communities, and they are essential to the Nation's economic health. Homebuilding accounts for about 16 percent of the total U.S. economy.

I congratulate the National Association of Home Builders and its members on the organization's 75th anniversary and encourage my colleagues in the Senate to reflect on the crucial role the homebuilding industry has played over the last 75 years in our Nation's economy and the lives of our people.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING DON DUNWELL

• Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I wish to remember the life of Don Dunwell—journalist, husband, father, and community leader.

Don was known for his thoughtful interview style, creative storytelling, and ability to connect with the thousands of viewers who entrusted him to deliver the news.

It was common to find Don teaching and mentoring young reporters about the ins and outs of journalism.

He believed fiercely in the free press and the strong ethics that were required to be a trusted source of information.

He never took his platform for granted and used it to make Montana and this Nation a better place.

Outside the newsroom, he was a proud father to John, working hard each day to ensure that his son had every opportunity possible.

Don was immensely proud of his wife, Mary Ann, who charted her own path as a public servant.

Today we remember the life and legacy of Mr. Dunwell and aim to follow in his ever fervent footsteps.●

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

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-1535. A communication from the Director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACU)" (RIN0524-AA39) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 4, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-1536. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Stephen R. Lanza, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-1537. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995, with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1538. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997, with respect to Sudan; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1539. A communication from the Assistant to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Reserve Bank Capital Stock" (RIN7100-AE68) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 8, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1540. A communication from the Assistant to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Reserve Bank Capital Stock" (RIN7100-AE47)

received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 8, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1541. A communication from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Technical Amendments to Form ADV and Form ADV-W" (17 CFR Part 279) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 8, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1542. A communication from the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of the Comptroller's 2016 Annual Report to Congress; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1543. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation as an emergency requirement all funding (including the rescission of funds) so designated by the Congress in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, pursuant to section 251 (b) (2) (A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, for the enclosed list of accounts; to the Committee on the Budget.

EC-1544. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism all funding (including the rescission of funds) and contributions from foreign governments so designated by the Congress in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, pursuant to section 251 (b) (2) (A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, for the enclosed list of accounts; to the Committee on the Budget.

EC-1545. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; Clean Air Act Requirements for Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance, Nonattainment New Source Review and Emission Statements" (FRL No. 9960-15-Region 6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1546. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Determinations of Attainment by the Attainment Date, Determinations of Failure to Attain by the Attainment Date and Reclassification for Certain Nonattainment Areas for the 2006 24-Hour Fine Particulate Matter National Ambient Air Quality Standards" (FRL No. 9962-25-OAR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1547. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Delegation of New Source Performance Standards and National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for the States of Arizona and Nevada" (FRL No. 9961-79-Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1548. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Imple-

mentation Plans; Texas; Revisions to Emissions Banking and Trading Programs and Compliance Flexibility" (FRL No. 9960-22-Region 6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1549. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Oklahoma; Revisions to Minor New Source Review Permitting Program" (FRL No. 9960-67-Region 6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1550. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Alaska; Infrastructure Requirements for the 2010 Nitrogen Dioxide and 2010 Sulfur Dioxide Standards" (FRL No. 9961-93-Region 10) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1551. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; West Virginia; Infrastructure Requirements for the 2012 Fine Particulate Standard" (FRL No. 9961-87-Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1552. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Virginia; Removal of Stage II Gasoline Vapor Recovery Requirements for Gasoline Dispensing Facilities" (FRL No. 9961-86-Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1553. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Maryland; Revisions and Amendments to Regulations for Continuous Opacity Monitoring, Continuous Emissions Monitoring, and Quality Assurance Requirements for Continuous Opacity Monitors; Correction" (FRL No. 9961-38-Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1554. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Quality Plans; Tennessee; Infrastructure Requirements for the 2012 PM2.5 National Ambient Air Quality Standard" (FRL No. 9961-89-Region 4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1555. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; North Carolina

Repeal of Transportation Facilities Rules" (FRL No. 9961-74-Region 4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1556. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; NH; Nonattainment New Source Review and Prevention of Significant Deterioration Permit Program Revisions; Public Hearing Revisions for State Permitting Programs; Withdrawal of Permit Fee Program; Infrastructure Provisions for National Ambient Air Quality Standards" (FRL No. 9962-01-Region 1) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1557. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Indiana; Commissioner's Order for SABIC Innovative Plastics" (FRL No. 9962-11-Region 5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1558. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Indiana; Commissioner's Order for Carmeuse Lime, Inc." (FRL No. 9962-09-Region 5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1559. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; ID, Updates to Incorporations by Reference" (FRL No. 9960-43-Region 10) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1560. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Georgia; Heavy Duty Diesel Requirements" (FRL No. 9961-44-Region 4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 5, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1561. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Indirect Food Additives: Polymers" (Docket No. FDA-2016-F-1805) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 8, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-1562. A communication from the Acting Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and a Management Report for the period from October 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-1563. A communication from the Executive Director, Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Seventy-Fifth Financial Statement for the period of October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016; to the

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-1564. A communication from the Executive Director, Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Seventy-Sixth Financial Statement for the period of October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-1565. A communication from the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Diversion Control, Drug Enforcement Agency, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Control of Ergocristine, a Chemical Precursor Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Lysergic Acid Diethylamide, as a List I Chemical" ((RIN1117-AB24) (Docket No. DEA-320F)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 8, 2017; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1566. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Restricted Areas R-4102A and R-4102B; Fort Devens, MA" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0307)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1567. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment, Modification and Revocation of Air Traffic Service (ATS) Routes; Western United States" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9264)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1568. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Restricted Area R-2507W; Chocolate Mountains, CA" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2015-2193)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1569. A communication from the Assistant Chief Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Hazardous Materials: Revision of Maximum and Minimum Civil Penalties" (RIN2137-AF23) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1570. A communication from the Assistant Chief Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Pipeline Safety: Inflation Adjustment of Maximum Civil Penalties" (RIN2137-AF16) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 385. A bill to promote energy savings in residential buildings and industry, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-60).

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. SANDERS (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BROWN, Ms. HASSAN, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 1081. A bill to establish an Employee Ownership and Participation Initiative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. LEAHY, and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 1082. A bill to provide for the establishment of the United States Employee Ownership Bank, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 1083. A bill to amend section 1214 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for stays during a period that the Merit Systems Protection Board lacks a quorum; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 1084. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to require that the Director of the Bureau of Prisons ensure that each chief executive officer of a Federal penal or correctional institution provides a secure storage area located outside of the secure perimeter of the Federal penal or correctional institution for firearms carried by certain employees of the Bureau of Prisons, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRUZ, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEE, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 1085. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide enhanced penalties for convicted murderers who kill or target America's public safety officers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. 1086. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to remove the prohibition on eligibility for TRICARE Reserve Select of members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who are eligible to enroll in a health benefits plan under chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 1087. A bill to ensure America's law enforcement officers have access to lifesaving equipment needed to defend themselves and civilians from attacks by terrorists and violent criminals; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 1088. A bill to require the collection of voluntary feedback on services provided by agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 1089. A bill to require the Secretary of Energy to review and update a report on the energy and environmental benefits of the re-refining of used lubricating oil; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. RISCH, Mr. GARDNER, and Mr. ENZI):

S. 1090. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to facilitate water leasing and water transfers to promote conservation and efficiency; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 1091. A bill to establish a Federal Task Force to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 1092. A bill to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself and Mr. ENZI):

S. 1093. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to improve pediatric medical device application procedures; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. NELSON, Ms. WARREN, Mr. REED, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. PETERS):

S. Res. 161. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that defense laboratories are on the cutting-edge of scientific and technological advancement, and supporting the designation of May 18, 2017, as "Department of Defense Laboratory Day"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 139

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 139, a bill to implement the use of Rapid DNA instruments to inform decisions about pretrial release or detention and their conditions, to solve and prevent violent crimes and other crimes, to exonerate the innocent, to prevent DNA analysis backlogs, and for other purposes.

S. 203

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 203, a bill to reaffirm that the Environmental Protection Agency may not regulate vehicles used solely for competition, and for other purposes.

S. 322

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 322, a bill to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

S. 378

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr.

LEE) was added as a cosponsor 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. 407

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) were added as cosponsors of S. 407, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 423

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 423, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program, and for other purposes.

S. 428

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 428, a bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to authorize States to provide coordinated care to children with complex medical conditions through enhanced pediatric health homes, and for other purposes.

S. 431

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 431, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand the use of telehealth for individuals with stroke.

S. 459

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 459, a bill to designate the area between the intersections of Wisconsin Avenue, Northwest and Davis Street, Northwest and Wisconsin Avenue, Northwest and Edmunds Street, Northwest in Washington, District of Columbia, as "Boris Nemtsov Plaza", and for other purposes.

S. 509

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 509, a bill to improve the control and management of invasive species that threaten and harm Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, and for other purposes.

S. 563

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 563, a bill to amend the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 to require that certain buildings and personal property be covered by flood insurance, and for other purposes.

S. 569

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 569, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the Land and Water Conservation Fund to maximize the effectiveness of the Fund for future generations, and for other purposes.

S. 573

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 573, a bill to establish the National Criminal Justice Commission.

S. 583

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) were added as cosponsors of S. 583, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize COPS grantees to use grant funds to hire veterans as career law enforcement officers, and for other purposes.

S. 654

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 654, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 670

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 670, a bill to provide for the regulation of over-the-counter hearing aids.

S. 704

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 704, a bill to provide that members of the Armed Forces performing services in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt shall be entitled to tax benefits in the same manner as if such services were performed in a combat zone.

S. 721

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 721, a bill to require the disclosure of certain visitor access records.

S. 772

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) were added as cosponsors of S. 772, a bill to amend the PROTECT Act to make Indian tribes eligible for AMBER Alert grants.

S. 808

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 808, a bill to provide protections for certain sports medicine professionals who provide certain medical services in a secondary State.

