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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 17, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

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

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

LADIES IN WHITE 2017 FREEDOM AWARD

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, last night I had the honor of presenting the International Republican Institute's 2017 Freedom Award to great freedom fighters in my native homeland of Cuba, the Ladies in White, las Damas de Blanco, although my dear friend Berta Soler, the leader of the Ladies in White, was not able to be there. Why? Because the Cuban regime refused to allow her to leave the island. We were lucky enough to have one of the organization's founding members, Blanca Reyes Castanon, with us accepting the award on the group's behalf.

I have had the privilege of knowing both Blanca and Berta for so many years, and it has been an honor for me to be able to raise awareness about the brave and inspiring Ladies in White, whether I do it here from the House floor or by hosting them here in our Nation's Capital or in my district in Miami, Florida.

Each Sunday in Cuba, the Ladies in White fight for their relatives and all political prisoners in Cuba, demonstrating peacefully as they walk to church.

Yet each Sunday, Mr. Speaker, they are harassed. They are beaten. They are arrested by the regime's thugs.

As a Cuban refugee myself, fleeing the island with my parents when I was only 8 years old, I have seen how the regime has morphed and evolved its methods of repression over the years.

Its treatment of the Ladies in White is emblematic of how it treats all political dissidents, with intimidation, with harassment, with arbitrary arrests, with short-term detentions, with denying them the ability to travel, by trying to bully dissidents into silence.

It attempts to disguise its tactics of repression, trying to fly under the radar so that outside eyes are fooled or placated or feel that they can simply look the other way. But we won't, Mr. Speaker. We won't look the other way.

Despite all of the propaganda, despite all of the misguided policy over the past years, the reality is that the regime's repression is only getting worse, and dissidents like the Ladies in White are bearing the brunt of the regime's intimidation and violence.

The regime is terrified of anyone who speaks for their God-given human rights in Cuba. It wants to project an image to the outside world that the situation in Cuba is improving, but we must not be fooled, Mr. Speaker. The regime will do whatever it takes to remain in power. That is its sole desire, to remain in power. We must be clear-eyed.

We must be honest about what is really going on in Cuba. We must not be placated by the regime's lies or by those who repeat them. We must fight for the truth and show the Cuban people that they are not alone, that together we all stand in solidarity with them in the pursuit of freedom, in the pursuit of democracy and the ability to practice their religion, to live without fear of arbitrary arrests, to live without fear of torture, and finally one day to be able to choose their own leaders.

And we can start by supporting the faces of Cuba's future, the dissidents, the human rights champions, the defenders of freedom, like the brave women of the Ladies in White. They represent the true Cuba. They are Cuba's future. And it was my honor to present them with the IRI's 2017 Freedom Award last night.

Congratulations to las Damas de Blanco, the Ladies in White.

CALLING FOR IMPEACHMENT OF THE PRESIDENT

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart. I rise today with a sense of responsibility and duty to the people who have elected me, a sense of duty to this country, a sense of duty to the Constitution of the United States of America.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to call for the impeachment of the President of the United States of America for obstruction of justice. I do not do this for political purposes, Mr. Speaker. I do

this because I believe in the great ideals that this country stands for, liberty and justice for all, the notion that we should have government of the people, by the people, for the people.

I do it because, Mr. Speaker, there is a belief in this country that no one is above the law, and that includes the President of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, our democracy is at risk. Mr. Speaker, this offense has occurred before our very eyes. It is perspicuous. It is easy to understand.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a President who fired the FBI Director who was investigating the President for his connections to Russian involvement in the President's election.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about the President firing the FBI Director because he was investigating someone else. It is because the FBI Director was investigating the President himself. And after firing the Director, he went on to let us know that he considered the investigation when he fired him. And then he tweeted language that would be intimidation or a warning, an admonition, very strong, to say the very least.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow this to go unchecked. The President is not above the law. It is time for the American people to weigh in.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are a part of this democracy. This is a participatory democracy. The American people don't participate on election day only. The American people participate daily, and this is your day to act. This is your day. I am speaking to the American people. It is time for you to act. It is time for you to let us know where you stand.

I have seen a poll that indicates that a majority of those who are being polled are for impeachment. And I have seen another poll that says a plurality of those. Whether it is a majority or a plurality, let us let the American people weigh in. The American people should speak up, speak out, stand up so that we will get a sense of what the American people want.

This is not something to be taken lightly, and I do not. I think this is one of the highest callings that a Member of Congress has to address. I believe that this is where your patriotism is shown, where you demonstrate to the American people where you really stand. So I take this stand. It is a position of conscience for me. I have not talked to another person in Congress about this. Each Member of Congress has to make his or her own decision, so this is not about my encouraging other people to do things, other than the American people.