S. 939

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr.

PERDUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 939, a bill to reserve any amounts forfeited to the United States Government as a result of the criminal prosecution of Joaquin Archivaldo Guzman Loera (commonly known as “El Chapo”), or of other felony convictions involving the transportation of controlled substances into the United States, for security measures along the Southern border, including the completion of a border wall.

S. 954

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 954, a bill to prevent harassment at institutions of higher education, and for other purposes.

S. 980

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 980, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for payments for certain rural health clinic and Federally qualified health center services furnished to hospice patients under the Medicare program.

S. 1018

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1018, a bill to provide humanitarian assistance for the Venezuelan people, to defend democratic governance and combat widespread public corruption in Venezuela, and for other purposes.

S. 1034

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1034, a bill to improve agricultural job opportunities, benefits, and security for aliens in the United States, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 12

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 12, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that those who served in the bays, harbors, and territorial seas of the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, should be presumed to have served in the Republic of Vietnam for all purposes under the Agent Orange Act of 1991.

S. RES. 109

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 109, a resolution encouraging the Government of Pakistan to release Aasiya Nooreen, internationally known as Asia Bibi, and reform its religiously intolerant laws regarding blasphemy.

S. RES. 155

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) were added as co-

sponsors of S. Res. 155, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States should work in cooperation with the international community and continue to exercise global leadership to address the causes and effects of climate change, and for other purposes.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 161—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT DEFENSE LABORATORIES ARE ON THE CUTTING-EDGE OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT, AND SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF MAY 18, 2017, AS “DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE LABORATORY DAY”

Mr. DONNELLY (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. NELSON, Ms. WARREN, Mr. REED, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. PETERS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

S. RES. 161

Whereas the national network of laboratories and engineering centers that are owned by the United States Armed Forces and funded by the Federal Government and research and development centers that are owned by the United States Armed Forces and funded by the Department of Defense (referred to in this preamble as the “defense laboratories”) should be commended for the unique role that network has had in countless innovations and advances in the areas of defense and national security;

Whereas technological progress is responsible for up to 50 percent of the growth of the United States economy and is the principal driving force behind long-term economic growth and increases in the standard of living in the United States;

Whereas research and development supported by the Department of Defense has led to new products and processes for state-of-the-art Armed Forces weapons and technology;

Whereas defense laboratories frequently partner with State and local governments and regional organizations to transfer technology to the private sector;

Whereas defense laboratories have earned prestigious national and international awards for research and technology transfer efforts and lead the way in cutting-edge science and technology;

Whereas the innovations that are produced at defense laboratories fuel economic growth by creating new industries, companies, and jobs;

Whereas, since the global leadership and national security of the United States is dependent on innovation and new industries, the work of the national network of defense laboratories is essential to the continued prosperity of the United States; and

Whereas May 18, 2017, is an appropriate day to designate as “Department of Defense Laboratory Day”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the designation of the “Department of Defense Laboratory Day” in celebration of all of the work and accomplishments of the national network of laboratories and engineering centers that are owned by the United States Armed Forces and funded by the Federal Government and

research and development centers that are owned by the United States Armed Forces and funded by the Department of Defense (referred to in this resolution as the “defense laboratories”);

(2) recognizes that a key to maintaining United States Armed Forces superiority, innovation, and competitiveness in a global economy is to continue to support federally sponsored research and development;

(3) acknowledges that the knowledge base, technologies, and techniques generated in the national network of defense laboratories serve as a foundation for additional efforts relating to the Armed Forces in the defense industrial base;

(4) commits to find ways to increase investment in the national network of defense laboratories in order to increase support of federally sponsored research and development critical to the national security interests of the United States;

(5) encourages defense laboratories, Federal agencies, and Congress to hold an outreach event on May 18, 2017, “Department of Defense Laboratory Day”, to make the public more aware of the work of the national network of defense laboratories; and

(6) recognizes the outstanding dedication, qualifications, service, and accomplishments of the scientists, technicians, and support staff of the defense laboratories.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 11, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. on Thursday, May 11; 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; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Lighthizer nomination, with the time until the cloture vote equally divided in the usual form.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator TILLIS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from North Carolina.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the new FDA Commissioner, or, more specifically, the role that the agency must play in tackling one of the biggest health crises of our day, one that I have personal experience with. Unless we act decisively, this crisis will only grow in terms of the staggering human and economic costs in the future.

That crisis is the Alzheimer’s epidemic in this Nation. The reason I am

talking about Alzheimer's is it is truly a terrible condition that affects patients, their families, and communities across the Nation. I learned firsthand about Alzheimer's disease when my mother was robbed of many of her Golden Years at a relatively early age, in her seventies.

Currently, more than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's, including an estimated 160,000 in my own State of North Carolina. Estimates project the number of Alzheimer's patients to grow to 16 million by 2050, with an annual cost of more than \$1 trillion to the healthcare system.

Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. It is a current and growing problem. It is the only top 10 disease for causes of death that cannot be prevented. It can't be cured. We can't even slow the pace of the disease. Simply put, we need a war on Alzheimer's disease like we have on cancer.

As a country, we must take the fight to this awful disease. This should be one of our highest priorities, to support the discovery and development of new medicines for the millions of patients who currently have Alzheimer's and the millions more who may develop it in the future. We need medicines to slow the progression of the disease. We need medicines to reverse its affects. We need medicines to cure Alzheimer's disease. One day, we need medicines to prevent it in the first place.

That is where the FDA comes in. The new Commissioner must make Alzheimer's an urgent priority. Obviously, the science of developing new medicines and technologies is complicated under any circumstances. Those challenges are only compounded by the fact that we still do not fully understand the disease, its causes, or how to stop it, but the FDA does hard things and they often do them very well.

The new Commissioner must ask tough questions of the agency: Are they doing everything they possibly can to encourage the development of safe and effective new drugs for Alzheimer's? Are they using all the tools at their disposal and using them flexibly to advance this goal? Do they have the right policies to be facilitators of and not barriers to important efforts to innovate in this space?

I recently visited with Dr. Gottlieb in my office and was pleased to hear the battle against Alzheimer's is a mission-critical item for him. I assume that pervades the FDA. I want to be clear. I do not know the answers to the questions related to FDA's specific regulatory policies related to Alzheimer's.

I think those determinations are best left to scientific and medical experts, but I know the status quo, the current standard of care, and the set of FDA-approved treatment options is not enough for patients or our Nation. Inaction is not acceptable. America is at its finest when we come together to do big things. Now is the time to commit to stopping the suffering and death from Alzheimer's.

The FDA cannot do this alone. This is an all-hands-on-deck kind of battle, but FDA will play a critical role in tackling this vital public health priority. I was pleased to vote for Dr. Gottlieb's confirmation yesterday. I look forward to working with him to ensure that we are doing everything we can to defeat Alzheimer's. For those of us who have been and will continue to be Alzheimer's caretakers, I hope we will see a cure in our lifetime. Those who are afflicted by the disease deserve it. It is a fiscal crisis we can avert. With the right focus by the FDA and this Congress, I am absolutely convinced this is a disease we can take the war to and win the war in our lifetime in the near future.

I encourage the FDA and all of my Members to stand in battling this terrible disease so we can end it once and for all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, it is perhaps a providential happenstance that I should be giving this particular speech while the Senator from Louisiana is presiding because we are both from coastal States. I am sure he will find things that are familiar in my Rhode Island remarks, particularly given that his Governor has declared the Louisiana coast a state of emergency due to sea level rise.

As the Presiding Officer knows, one place where the effects of climate change are most evident is in our oceans and along our coasts. Rhode Island is the Ocean State, and we have almost 400 miles of beautiful coastline. Everyone in Rhode Island lives less than a half hour from the shore. We count on a healthy ocean and vibrant coast. Our ocean economy, including fishing, tourism, and shipbuilding, amounts to nearly \$2.5 billion every year—perhaps not what Louisiana's coastal economy is but pretty good for our small State.

It employs over 42,000 Rhode Islanders. Warming, acidifying, and rising oceans are a clear and present danger to many aspects of our Rhode Island way of life. Sea level rise now threatens to remake our Rhode Island coast, swallowing low-lying land, widening existing inlets, eroding beaches, and stranding higher shorefronts as new islands.

For my 166th "Time to Wake Up" speech, I want to show the Senate what this new island chain, the new Rhode Island Archipelago, would look like. The latest modeling software allows us to visualize these projected changes, and the latest science shows that they may be coming sooner than we thought. How soon and how much? Well, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration released a new report in January updating global sea level rise estimates based on the latest peer-reviewed scientific literature.

Ice sheets, it turns out, and glaciers, are melting faster than expected, raising the so-called extreme scenario for average global sea level rise in this century, the "we do nothing on climate change scenario," by around 20 inches.

When NOAA and its partners applied these findings to America's coasts, taking into account things like regional variations in ocean circulation, in gravitational pull, and in landside conditions like erosion, settling, and depletion of groundwater, the news was particularly harsh for the northeast Atlantic coast—from Virginia through Maine, including Rhode Island.

Our Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council is now telling us that for planning purposes we need to face the possibility of 9 to 12 vertical feet of sea level rise along our shores by the end of the century. A little girl born today at Rhode Island's Women and Infants Hospital will likely actuarially live to see all of these changes. That invasion of our shores by the rising oceans will leave Rhode Island's map unrecognizable.

Early explorers to Rhode Island found our coastline looking much like it does today. Before the 1600s, it had looked much the same for many centuries before that to the Narragansetts and the Wampanoags who lived here. In the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution, which began in America in Rhode Island, brought our Nation great wealth, but it also created manmade pollution which began changing our climate.

Climate change causes sea levels to rise. As oceans warm, they expand. As the world warms, ice sheets melt and pour water into the oceans. We measure these things happening. This is not a guess or a projection.

Rhode Island's Coastal Resources Management Council has developed STORMTOOLS, which is an online simulation that models sea level rise and storm surge so we can see ahead what is coming at us. Once again, science gives us the headlights to look forward and see what is coming at us. This is what Rhode Island can expect.

Here is the high water scenario. This is the upper part of Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island, including Providence, up here, Warwick, and Warwick Neck and Greenwich Bay over here to the west. Bristol and Warren here, with Mount Hope Bay to the east.

This graphic shows the same image overlaying that previous scenario with the scenario that Rhode Island's CRMC now predicts for our State. This bright blue color depicted is land that gets covered up with 10 feet of sea level rise, and this teal color is what we get when the sea level rise hits 12 feet. Over here, Bristol gets two new islands, and Bristol and Warren become an island themselves.

If you cross over the bay to Warwick Neck, which is now part of our new coastline, that becomes a new island, Warwick Neck Island. Much of Barrington, which is a well-developed and

prosperous bedroom community, just disappears under the water. As I said, Warren and Bristol become their own island.

Now we move down the bay to historic Newport, RI, and the historic waterfront area completely floods, the historic Point section here floods, down here the western part of Newport becomes a new island. Again, all of this is now land that we lose to rising seas.

Not only does Western Newport become Western Newport Island, but it gains its own Castle Hill Island off to the side of it. Up here, the existing Goat Island virtually disappears.

This story is repeated all along Rhode Island's coast. The tip of Little Compton breaks off to become its own tiny little archipelago of new islands. This is Tiverton, which is just north of Little Compton. On the other side, here, is the shore of Portsmouth on Aquidneck Island. What you see is that the sea level rise turns Nonquit Pond into ocean and makes an island of this section of Tiverton here near Fogland Point, another new island.

Here we see the point on the other side of the opening into Narragansett Bay from Little Compton. You have Little Compton here, Aquidneck Island comes down in the middle, and on the other side you have Point Judith. Point Judith also begins to break up into little islands.

If you go up here, Galilee is our fishing port. It is where most of the fishing trawlers have their home port and the entrance runs right up here into the protected harbor area. As you can see, Galilee is now pretty much underwater.

So for folks who like to go to Champlin's Seafood, you will probably have to row there, and it might not even be there. For those who like Aunt Carrie's better, it is here, and it is not in great shape for surviving storms.

So we can go offshore to Block Island, which has been designated by The Nature Conservancy as one of the world's last 10 great places. Well, it is no longer one of the world's last 10 great places, it is now two of the world's last—I guess it would have to be 11 great places because it breaks into two separate islands. Block Island becomes Block Islands.

The beautiful town of Jamestown, which is its own island between Aquidneck Island and our mainland shore, breaks up into three separate islands. It is now one. Jamestown goes up a little bit further, that part stays intact, but the upper part breaks away from downtown Jamestown, here, and the Beaver Tail area breaks off into, I guess it would become Beaver Tail Island.

Now let's go up to our capital city. We started with the first map showing Providence. This series of images will show what happens to Providence as sea levels rise. Just to orient people who are seeing this, this is the Providence River coming in. This is the Woonasquatucket River. This is the

circle at Waterplace Park and the Woonasquatucket River goes out over the Providence Place Mall, and it goes on from there.

This is Providence's downtown business district. That is 3 feet of sea level rise—not much change. Now you get to 7 feet of sea level rise, and you see the encroachment of the ocean into our business center. Seven feet used to be our worst-case scenario, but as the evidence comes in and we are seeing things happening faster and the sea level rise occurring greater than had been expected, we have been raising our expectations.

So here is the new worst-case scenario—10 feet of sea level rise. As you can see, the business section of downtown Providence is entirely overwhelmed. Twelve feet of sea level rise is a natural consequence once you get to 10 feet of sea level rise because if you have 10 feet of sea level rise, then what you get is a regular and recurring, what people call astronomical tides or king tides, when celestial bodies line up so you have a higher than usual tide. For sure people from Florida know about it because those are the days when the street in front of their house on a sunny day is filled with saltwater because the tide has washed in over it. If you go at king high tide time along the Boston wharf, you see parking areas and walking areas already flooded. So it is not unreasonable to look at 12 feet of sea level rise if you are expecting a baseline, what they call bathtub level of 10 feet.

As you can see, downtown Providence, our business district is more or less completely inundated. So this is Climate Central. Climate Central has allowed us to get these images of what downtown Providence looks like up close, with various levels of sea level rise, and this is something they run off of Google Earth. This, again, is downtown Providence.

This is Providence City Hall. This is Kennedy Plaza, you will be pleased to know, Senator. It is named after another John Kennedy because he gave his last speech in his campaign for President before he went home to take in the election results and find out that he had been elected—his last speech was right here to a huge crowd that had come out to see him in downtown Providence.

This is our famous Biltmore Hotel. This used to be the train station. Now the offices of the Rhode Island Foundation are there. As you can see, most of these historic buildings are up to their second floor. If you look at old pictures from the hurricane in 1954 and the hurricane in 1938, you see buildings where the water got that high, but that was at a peak of a hurricane surge. This becomes the baseline. This is what it looks like every day.

Here is a closeup of Providence City Hall. Instead of coming along the sidewalk and walking up the steps, you would have to come over in one of our gondolas in order to get in the front

entrance, and the first floor of City Hall is lost.

If you look at all of this, it represents a loss of billions of dollars in property value to Rhode Islanders.

Let me grab the original. All of these areas are occupied right now—people's homes, people's businesses are there, and if they disappear below rising seas, all that value is lost. It is actually worse than that because if this is the new coastline, then behind that coastline is going to be a new set of flood zones and a new set of velocity zones. For those who are not familiar with what a velocity zone is, that is the part of the flood zone in which it is deep enough and exposed enough that you actually get wave action against structures. So you get the physical force of waves damaging structures rather than just tides rising. Between the V-zones and flood zones, there is a much larger area in which structures become uninsurable, they become unmortgageable, and as a result they become unsellable. So the economic harm from this potential sea level rise inundation of Rhode Island is virtually incalculable, and we are not the only ones who are looking at this.

Looking ahead at this coastal threat also is the massive government-backed home loan mortgage corporation Freddie Mac. Freddie Mac has predicted "the economic losses and social disruption may happen gradually, but they are likely to be greater in total than those experienced in the housing crisis and Great Recession."

Think about that. Think about the economic damage that this country sustained and the pain the families experienced after the 2008 Wall Street meltdown in that housing crisis, the great recession. Here is Freddie Mac saying this problem is going to be greater in total than the harm from the housing crisis and great recession. Some people would say you can't trust the government about this stuff. You have to trust the private sector. The government doesn't know what it is talking about.

Here is a quote from a recent article in the trade publication Risk & Insurance, an insurance trade publication. The editor of that publication wrote that this was what he called "a growing and alarming threat." He went on to say: "Continually rising seas will damage coastal residential and commercial property values to the point that property owners will flee those markets in droves, thus precipitating a mortgage value collapse that could equal or exceed the mortgage crisis that rocked the global economy in 2008."

For anybody who wonders why I come and give these speeches every week, for anybody who wonders why I am up to No. 166, it is about seeing the coastline of my home State of Rhode Island being whittled away into this chain of islands—this new Rhode Island archipelago. If this were your State, you would be up here too.

We have a responsibility here in Congress to all Americans to face up to what is happening. This is not just a Rhode Island circumstance. It is going to be Louisiana. It is going to be North and South Carolina. It is going to be Massachusetts and Maine and California. It is going to be the gulf coast. We are all going to have to face up to this and help communities prepare.

The carbon dioxide that we have already pumped into the atmosphere will make some of this sea level rise inevitable. It is baked in now, and we just have to wait for it to happen. We can still avoid these worst case scenarios if we act promptly and if we will, for one minute, say to the fossil fuel industry: You have had enough. You have fed enough at this trough. You have silenced Congress enough. Your power and your greed will no longer prevail here. We are going to solve this problem for the people of our States.

We can still do that, but we do have to act promptly.

With regard to the stuff that we cannot avoid, we also have an obligation to help our coastal communities prepare for this, to make this transition. All of these islands are going to need bridges to get to them where there are now roads. Where things are falling into the ocean and you can shore them up and protect them with hard protection, you need to do that. Where not, you need to go back and adjust zoning and planning so that nature can defend herself a little bit better through dunes and through marshes and so forth. There is a lot of work we need to do with this coming at us.

This is not funny. Nature will not wait for our politics to sort themselves out. The laws of physics, the laws of chemistry, the laws of biology do not give a hoot about the laws in the Senate. They are going to do their thing, and we need to get ahead of them. When this happens, that big, old fossil fuel industry, with all of its lies and its long, dishonorable campaign of calculated disinformation and phony front groups—so that you do not see its hands—and deliberate political mischief to prevent us from acting, is not going to be around to help us. It will be no help when this flooding comes, so it is up to us. That is why we have to wake up.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:13 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 11, 2017, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

J. CHRISTOPHER GIANCARLO, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION, VICE TIMOTHY G. MASSAD, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ADAM J. SULLIVAN, OF IOWA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, VICE DANA G. GRESHAM.

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

ROBERT L. SUMWALT III, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 31, 2021. (RE-APPOINTMENT)

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

NEIL CHATTERJEE, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION FOR THE TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2021. VICE ANTHONY T. CLARK, RESIGNED.

ROBERT F. POWELSON, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION FOR THE TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2020. VICE PHILIP D. MOELLER, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

ANDREW K. MALONEY, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE ANNE ELIZABETH WALL.

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MARK ANDREW GREEN, OF WISCONSIN, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, VICE GAYLE SMITH.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JAY PATRICK MURRAY, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR.