This is about my position. This is what I believe. This is where I stand. I will not be moved. The President must be impeached.

For those who do not know, impeachment does not mean that the President will be found guilty. It simply means that the House of Representatives will bring charges against the President. It is similar to an indictment but not quite the same thing.

Once a President is impeached, then the Senate can have a trial to determine the guilt or innocence of the President; whether he is guilty or not guilty, to be more specific. But the House of Representatives has a duty that it can take up, and that is of impeachment.

I stand for impeachment of the President. How can you weigh in? Well, you can contact my good friends over at Free Speech For People. At that organization, they have a petition. The petition would allow you to weigh in and become a part of the nearly 1 million people who have already said the President ought to be impeached. You can weigh in at impeachdonaldtrumpnow.org. And believe me, if a plurality of the people are saying it now, and that is the poll that I really put my emphasis on, the one that says a plurality believes that the President should be impeached, more than 40 percent, I think that can grow. I assure you, once you weigh in, American people, there will be a difference in the attitudes about this.

I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity because but for this opportunity, you might not hear my voice. I am a voice in the wilderness, but I assure you that history will vindicate me. I assure you that righteousness will prevail. I assure you that no lie can live forever, and truth crushed to Earth will rise again.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President, such as accusations that he committed an impeachable offense.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning in recognition of National Police Week and in honor of National Peace Officers Memorial Day, which was this past Monday. National Police Week was established by President Kennedy in 1962, as a day for Americans to remember police officers who lost their lives in the line of duty over the previous year.

This year's Peace Officers Memorial Day was especially somber in my district in western North Carolina as it was the first time since Shelby police officer Tim Brackeen was killed.

Officer Brackeen was a dedicated law enforcement officer who began his career with the Cleveland County Sheriff's Office and later joined the Shelby Police Department where, in 2012, he was honored as the officer of the year.

Last September, Officer Brackeen was working with his canine partner Ciko when he was killed in the line of duty, leaving behind his young wife and his 4-year-old daughter.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember Officer Brackeen and all of the officers throughout our country who serve us so diligently every day who lost their lives serving our communities. It is really important for us as Americans to thank those who put themselves in harm's way so we may live peaceful lives for our own benefit and for the benefit of our communities.

Our men and women in blue put their lives on the line each and every day to keep us safe. When shots are fired, they run toward the sound of the gun while others are running away. I thank them for their dedicated service, and I pray each day for their continued safety.

HOLDING WHITE HOUSE ACCOUNTABLE

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

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, the House of Representatives is a separate and coequal branch of government. We don't work for Donald Trump; we work for the people of this great Nation. The events of the last few months have been deeply troubling. I am trying to figure out when will my colleagues on the other side of the aisle decide that it is time to do your jobs and hold the White House accountable for its actions. When will you do your job?

Seventeen different intelligence agencies concluded that Russia interfered with our election for the purpose of helping to elect Donald Trump, but that was not enough. High-level Trump allies such as Carter Page, his foreign policy adviser; Michael Flynn, his first National Security Advisor; Jeff Sessions, his Attorney General; Paul Manafort, his campaign chairman; Michael Cohen, his personal attorney; Roger Stone, his longtime political confidant; Jared Kushner, his senior adviser and son-in-law—top Trump allies were having communications with the Russians at the same time that they were hacking into our election. But apparently, that was not enough.

□ 1015

Michael Flynn, the first National Security Advisor, was demonstrated to have had an illegal conversation with the Russian Ambassador in December of 2016. He then lied about it to the Vice President, who then delivered misleading information to the American people. But guess what. For my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, that was not enough.

The Attorney General testified under oath before Congress, and he said he had no communications with the Russians during the campaign. It was subsequently proven that he communicated with them twice at the Republican National Convention and then a few months later in his office. He either lied under oath, committed perjury, or delivered misleading information to Congress, which would be a misdemeanor. Either way, he likely committed a crime. Silence from the other side. Apparently that was not enough.

Donald Trump refuses to release his tax returns, unlike every other President since Gerald Ford, Republicans and Democrats.

What is the President hiding?

We can't figure it out. And apparently for the other side, that is not enough.

The Deputy Attorney General, Sally Yates, was fired by the President shortly after she went to the White House and revealed her suspicion that Michael Flynn may be a Russian asset. But apparently that was not enough.

The President fired Preet Bharara, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, shortly after it was publically revealed that his office was investigating one of Trump's Cabinet Secretaries and close allies at FOX News. But for my Republican colleagues on the other side of the aisle, that was not enough.

The former FBI Director revealed that the Trump campaign was under criminal investigation for possible collusion with the Russians. But for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, even that was not enough.

Then the President fires the FBI Director who is leading the investigation into his campaign after it appears he urged the FBI Director to drop the case against his buddy Michael Flynn. But even for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, that is not enough.