JAY PATRICK MURRAY, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FOR SPECIAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE UNITED NATIONS.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be major

JOHANNA K. REAM

THE FOLLOWING NAMED AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be colonel

PAUL R. AGUIRRE
MICHAEL D. ARNOLD, JR.
NICHOLAS BRIAN BABIAK
JERRY B. BANCROFT, JR.
DAVID GEORGE BERUBE
JAMES KEVIN BLANTON
JOHN JOSEPH CAMPO
EDWARD CASEY
MARK K. CASEY
TIMOTHY MARK CATHEY
ROBIN LEEANN CELATKA
PATRICIA N. CHAVEZ
PETER S. CHIO
CHAD S. CHRISTMAN
MICHAEL S. CLAY
JOHN A. CONLEY
SEAN FREDERICK CONROY
LISA M. CUNNINGHAM
JULIE PETRINA CURLIN
WILLIAM RAY CUSICK
JOSEPH M. DICKENS
JASON DEREK DICKINSON
ROBERT EDWIN DONALDSON
JUSTIN H. DUNCAN
CHARLES ALAN DURFEE
JUNE A. DYKSTRA
PAUL WILLIAM FEICHTINGER
CRISSIE DAWN FITZGERALD
PAMELA LEE FONIT
FREDERICK R. T. FOOTE
DANIEL R. FOWLER
PAUL EDWARD FRANZ
MATTHEW JOHNSON FRENCH
TREVOR JOHN FULMER
SUSAN ELAINE GARRETT
JOHN C. GIBBS
JAMES D. GLOSS
REBECCA A. GRAY
CHRISTOPHER L. GREEN
STEPHEN R. GWINN
RAED D. GYEKIS
MELISSA L. HAGEN
DARRIN E. HAMILTON
FRANK A. HARROLD III
GILBERT THOMAS HARVEY
BARRY TODD HELLING
BRADLEY GENE HINKLE
TODD A. HOFFORD
LANCE A. HOPPER
JAMES PATRICK HOYE
CATHERINE ANNE HUTSON
DAVID MARK JAFFE
GEOFFREY MARK JENSEN
MATTHEW C. JENSEN

DAVID A. JOHNSON
MITCHELL R. JOHNSON
JEFFREY M. JONES
MATTHEW EDWARD JONES
SAMUEL DAVID KINCH
KENNETH KMETZ
STANLEY J. KOWALCZYK
JULIO R. LAIRET
JASON A. LAY
MICHAEL ALLEN LAYMAN
ANTHONY ANDREW LUJAN
ANTHONY DEL MACHABEE
CLAUDIA SUZANNE MALONE
ADAM JAMES MARSHALL
COREY PATRICK MASSEY
CHAD V. MCGARRY
JOSIAH L. MEYERS
JEREMY SCOTT MILLIMAN
WALTER L. MODDISON
MARK RICHARD MORRELL
MARTIN JAMES MOSER
BILLY F. MURPHY, JR.
LAWANA GAY NELSON
ERIC P. NEUMANN
KAREN E. NICHOLS
MICHAEL JOHN OLIVIER
BRIAN L. PARKER
BARBARA M. PAZDERNIK
ROBIN CHRISTINE PETERSON
JEREMY CHAD PHILLIPS
LAWRENCE E. J. PHILLIPS
BRYAN W. PREECE
DAVID A. PREISMAN
PATRICK L. PRITCHARD
DAVID G. RABEL
LORALIE E. RASMUSSEN
LINDA A. ROHATSCH
SHAWN GILBERT RYAN
MATTHEW PARRISH SANDS
YVETTE MARIE SCHUE
BRIAN K. SIMS
SUSANA CORONA SMITH
TIMOTHY J. SODERHOLM
CLIFFORD ADAM SOUZA
MARTIN STALLONE
ROBERT R. STATCHEN
KURT M. STEGNER
MICHAEL W. STINSON
MELINDA LEE SUTTON
JOSEPH B. SZUCS
BRYONY A. TERRELL
BRADD LEE THOMPSON
CHAD P. TUTTLE
TRENTON N. TWEED
JOY D. UNDERWOOD II
SCOTT DALE VANBEEK
LEE A. VANDERHOOF
BRITT C. VANSUR
JAMES MICHAEL WARD
THOMAS J. WATTS
PATRICK CLARK WEBB
MATHEW CARROLL WENTHE
JOHN D. WILLIAMS
PETER LAWRENCE ZALEWSKI

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY DENTAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be major

MOHAMAD EL SAMAD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR REGULAR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY NURSE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 3064:

To be major

LANA J. BERNAT

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

PATRICK K. SULLIVAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

DEREK L. ADAMS
ADAM K. AKE
MARK G. ALESSIA
JOY L. ALEXANDER
GEOFFREY M. ALLEN
NADER S. ARAJ
DAVID E. BABB
THOMAS C. BARNETT, JR.
THOMAS C. BARRON
JAMES D. S. BARROS
JESSE L. BARTH
DEBORAH L. BARTUNEK
TODD L. BARTUNEK
MICHAEL J. BEARDI
KEVIN L. BECAR
MATTHEW J. BEDWELL
JOHN R. BENSON
LARRY W. BENTON
JAMES W. BIBB
CHARLES M. BLOMQUIST
JOHN L. BONNETTE II
MARTIN L. BORTOLUTTI
LEONARD D. BRANNOM III

JOHN S. BREWER
 WILLIAM R. BREWER
 JONATHAN E. BROWN
 STEPHEN M. BURGGRAFF
 THOMAS P. CALDWELL
 DUDLEY R. CAPPS
 IRBY W. CARPENTER, JR.
 RICHARD A. CAUFIELD
 ADONIS H. CHAKIDES
 CLAYTON W. CHAPPELL
 TED N. CHAVEZ
 JOHN D. CLARK
 MARTIN M. CLAY, JR.
 TIMOTHY A. CLEVELAND
 TIMOTHY A. COAKLEY
 RICHARD D. COLLAGE
 ONEL COLON
 RYAN E. CONNELLY
 MATTHEW G. COOPER
 JOSEPH M. COYLE
 SCOTT G. E. CRAIG
 RONALD L. CRANE, JR.
 THOMAS W. CROSBY
 DAVID A. DAILEY
 CHRISTOPHER DANIELS
 JOHN L. DAVIS
 ZACHARIAHS DELWICHE
 JEFFERY L. DESMOND
 COROL B. DOBSON
 WAYNE W. DON
 SEAMUS K. DOYLE
 JEFFREY J. EGET
 LESTER W. ELMORE
 JOHN A. ENGELS
 ROBERT A. EPP
 STEVEN A. FAIRBOURN
 LEIF E. T. FAUTANU
 JOHN C. FELL
 JEFFERY J. FILES
 GREGORY D. FLY
 TROY G. FLOWERS, JR.
 TAMARA J. FRATTALONE
 ROBERT M. FUGERE
 KORY H. GACON
 ERIC L. GAGNON
 GLYN C. GOLDWIRE
 JAMES C. GONYO II
 THOMAS P. GONZALES
 RODRIGO R. GONZALEZ III
 ALBERT T. GORMAN
 WILLIAM J. GRAY, JR.
 GRAHAM T. GREEN
 MICHAEL D. GREEN
 JOHN C. GREGORY
 MILTON L. GRIFFITH, JR.
 ALAN R. GRONEWOLD
 PATRICIA K. HAGEN
 DAVID L. HALL
 RICHARD E. HAMBY
 MATTHEW R. HANDY
 DANIEL E. HARRIS
 WILLIAM E. HAYGOOD
 ANTHONY C. HEIGAARD
 LARRY L. HENRY
 RONALD C. HENSON
 SCOTT M. HOUCK
 BRADLEY K. HOWE
 JOSEPH M. HUSS
 CHRISTOPHER A. HYMAN
 MARK L. INABA
 ERICA L. INGRAM
 CHRISTIAN J. JOHNSON
 ERIC N. JOHNSON
 MARK K. KAMPA
 JOHN C. KENNEDY
 JEFFERY C. KERNS
 PAUL A. KIRCHHOFF
 CHARLES W. KITSON, JR.
 RALPH E. KLINE III
 ROBERT M. KURTZ
 SUSAN B. KUSAN
 CAROLYN Y. LANCIOS
 JEFFREY C. LARRABEE
 ROBERT K. LASHBROOK
 RONALD G. LEE, JR.
 DEBRA K. LIEN
 DANIEL S. LOVETT
 ROBERT A. LUND
 CRAIG M. MACERI
 THOMAS W. MACKEY
 MICHAEL M. MAJORS
 LANE B. MARSHALL
 CORY L. MATTHEWS
 CLIFFORD A. MCDANIEL II
 DONNA G. MCDANIELCOX
 CHARLES P. MCDONALD
 SEAN T. MCGANN
 CHRIS A. MCKINNEY
 DONALD L. MCLELLAN
 ERIN K. MCMAHON
 CODY A. MCROBERTS
 TROY D. MEUTH
 JACK B. MIDYETTE III
 RICHARD F. MIFSUD II
 VERL C. MILLER
 LOUIS B. MILLIKAN
 SHAUN R. MISTLEBAUER
 CHARLES C. MOORE
 SCOTTIE A. MOORE
 ANDREW C. MORESHEAD
 JOHN D. MORGEN
 WILLIAM F. MORRIS
 BRIAN C. MULCAHY
 TIMOTHY P. MULLEN
 MICHAEL H. MURPHY III
 WESLEY D. MURRAY
 PETER M. MUSHOVIC

DERALD R. NEUGEBAUER
 JOSEPH T. NOONAN III
 JEFFREY A. NORRIS
 CRAIG P. NOWAK
 TRACEY M. Y. OMORI
 JAVIER ORTIZ
 LARS B. OSTERVOLD, JR.
 ROBERT F. PAOLETTI
 BRIAN L. PARCELL
 JAMES L. PAYNE, JR.
 BRIAN L. PETERSON
 THOMAS B. PICKLE, JR.
 THOMAS R. POWERS
 MARK D. PRESLEY
 JASON D. PRICE
 MARK A. RAAKER
 LORA J. RAINEY
 FELIX RAMOSTORO
 NATHAN C. RANGE
 DAVID S. RHOADS
 MICHAEL D. RIESKE
 ERIC J. RILEY
 BREN D. ROGERS
 GILBERT ROLDAN
 HERIBERTO ROMAN
 DARRIN M. ROSHA
 PAUL E. RUMBERGER
 JAMES J. SAHADY, JR.
 CRAIG L. SANDMAN
 SHAD B. SATTERTHWAITTE
 MATTHEW C. SCHELL
 STEPHEN L. SCHMIDT
 PAUL W. SCHNEIDER
 JAMES P. SCHREFFLER
 ROBERT W. SHIPMAN
 WILLIAM A. SHOMENTO
 ANTHONY W. SMITH
 GREGORY SMITH
 ALAN C. SOUTH
 MARK J. SOUTH
 BOBBIE M. SPROUSE
 DANIEL M. STARK
 ROBIN B. STILLWELL
 JEFFREY STRICKLE
 JONATHAN M. STUBBS
 SOL D. SUKUT
 MARC M. SULLIVAN
 DARRYL B. TAGUACTA
 JULIE A. THOMAS
 PAUL E. THOMPSON
 LOREN J. THOMSON
 JOHN M. TILL
 MICHAEL A. TOBEY
 TIMOTHY J. TOMCHO
 KELLARD N. TOWNSEND
 MICHAEL A. TREADWELL
 JOHN A. TURK II
 THOMAS M. TURNER
 IVAN R. UDELL
 PAUL E. WALDRON
 MICHAEL E. WEGNER
 JOHN W. WELLS II
 JAMES B. WHARTON
 THOMAS M. WHATLEY
 JAMES D. WHITAKER
 BRIAN P. WILKINS
 JAMES M. YATES

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT
 TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE
 ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

RODNEY ABRAMS
 RICK A. ACKERMAN
 KURT C. ADAMS
 DUSTIN L. AWTREY
 MARK R. BAADE
 KEITH A. BARTA
 JAMES M. BECKER
 ANSON W. R. BELIN
 SHARLEEN N. BENDER
 GLEN D. BLACKBURN
 DARRELL J. BOAZMAN
 CHRISTINE C. BORGOGNONI
 LAURA R. BOSCO
 MORGAN C. BRANTLEY
 KATHERINE M. BRAUN
 CHRIS M. BRIAND
 MICHAEL F. BROCKWAY
 GREGORY L. BUNCK
 JOHN F. CADRAN
 JAMES W. CARMICHAEL, JR.
 STEPHEN P. CASE
 PETER M. CHACE, JR.
 CHRIST W. Y. CHANG
 JERRY B. CHAPPEE
 JIMMY W. CLEMONS
 PETER T. CLINTON
 IAN D. CLUNIESROSS
 ROBERT J. COKER
 CLIFFTON C. CORNELL
 RICHARD J. COTE
 VICTORIA A. CUMINGS
 DAVID L. DEAN
 WILLIAM P. DEBACK
 GRETCHEN A. DECKER
 KIRK D. DECKER
 ROGER P. DEON, JR.
 JOHN M. DIDONA TO
 ADAM T. DIETRICH
 DOUGLAS M. DILLON
 ALLAN L. DOLLISON
 MICHAEL J. DOUGHERTY
 JAMES R. DRAKE
 CHRISTOPHER S. DUBE
 THOMAS M. DUBININ
 VINCENT W. DUNCAN
 JAMES L. EIPPER
 DONALD R. ELLISON, JR.
 DERIK D. ERICKSON
 ANDREW L. FETHERSTON
 JOHN J. FINKLE, JR.
 CHARLES T. FLEETWOOD
 CHRISTOPHER L. FLOWERS
 JEANNE F. FORGEY
 ROELENE E. FREEMAN
 LEIGH F. FRIEDEL
 CHELEY A. GABRIEL
 CHARLES A. GAMBARO, JR.
 JUAN A. GARGES, JR.
 JASON E. GARCIA
 DAMIEN T. GARNER
 DEVIN P. GARRITY
 STEVEN D. GAVIN
 GINA M. GENTILE
 HELEN G. S. GEORGE
 LENORA T. GERMAN
 JAMES G. GILL, JR.
 GREGORY C. GLASOW
 DARRYL GODWIN
 CARLOS E. GORBEA
 PAUL C. GRESENS
 ANTHONY P. GRIFFIN
 MARC C. HALE
 KIMBERLY K. HAMILTON
 COLE A. HANSON
 STEPHEN G. HARLAN
 GROVER C. HARMS, JR.
 VICTOR H. HARRIS
 STEVEN D. HAYDEN
 SCOTT L. HEIL
 CORY F. HENRY
 DANIEL H. HERSHKOWITZ
 TODD M. HEUSER
 KIRK H. HOLMES
 KEITH K. HORIKA WA
 WILLIAM H. HOUSTON IV
 STEVEN B. HOWEY
 HEROLD J. HUDSON
 RACHEL E. HUMPHREY
 STANLEY A. HUTCHISON
 TAYLOR K. C. HWONG
 AMY M. IHDE
 VICTOR S. INGRAM
 AVRAM J. ISAACSON
 GERRY L. JACKSON
 MARK W. JACKSON
 DANIEL J. JAQUINT
 KELLY K. JONES
 MARTIN R. JUAREZ
 MARTIN C. JUNG
 RICHARD A. KAISER
 RUTH D. KANE
 MARK Y. KAZUNAGA
 SHARON K. KELSEY
 JOSHUA S. KENNEDY
 EERO R. KERAVUORI
 ROSE P. KERAVUORI
 KERIANN L. KLEIN
 MARCUS A. KREPLINGER
 GEORGE E. KOKLANARIS
 GARRETT R. KOLO
 PAUL L. KUETTNER
 JAKE S. H. KWON
 FLOYD E. LACEY, JR.
 DANITA K. LADISON
 CHRISTOPHER D. LANGE
 GLEN A. LAYTON
 RAQUEL G. LEBLANC
 ARLENE M. LEIGH
 BRADLEY W. LEWIS
 RAYMOND LO
 JOSHUA M. LUBARSKY
 STEPHAN E. LYNKEY
 JEFFREY V. MAGLIE
 MURRAY A. MALLETTSTEIN
 MICHAEL J. MALONE
 DAVID P. MANN
 JAMES W. MANZI, JR.
 DRAGOMIR C. MARINKOVICH
 MARLENE K. MARKOTAN
 JORGE MARRERO
 JANENE A. MARSHALLGATLING
 SANDRA K. MARTIN
 THOMAS E. MCAVOY
 PETER A. MCBRIDE
 THOMAS W. MCBROOM, SR.
 PAUL J. MCCARTHY
 DANIEL M. MCCLINTOCK
 ALEX A. MCCULLOUGH
 MARK R. MCCULLOUGH
 JEREMY T. MCGARRY
 SHAWN J. MCNABB
 BRIAN J. MCNULTY
 JON S. MIDDAUGH
 MEGAN E. MIRANDA
 LOUIS L. MITCHELL
 DELIRIS MONTANEZBERRIOS
 COLIN J. MORROW
 JACQUELINE E. MORTON
 APRIL A. D. MYRICK
 ANDREE G. NAZARRO
 NICHOLAS NAZARRO II
 JAMES D. NELSON
 WILLIAM J. NELSON
 RYAN J. NIELSEN
 GINGER K. NORRIS
 WILLIAM K. NORRIS
 MARK L. OGBURN
 GARY K. OGLE
 ALEXA G. OLEARY
 DANIEL J. ORourke
 JOHN D. OSBORNE

DOUGLAS M. OTTENBERG
 OTTO M. PADRON
 EDWARD R. PALACIOS
 NOEL F. PALMER
 DAVID R. PARAVECCHIA
 MARK F. PARCELLS
 GREGORY M. PAVICK
 EUGENE POINDEXTER
 ROBERT J. PORTWAY
 KEVIN POWERS
 DANIEL J. PRIETO
 PETER PROZIK, JR.
 KAREN D. RADOS
 JEFFREY RECTOR
 JEROME J. REDMOND
 HEATHER A. REUTER
 SCOTT W. RICHARDS
 WILLIAM D. RITTER
 BRIAN M. RIVERA
 PETER D. ROCHA
 JUAN R. RODRIGUEZ
 RAUL L. RODRIGUEZ
 JOSE E. RODRIGUEZRIVERA
 CHRISTOPHER M. ROMERO
 SCOTT S. ROMERO
 STEVEN T. ROSE
 YVETTE O. ROSE
 MITCHELL A. RUEDEBUSCH
 STEPHEN J. RYAN
 JAMES P. SANDERS
 RICHARD W. SETTINO
 JAMES M. SINDLE
 JODI J. SMITH
 JOHN A. SMITH
 STEPHEN J. SNYDER
 GILBERTO SOTOMALDONADO
 DAVID A. SPARACIO
 NICOLE R. SPEAROS
 STEPHEN M. SPINELLI
 JOHN STANLEY
 BARRY M. STENTIFORD
 JUSTIN STIEGLITZ
 VINCENT J. STONEKING
 KEVIN D. STRINGER
 RICHARD T. STUBBLEFIELD
 THOMAS P. SULLIVAN
 MABRY A. SUMNER
 TIMOTHY S. SUMOVICH
 JULIA E. SWEET
 PHILLIP A. TAYLOR
 EARL D. TERRY III
 WILLIE L. THORNTON
 EVAN TING
 WAI K. TONG
 GREGORY W. TOTH
 DEREK J. ULEHLA
 CLARENCE M. WALTON
 MATTHEW S. WARNER
 GREGORY A. WEISLER
 LATONIA R. WHITE
 MICHAEL R. WHITESCARVER
 GREG S. WICKLUND
 WILLIAM F. WILKERSON
 AARON D. WILKES
 ANTOINE M. WILLIAMS
 BRIAN D. WISNIEWSKI
 DAVID R. WOOD
 TIMOTHY H. WRIGHT
 D010081