Mr. Speaker, there is a cloud of corruption hanging over 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. We are in the midst of a constitutional crisis. It is time for the Speaker to get his head out of the sand. It is time for House Republicans to do the right thing. Support our demand for a special prosecutor. Support our legislation for an independent commission. It is time for House Republicans to put their country ahead of their party.

SAUK RAPIDS' CITIZEN OF THE YEAR, JODI SPEICHER

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

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sauk Rapids' Citizen of the Year, Jodi Speicher.

The Sauk Rapids Chamber of Commerce started this award in 1986 to recognize individuals who have influenced the community for the better.

Jodi, a resident of Sauk Rapids over the past 15 years, is known for her many contributions to this wonderful community. Whether she is striving for economic prosperity by working with the Sauk Rapids Chamber of Commerce, fighting to end disease through her work with the Alzheimer's Association and the Walk to End Alzheimer's, helping to put on St. Cloud's Expo for Seniors, or advocating for our children by serving on the Community Education board for the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District, Jodi is always putting her community first.

It takes a very special person to dedicate so much of their time to helping and supporting others. I am proud to recognize that kind of accomplishment here today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Jodi for all she does for our community. She is truly deserving of this award. Keep up the great work.

TEACHING LIFE LESSONS THROUGH ART

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate an educator in my district who was recently named Minnesota's Middle Level Art Teacher of the Year by the Art Educators of Minnesota.

Pam Schwandt began her teaching career 31 years ago at Lincoln Elementary School for the Arts in Anoka, Minnesota, where she was a favorite teacher of one of my staffers. After 13 years in Anoka, Pam moved to Roosevelt Middle School, where she has been for the past 18 years.

While Pam recognizes that not all of her students will become artists, she believes many life lessons can be taught through art. Pam has been helping students learn how to find joy, in addition to nurturing their creative thinking and problem-solving skills through art.

Mr. Speaker, I speak for all Minnesotans when I say: Thank you, Pam.

The best teachers are the ones who go above and beyond just teaching a subject. The best teachers are the ones like Pam, who teach lessons and skills that our students will carry with them for the rest of their lives. Pam's award is well deserved.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise the strength and resolve of Forest Lake Patrol Officer Troy Meyer for not only overcoming adversity over the past 3 years, but for his amazing perseverance.

Troy has escaped death not just once, not twice, but three times by overcoming a severe brain infection, a lung infection, and a double lung transplant a year later. He also had surgery to repair a hole in his heart just 6 months after that.

Despite his challenges, Troy always moved ahead, determined to live life to the fullest and to help as many people as possible. He has done that by returning to his job on the police force only 13 months after his third surgery.

Mr. Speaker, Officer Meyer is an example of the resiliency of the human spirit. We are so thankful that he has made a full and miraculous recovery. Forest Lake, the police department, and the State of Minnesota are fortunate to have an individual like Troy Meyer in our community.

SERVING TO SERVE OTHERS

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend several police officers in my district for receiving the U.S. Department of Defense's Patriot Award.

Police Chief Todd Schwieger and Police Reserve Captain Richard Johnson both received the distinguished Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's Patriot Award for their efforts helping an Active-Duty soldier work in their department while continuing his service to our country through the Army Reserve.

Created in 1972, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve was created to help employers understand the obligations of their Active-Duty employees and how to meet any challenges that may arise for those employees.

St. Francis Reserve Officer and Army Reserve Staff Sergeant Richard Sieber, whom they had been helping, nominated Chief Schwieger and Captain Johnson for this award. Serving in our Nation's Armed Forces is one of the most noble ways one can assist our Nation, and it is imperative that we help the brave individuals who choose to serve our country in any way that we can.

Mr. Speaker, I thank both Todd Schwieger and Richard Johnson for their dedication to our servicemembers, as well as their own service to our community through their work in the St. Francis Police Department. Their work hasn't gone unnoticed.

WE CANNOT ''LET THIS GO''

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, this is a very troubling time in American history. Our national security is endangered, the very future of our democracy is at stake, and without the continued engagement of millions of people across this country, this troubling time could become much worse.

There is an old adage: ''Loose lips sink ships.'' But it is also true that when it comes to the abuse of Presidential power, sealed lips can sink a democracy.

We have gone through a period where it would appear that some of our Republican colleagues are in a witness protection program because they have been unable to come forward with any words to comment on the continued abuse of power that we see played out each day, with one being more incredible than the one before.

All United States intelligence services agree that the Russians interfered in our last election. Russia deserves sanctions, not secrets, not rewards. A President of the United States invited Putin's gang right into the Oval Office. We don't know what they left behind to listen to the rest of the conversations, although they may not need to learn them surreptitiously since President Trump, in such a cavalier way, proceeded to share secrets with them.