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

CHRISTINE N. ADAMS
 THOMAS C. AKERLUND
 JAMES M. AKERS
 DARREN S. ANTAL
 U. L. ARMSTRONG, JR.
 BRIAN S. AXELSEN
 CHRISTOPHER A. BAER
 CHRISTOPHER A. BAINS
 THOMAS W. BANNON
 JONAH A. BRIERTON
 CURTIS E. BURRELL, JR.
 LEWIS D. CARPENTER
 SEAN F. COUNIHAN
 JEFFREY M. DUKAVAS
 DAVID W. EATON
 BRIAN P. ELLIOTT
 DARL E. EVERETT, JR.
 THOMAS D. FILLGROVE
 CHRISTOPHER P. GERDES
 JOHN J. GOBRICK
 ANGEL E. GONZALEZ
 KEITH G. HARLEY
 CHRISTOPHER L. HENDERSON
 GLEN R. HOWIE
 STEPHEN P. HUCKS
 TIMOTHY L. HUGHES
 ANDREW W. JONES
 CHARLES E. JONES
 HUI C. KIM
 MATTHEW W. LAWRENCE
 ANGEL M. LIBERG
 LINDA M. MARTIN
 RICHARD R. MASSENGALE
 MICHAEL D. MAYES
 KEVIN M. MERS
 PATRICK M. PASCALL
 CLAY D. PETTIT
 DAVID A. POLAND
 CHRISTOPHER N. QUALE
 ROBERT R. REISZ
 JOSE A. RIVERA
 RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ, JR.

JOHN T. SCHULTE
 CAMERON S. SELLERS
 WARREN G. SEYMOUR, JR.
 MARK W. SIEKMAN
 TRACY L. SIMMONS
 MARK D. THOMPSON
 SCOTT K. THOMSON
 ANDREAS M. THUM
 EDWARD A. VAN RAVENSTEIN
 THOMAS E. WALTON, SR.
 RICARDO L. WARFIELD
 LISA A. WEIDENBUSH
 CHARLES W. WEKO
 VALNECIA E. WILLIAMS
 JERRY D. WILSON, JR.
 CHARLETTE K. WOODARD

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

BRUCE E. OSBORNE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

COLETTE M. MURPHY
 JOHN A. ROBINSON III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

NATHAN R. ANDERSON
 RANDALL L. BICE
 DANIEL P. GAVIGAN
 WILLIAM J. HARTMAN
 STANLEY P. HERNDON
 ROBERT E. HUGHES
 ERIC R. LIU
 KURT B. MADSEN
 KAI S. MARTIN
 DOLORES J. PYNEMERCIER
 DANIEL G. ROBSON
 ERIK T. TYNAN
 ROBERTO VALLETTA
 JODIE M. C. YIM

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

ADRIA R. SCHNECK

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

MARY A. PONCE
 BRIAN K. REED

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

RYAN K. MAHELONA
 PHILIP L. NOTZ

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

JOSEPH T. BAILEY
 MARCUS P. BAUER
 RAYMOND K. BIZIOREK
 HEATHER M. BOTHWELL
 STANLEY A. BUNNER
 EDWARD C. GARRANT
 JOHN B. GARRY
 RICHARD B. GILLIGAN
 ROBERT E. JACKSON
 KERRY D. MOORE
 WILLIAM A. RIGAZZI
 JILL A. ROUGH
 GREGORY B. SETTELMAYER
 JONPAUL STEFANI

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

DAVID W. SHAIB

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

LEE A. AXTELL
 MAURICE A. BUFORD
 CAREY H. CASH
 ROBERT R. CHRISTIAN
 JOSEPH L. COFFEY
 JON W. CONROE
 DENIS N. COX
 STEPHEN S. DUBSENBERY
 ERIK P. LEE
 JUDY T. MALANA
 WILLIAM E. MIDDLETON

CURTIS PRICE
 ROBERT J. VANCE
 BRIAN K. WAITE
 MARK S. WINWARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

THOMAS M. BESTAFKA
 JAMES E. BROWN
 JAY M. CAVNAR
 JAMES J. H. CHO
 MIGUEL DIEGUEZ
 ALEXANDER K. HUTCHISON
 GORDON E. MEEK III
 RAFAEL A. MIRANDA
 JEFFREY S. POWELL
 RUSSELL C. RANG
 MATTHEW C. RIETHMILLER
 LAURIE SCOTT
 FRANCIS J. STAVISH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

DANNY W. KING

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant commander

AARON L. WITHERSPOON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

BABAK A. BARAKAT
 ROGER L. BILLINGS
 TIMOTHY A. BROWN
 GEORGE W. CLARK III
 STUART M. DAY
 ROY M. GARRISON
 TONY V. GILES
 TIMOTHY R. GRIFFIN
 TROY M. GRONBERG
 MICHAEL N. JEFFERSON
 BLAKE W. KENT
 JASON E. KLINGENBERG
 BRUCE KONG
 SCOTT D. LOGAN
 MANUEL X. LUGO
 CHRISTIAN M. MAHLER
 ROBERT S. MAZZARELLA
 MICHAEL C. MCCORMACK
 JOSHUA H. MCKAY
 JACQUELINE M. MEYER
 EDWARD D. PIDGEON
 WADE W. RINDY
 NICHOLAS R. RUSSO
 KENNETH W. RYKER III
 KADIATOU F. SIDIBE
 JAMES H. STRAUSS
 SHANE P. STROHL
 CHRISTOPHER A. WALDRON
 RICHARD H. WILHELM
 STEPHEN M. WILSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

MICHAEL J. ALLANSON
 RANDY E. ASHMAN
 JESSICA D. BEARD
 SUSANNE E. BLANKENBAKER
 JENNY S. BURKETT
 ALISON H. CASTRO
 CHARLES L. CATHER
 DANIEL W. CLARK
 CAROLYN M. CURRIE
 JOSEPH L. DESAMERO
 VICTOR M. DIAZ
 ROBERT D. FETHERSTON
 JOSEPH A. GOMEZ
 ANNA M. GRUETZMACHER
 HARRY W. HAMILTON
 CHARLES S. HARTUNG
 BOBBY J. HURT
 JASON D. LAYTON
 ANGELO P. LUCERO
 FREDORA A. MCRAE
 MARY K. PARKER
 ELISABET PRIETO
 DAVID V. D. THOMAS
 PAUL S. VILLAIRE
 ANTHONY G. VOEKS
 GERARD J. WHITE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

MATTHEW L. BERAN
 MARC S. BREWEN
 MARCUS N. FULTON
 STACIA J. GAWRONSKI
 CHRISTOPHER J. GREER
 VANESSA C. HOPGOOD
 FRANKIE D. HUTCHISON
 AMY K. LARSON

KIMBERLEY B. MCCANN
HEATHER D. PARTRIDGE
STEPHEN C. REYES
MARC S. ROSEN
JONATHAN T. STEPHENS
JEFFREY A. SUTTON
DUSTIN E. WALLACE
IAN S. WEXLER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

GARLAND H. ANDREWS
DARRYL P. ARFSTEN
GORDON R. BLIGHTON
BRIAN L. BOHRER
STEPHEN A. CHAPMAN
SERGIO CHAVEZ
MICHAEL O. ENRIQUEZ
WILLIAM E. GRADY
ROBERT P. HIGGINS
JEFFREY J. KLINGER
BRADLEY C. KLUEGEL
JASON T. LEWIS
THOMAS J. PINER
PAUL S. SCHIERMEIER
SPENCER T. SCHOEN
MICHAEL E. STEVENS, JR.
MICHAEL L. SUNMAN
TIMOTHY T. THOMPSON
ROMEO T. TIZON, JR.
ERIC R. WELSH
MEREDITH L. YEAGER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

OLADAPO A. AKINTONDE
NATHANIEL B. ALMOND
KATHERINE C. AUSTIN
CHAD M. BAASEN
JOHN S. BROOKS
HAN Q. BUI
HENRY F. CASEY III
GEORGE S. CONLEY
KONRAD L. DAVIS
BRENDON G. DREW
DENNIS J. FAIX
NATHANIAL FERNANDEZ
JONATHAN A. FORSBERG
DAVID M. FURLONG
CURTIS W. GABALL
MICHAEL S. GALITZ
RAMIRO L. GUTIERREZ
TIPTON D. Q. HUTCHESON
MICHAEL B. JACOBS
HENRY S. KANE
KARL C. KRONMANN
KELLY M. LATIMER
LANNY F. LITTLEJOHN
KAREN L. MATTHEWS
RYAN C. MAVES
MICHAEL L. MEADOWS
JOEL R. METZGER
ARASH MOHTASHAMIAN
MICHELE P. MORRISON
MARK M. MORTON
JAMES J. MUCCIARONE
FRANK E. MULLENS
TODD J. OCHSNER
KEVIN C. OMALLEY
ADAM K. SAPERSTEIN
ROLF K. SCHMIDT
JASON W. SCHROEDER
ANDREW J. SELLERS
SEAN C. SKELTON
JAMES P. SMITH
JASON D. SWEET
SEAN A. SWIATKOWSKI
CHRISTOPHER M. TEPERA
HASSAN A. TETTEH
KRISTOPHER P. THIBODEAU
JOHN W. VINCENT
MATTHEW J. WAUSON
CHRISTOPHER H. WAY
KEDRIC E. WEBSTER
SEAN R. WISE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

JEFF A. BLEILE
TONI A. BOWDEN
DANIEL A. BROWN
HECTOR A. CABALLERO
CHRISTOPHER E. CRECELIUS
TUANH C. HALQUIST
THOMAS B. HINES, JR.
MOLLY A. JENKINS
DAVID W. JONES
REBECCA O. LEE
KEITH L. MAYBERRY
NANCY OSBORNE
ANTON PETRICH
RAOUL H. SANTOS
HIEN TRINH
JEFFREY G. ZELLER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be captain

JOHN E. FRITZ

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

GRADY G. DUFFEY, JR.
BRETT D. INGLE
STEVEN W. LEEHE
JOSE F. MONTES
DAVID A. VONDRAK

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

WILLIAM M. KAFKA
RYAN M. PERRY
KEVIN R. STEPHENS
WILLIAM R. URBAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

DANIEL E. FILLION
GREGORY A. FRANCIOSCH
JENNIFER B. JONES
TUAN NGUYEN
DAVID D. OBRIEN
JASON D. WEDDLE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

DAMON B. DIXON
RICHARD A. KENNEDY, JR.
DAVID R. KUEHN
THOMAS A. MONEYSMAKER II
JONATHAN J. VORRATH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

JAMES W. ADKISSON III
CHRISTOPHER G. BRYANT
ROBERT S. DAMSKY
ETHAN C. GIBSON
RACHEL J. V. LIND
DOMINIC R. LOVELLO
MARC W. RATKUS
JOSEPH D. SEARS
VICTOR L. SPEARS III
HOLLY A. YUDISKY
SHERRI R. ZIMMERMAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

CORY S. BRUMMETT
ANDREW R. DITTMER
JAMES O. HAMMOND
JAMES A. LECOUNTÉ
ERIK G. PITTMAN
JAMES J. WATSON
DAVID J. WHITE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

JULIE M. ALFIERI
JAMES L. BOND
TRENT W. FINGERSON
JAMIE A. FRASERLORIA
CHRISTOPHER W. HALL
STACY L. HANNA
RAYMOND E. KENDALL
ERIC E. LAHTI
KYLE L. LEESE
JOHN B. MARKLEY
FRANCISCO J. MARTINEZ
KEVIN J. MCHALE, JR.
SUZANNE R. MEYER
THOMAS P. SCARRY
MARCUS D. STARKS
TIMOTHY M. SULLIVAN
MATTHEW A. VERICH
BRETT A. WISE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

MATTHEW E. ARNOLD
ROBERT B. BAILEY
WILLIAM R. BELL
EDWARD L. CALLAHAN
DAVID DWYER
MORRIS OXENDINE
JOHN W. POPHAM
JEFFREY A. SANDIN
ANTHONY C. TARANTO, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

PETER A. ARROBIO
RYAN G. BATCHELOR
JAMES C. CHITKO
ROBERT M. GALLAGHER, JR.
ERIC M. GARDNER
SAMUEL Y. HANAKI
ADAM T. SCOTT
PETER J. SHEEHY
LISA M. SULLIVAN
SHAUN A. SWARTZ
KEVIN J. WATKINS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

JOHN A. ANDERSON
KEITH A. BARAVIK
SAMUEL F. CORDERO
GREGORY A. CRAWFORD
JUSTIN A. DOWD
DAVID W. GAST
JASON S. HALL
GINALYN B. HARRELL
SIDNEY W. HODGSON III
MARK E. JOHNSON
FREDERICK L. LENTZ II
JEFFREY S. LOCK
CEDRIC J. MCNEAL
SETH A. MILLER
JAMES P. MOSMAN
RAMIRO E. ORELLANO
ETHAN R. PROPER
JAY A. YOUNG

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

LAWRENCE H. KENNEDY
KEVIN M. MULLANEY
TRACIE A. SEVERSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

JOSE G. HERNANDEZ
NATHAN J. KING
HALLOCK N. MOHLER
BRETT A. STGEORGE
DEREK A. VESTAL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

DAVID A. ABERNATHY
PAUL M. ALLGEIER
ROBERT W. ALFIGINI, JR.
KENNETH D. ANDERSON
JEREMY T. ANDREW
CHRISTOPHER M. BAHNER
LINDSEY J. BAKER III
MATTHEW B. BARR
BRIAN H. BENNETT
ROBERT T. BIBEAU
CHRISTOPHER C. BOHNER
GEOFFREY P. BOWMAN
JONATHAN J. BRADFORD
MICHAEL D. BRASSEUR
DAVID S. BRINSON
ROBERT T. BRYANS
RYAN J. BRYLE
RICHARD G. BURGESS
STEPHEN J. BURY
ADRIAN T. CALDER
JASON G. CANFIELD
HUNG GAO
BRYAN K. CARMICHAEL
RICHARD W. CARNICKY
RYAN C. CECI
JILL R. CESARI
ANDREW J. CLARK IV
DWIGHT L. CLEMONS II
DANIEL COBLAN
ELAINE A. COLLINS
JAMES N. COLSTON
MICHAEL CONGANNON
JOHN D. CRADDOCK
JOHN L. CROGHAN
KENNETH M. CURTIN
MICHAEL J. DAIGLE, JR.
THERON C. DAVIS
MICHELE M. DAY
SAMUEL F. DECASTRO
DAVID S. DEES
HANS D. DEFOR
JASON M. DENNEY
JEFFREY A. DERMODY
ALAN M. DJOCK
THOMAS A. DONOVAN
PETER J. EHLERS
JESSE G. ESPE
ERIK C. ESTENSON
JOHN J. FAY
DAVID P. FIELDS
ANDREW P. FITZPATRICK
KELLY T. FLETCHER
MICHAEL D. FRANCE
ROBERT C. FRANCIS, JR.
KENNETH R. FRANKLIN

BRIAN G. FRECK
TRACEY J. GENDREAU
NICHOLAS D. GOOD
TADD H. GORMAN
BRET M. GRABBE
DOUGLAS GRABER
THOMAS J. GRADY
DAVID L. GRAY
JEREMY GRAY
BRIAN C. GUGLIOTTA
BLAIR H. GUY II
JAMES W. HARNEY
SCOTT B. HATTAWAY
HARRY E. HAYES
MARK C. HAZENBERG
JEFFREY L. HEAMES
RYAN J. HEILMAN
JEFFREY W. HILL
MICHAEL P. HOLLENBACH
ROBERT L. HOLMES
FRASER P. HUDSON
CHRISTOPHER N. HURST
ERIC P. ILLSTON
STEPHEN J. ILTERIS
CHRISTOPHER C. JASON
ALLEN P. JOHNSON
STEPHEN O. JOHNSON
JAMES P. JOHNSTON
JEFFREY JUERGENS
AARON R. KELLEY
PETER S. KIM
DERRICK W. KINGSLEY
JOSHUA C. KINNEAR
THOMAS G. KORSMO
GADALA E. KRATZER
JOHN A. KRISCUNAS
JOHN W. KURTZ
JEFFREY E. LAMPHEAR
MICHAEL C. LANGBEHN
BRENDAN J. LEARY
RICHARD LEBRON
ANDREW G. LIGGETT
JONATHAN D. LIPPS
PRICE J. LOCKARD
TOMMY F. LOCKE, JR.
DAVID LOO
KEVIN W. MACY
JAMES R. MCIVER
KEVIN O. MOLLER
STEPHEN E. MONGOLD
GARY G. MONTALVO, JR.
TIMOTHY B. MOORE
JEFFREY V. MORGANTHALER
MICHAEL C. MOSBRUGER
WILLIAM G. MUSSER
THOMAS E. MYERS
MELVYN N. NAIDAS
TODD J. NETHERCOTT
MARK C. NEWKIRK
MARK S. NIESWIADOMY
EDWARD J. OGRADY III
FRANK E. OKATA

DANIEL P. PAPP
DOUGLAS A. PATTERSON
DAVID J. PEARSON
TODD S. PERRY
DOUGLAS M. PETERSON
GREGORY T. PETROVIC
JESSIE A. PORTER
ROBERT R. PORTER III
DAVID M. RAY
JOHN D. REARDON
JASON S. RELLER
TED C. RICCIARDELLA
PETER J. RIEBE
JEREMY Y. RIFAS
JAMES T. ROBINSON
SEAN P. ROCHELEAU
MIKAEL A. ROCKSTAD
CHRISTOPHER F. ROHRBACH
DAVID J. RUETTER
MATTHEW F. RUTHERFORD
RUSSEL B. SANCHEZ
CHARLES R. SARGEANT
ZOA H. SCHENEMAN
TORSTEN SCHMIDT
WILLIAM D. SELK
JASON J. SHERMAN
JOSEPH T. SHULER
GREGORY A. SMITH
MICHAEL A. SMITH
MATTHEW M. SNIFFIN
MICHAEL D. SNOWDEN
ROLF B. SPELKER
JOEL G. STEWART
DANIEL C. STONE
DANIEL G. STRAUB
SCOTT T. TASIN
MATTHEW C. THOMAS
RODNEY A. THOMAS
JOSEPH P. THOMPSON III
MICHAEL B. THOMPSON
ANDREW J. THOMSON
JOSEPH F. TORIAN, JR.
BLAKE J. TORNGA
THOMAS A. ULMER
JONATHAN G. VOORHEIS
TIMOTHY L. WAITS
RICHARD W. WHITFIELD
TIMOTHY B. WILKE
ALAN R. WING
THOMAS R. WINKLER
ERNEST M. WINSTON
DORSEY G. WISOTKI
MICHAEL L. WITHERSPOON
RONALD L. WITHROW
TODD C. ZENNER
JESSE J. ZIMBAUER

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT
IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR MARINE
CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be major

MICHAEL S. STEVENS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT
IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR MARINE
CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 716:

To be major

PATRICK J. MULLEN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT
TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MA-
RINE CORPS RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION
12203:

To be colonel

RAYMOND L. ADAMS
DAVID B. ASHE
WILLIAM A. BARNES
DANIEL M. BELLIG
RICHARD D. BELLISS
JOSEPH S. BORNSCHEIN
KYLE R. BURRESS
KEVIN F. COUGHLIN
MICHAELA C. COUGHLIN
JOHN D. COWART
MARK A. CUNNINGHAM
RAQUEL L. DECKERT
FRANCISCO P. DELGADO
SAMUEL J. DIBIANCA
SEAN R. DUNN
JAKE J. FALCONE
CHRISTOPHER T. GRAVES
JEFFREY D. GROHARING
JOHN K. JARRARD
ERIK W. JILSON
JOHN D. KAUFFMAN
JOHN F. KIDD
JOHN D. KNAPP
CHRISTOPHER M. LONG
HOWARD K. MAROTTO II
PETER W. MCCORMICK
RONALD S. MCGINTY
WILLIAM H. MCHENRY II
RICHARD J. MENDELOW
PERCY T. MOORE
ANDREW J. MUNRO
JOHN T. NGUYEN
CHRISTOPHER OBALLE
FELIPE PAEZ
WILLIAM J. PALMER
SIDNEY R. PARK
RODOLFO A. QUILES
THOMAS J. READY IV
ROBERT E. RHODE III
RICHARD J. RILEY
JEFFREY A. STERNBERG
DANIEL S. SULLIVAN
MICHAEL R. TEUBNER
TROY C. WARE
DOUGLAS S. WOODHAMS

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, May 11, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MAY 16

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes, Marshall Billingslea, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, and Heath P. Tarbert, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary, all of the Department of the Treasury, and Mira Radielovic Ricardel, of California, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Export Administration.

SD-538

Committee on Finance

To hold hearings to examine bipartisan Medicare policies that improve care for patients with chronic conditions.

SD-215

3:15 p.m.

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure

To hold hearings to examine leveraging Federal funding, focusing on innovative solutions for infrastructure.

SD-406

MAY 17

9:30 a.m.

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

To hold hearings to examine the growing Russian military threat in Europe, focusing on assessing and addressing the challenge.

SVC-208

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine current issues in American sports, focusing on protecting the health and safety of American athletes.

SR-253

Committee on Environment and Public Works

To hold hearings to examine improving America's transportation infrastructure.

SD-406

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 34, to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for the en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for "midnight rules", S. 829, to reauthorize the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program, the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants program, and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program, S. 951, to reform the process by which Federal agencies analyze and formulate new regulations and guidance documents, S. 21, to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law, S. 577, to require each agency, in providing notice of a rule making, to include a link to a 100 word plain language summary of the proposed rule, S. 584, to amend chapter 6 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Regulatory Flexibility Act), to ensure complete analysis of potential impacts on small entities of rules, S. 579, to require agencies to publish an advance notice of proposed rule making for major rules, S. 459, to designate the area between the intersections of Wisconsin Avenue, Northwest and Davis Street, Northwest and Wisconsin Avenue, Northwest and Edmunds Street, Northwest in Washington, District of Columbia, as "Boris Nemtsov Plaza", S. 595, to provide U.S. Customs and Border Protection with additional flexibility to expedite the

hiring process for applicants for law enforcement positions, S. 696, to amend title 5, United States Code, to appropriately limit the authority to award bonuses to Federal employees, S. 504, to permanently authorize the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Business Travel Card Program, S. 842, to prohibit Federal agencies and Federal contractors from requesting that an applicant for employment disclose criminal history record information before the applicant has received a conditional offer, S. 760, to expand the Government's use and administration of data to facilitate transparency, effective governance, and innovation, S. 831, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 120 West Pike Street in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, as the "Police Officer Scott Bashioum Post Office Building", an original bill entitled, "Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017", an original bill entitled, "Federal Agency Customer Experience Act of 2017", and an original bill entitled, "Saving Federal Dollars Through Better Use of Government Purchase and Travel Cards Act of 2017".

SD-342

Joint Economic Committee

To hold hearings to examine the state of social capital in America today.

SD-106

10:30 a.m.

Committee on the Budget

To hold hearings to examine running the government for less.

SD-608

2 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

To hold hearings to examine military space organization, policy, and programs.

SR-222

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the Government Accountability Office's high risk list for Indian programs.

SD-628

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold hearings to examine pending calendar business.

SR-418

3:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Airland

To hold hearings to examine United States military small arms requirements.

SR-232A

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S2851–S2890

Measures Introduced: Thirteen bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 1081–1093, and S. Res. 161. **Pages S2881–82**

Measures Reported:

S. 385, to promote energy savings in residential buildings and industry. (S. Rept. No. 115–60) **Page S2881**

Measures Considered:

Bureau of Land Management Rule Relating to Methane: By 49 yeas to 51 nays (Vote No. 125), Senate rejected the motion to proceed to consideration of H.J. Res. 36, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Bureau of Land Management relating to “Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation”. **Pages S2851–53**

Lighthizer Nomination—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of the nomination of Robert Lighthizer, of Florida, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador. **Pages S2853–71**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S2853**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination at approximately 10 a.m., on Thursday, May 11, 2017, with the time until the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination equally divided in the usual form. **Page S2883**

Rosen Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Jeffrey A. Rosen, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation. **Page S2871**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Robert Lighthizer, of Florida, to

be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador. **Page S2871**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S2871**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S2871**

Brand Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Rachel L. Brand, of Iowa, to be Associate Attorney General. **Pages S2871–76**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Jeffrey A. Rosen, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation. **Page S2871**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S2871**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S2871**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

J. Christopher Giancarlo, of New Jersey, to be Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

Adam J. Sullivan, of Iowa, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation.

Robert L. Sumwalt III, of South Carolina, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board for a term expiring December 31, 2021.

Neil Chatterjee, of Kentucky, to be a Member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the term expiring June 30, 2021.

Robert F. Powelson, of Pennsylvania, to be a Member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the term expiring June 30, 2020.

Andrew K. Maloney, of Virginia, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury.

Mark Andrew Green, of Wisconsin, to be Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

Jay Patrick Murray, of Virginia, to be Alternate Representative of the United States of America for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador.

Jay Patrick Murray, of Virginia, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during his tenure of service as Alternate Representative of the United States of America for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations.

Routine lists in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy. **Pages S2886–90**

Executive Communications: **Pages S2880–81**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S2882–83**

Additional Statements: **Pages S2879–80**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—125) **Page S2853**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6:13 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Thursday, May 11, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S2883.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS CAPABILITIES TO COUNTER RUSSIA

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities receive a closed briefing on United States special operations capabilities to counter Russian influence and unconventional warfare operations in the "Grey Zone" from Major General Mark C. Schwartz, USA, Commander, and Colonel Terry Guild, USA, Director of Intelligence, both of Special Operations Command Europe, Department of Defense.

CONSTRAINING NORTH KOREA

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Subcommittee on National Security and International Trade and Finance concluded a hearing to examine secondary sanctions against Chinese institutions, focusing on assessing their utility for constraining North Korea, after receiving testimony from Adam J. Szubin, Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, D.C.; and Juan C. Zarate, Financial Integrity Network, and Center on Sanctions and Illicit Finance, Alexandria, Virginia.

GROWTH POLICIES

Committee on the Budget: Committee concluded a hearing to examine growth policies for the new Administration, after receiving testimony from former Senator Phil Gramm.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded a hearing to examine state views on the need to modernize the Endangered Species Act, after receiving testimony from Nick Wiley, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Tallahassee, and Larry D. Voyles, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, both on behalf of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; and Janet Coit, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Providence.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues concluded a hearing to examine emerging external influences in the Western Hemisphere, after receiving testimony from Emanuele Ottolenghi, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, and Eric Farnsworth, Council of the Americas, both of Washington, D.C.

CYBER THREATS

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine cyber threats facing America, focusing on an overview of the cybersecurity threat landscape, after receiving testimony from Jeff Greene, Symantec Corporation, and Steven R. Chabinsky, White and Case LLP, both of Washington, D.C.; Brandon Valeriano, Marine Corps University, Alexandria, Virginia; and Kevin Keeney, Monsanto Company, Linn, Missouri.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Steven Andrew Engel, of the District of Columbia, who was introduced by Senator Graham, and Makan Delrahim, of California, who was introduced by Senator Hatch, both to be an Assistant Attorney General, and Noel J. Francisco, of the District of Columbia, to be Solicitor General of the United States, who was introduced by Senator Cruz, all of the Department of Justice, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

The House was not in session today. The House is scheduled to meet in a Pro Forma session at 2 p.m. on Thursday, May 11, 2017.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 11, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: to hold hearings to examine pesticide registration under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, focusing on providing stakeholders with certainty through the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act, 9:30 a.m., SR-328A.

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine reducing burden and increasing access to healthcare, focusing on improving Department of Veterans Affairs community care, 10:30 a.m., SD-124.

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine cyber policy, strategy, and organization, 9:30 a.m., SD-G50.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the status of the housing finance system after nine years of conservatorship, 10 a.m., SD-538.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: business meeting to consider S. 934, to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to revise and extend the user-fee programs for prescription drugs, medical devices, generic drugs, and biosimilar biological products, and S. 1028, to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a National Family Caregiving Strategy, 9:30 a.m., SD-106.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 139, to implement the use of Rapid DNA instruments to inform decisions about pretrial release or detention and their conditions, to solve and prevent violent crimes and other crimes, to exonerate the innocent, to prevent DNA analysis backlogs, S. 534, to prevent the sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities, S. 583, to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize COPS grantees to use grant funds to hire veterans as career law enforcement officers, and S. 867, to provide support for law enforcement agency efforts to protect the mental health and well-being of law enforcement officers, 10 a.m., SD-226.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Althea Coetzee, of Virginia, to be Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration, 10:30 a.m., SR-428A.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold hearings to examine worldwide threats, 10 a.m., SH-216.

Full Committee, to hold closed hearings to examine worldwide threats, 1:30 p.m., SH-219.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Thursday, May 11

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Robert Lighthizer, of Florida, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador, and vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination at approximately 11 a.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 p.m., Thursday, May 11

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: House will meet in a Pro Forma session at 2 p.m.



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