At long last we wonder, what will awaken these Republicans from their partisan stupor? We need them to speak out as well.

Last night we learned that Trump asked FBI Director James Comey, before firing him, to drop the investigation into National Security Advisor

Michael Flynn, whom Trump had been advised before he fired him that he was subject to being compromised by the Russians in his operations.

Our Republican colleagues need to decide whether they want to be accessories to Trump's obstruction of justice as he continues to endanger our national security.

Trump's firing of Director Comey is a shocking example of incredible duplicity that threatens the very fabric of the future of American democracy. It is a Nixonian dismissal that is designed to obstruct further inquiry into collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia.

Trump even said himself during his NBC interview with Lester Holt that, ''regardless of the recommendation from the Department of Justice,'' he was prepared and planning to fire the FBI Director because of what he was doing with the Russian investigation.

And that is part of a pattern: he fired the U.S. Attorney in New York City, he fired Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates, and he then fired Mr. Comey. If you are perceived as crossing the line with President Trump, it is like an episode out of that old TV series ''The Apprentice:'' You are fired.

But this is not make-believe. This is the future of American democracy.

Every day we hear new coverup evidence. What could possibly explain the continued Republican silence, the callous indifference?

Well, Trump is the Republican's golden ticket to denying healthcare coverage to 24 million Americans and, at the same time, already showering, with a bill passed in this House, almost $1 trillion of tax breaks to the superrich and a handful of special interests.

He is their winning ticket to awarding multinational tax dodgers more tax breaks while blowing a hole in the deficit that can change Medicare and Social Security forever.

Trump reportedly told Comey: ''I hope you can let this go.''

My fellow Americans, FBI Director Comey could not let it go; and now that he is gone. We cannot let this go. This is not business as usual. This is not just more tax breaks for the superrich, as Republicans are urging at a hearing tomorrow in this House. We cannot let this go.

History will be unkind to those who could not find their voice at this critical time in American history. I say it is time to truly put America first. Reject Putin. Reject partisanship. Help restore confidence in our democracy by supporting an independent special counsel and the type of independent, nonpartisan, nonpolitical inquiry that I have been calling for since last November into this Russian interference.

Mr. Speaker, too much is at stake to remain silent. We must join together to address this challenge to our future.

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

TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of our Nation's teachers. Teachers change lives every day across our Nation and around the world, shaping our students and our communities.

Each of us can remember a teacher who made an impression on our life as an educator, a coach, or a mentor, often beyond the walls of the classroom.

Last week, in honor of Teacher Appreciation Week 2017, I had the opportunity to travel the Eighth District to see firsthand the amazing work that teachers do across Bucks and Montgomery Counties.

Throughout the week, I had the opportunity to read to preschool students at the Elbow Lane School in Warrington to discuss our national debt with eighth graders in Newtown Middle School, marked the Sanctuary Model accreditation of the Valley Day School in Morrisville, and held a student townhall with the AP government class students at Bensalem High School.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Teacher Appreciation Week, and I call on every American to carry out that appreciation for our teachers all year long.

□ 1030

MY CONSTITUENTS DESERVE ANSWERS

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because this week marks the 1-year anniversary since the EPA established the health advisory level of 70 parts per trillion to limit the lifetime exposure to perfluorinated compounds like PFOA and PFOS.

To some, these acronyms and this anniversary may mean nothing, but to me and my constituents—more than 70,000 Pennsylvanians in Bucks and Montgomery Counties—it has been a year of confusion, concern, and anger sparked by the rightful fear that their health has been endangered by these PFCs.

The use of firefighting foam at military bases in and around our district has contaminated dozens of public wells and over 140 private wells with these compounds, leaving many residents scared and municipalities and local governments looking for answers.

Mr. Speaker, every American deserves access to clean, safe drinking water. Yet, for too many of my constituents, these elevated levels of PFCs have put them and their families at risk.

While work has been done, there is still far more work to do; and I am pleased that the recent government funding measure included directions for the Secretary of Defense to continue addressing these pressing issues, specifically by requiring all military services to establish procedures for prompt and cost-effective remediation of PFC contamination, and also by delivering a report to Congress by the end of the summer assessing the number of military installations across the country impacted and the effect on drinking water in the surrounding communities, as well as department-wide plans for community notification of contamination and procedures for timely remediation.

However, our work cannot stop here. Not only should a health study be executed to know if PFOS and PFOA have compromised my constituents' long-term health, other issues must be addressed, including interacting with the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding service-connected condition care for military veterans potentially impacted and finding ways to offset trickle-down costs for those forced to connect to public water in impacted areas.

After a year, my constituents deserve more answers, and we will give them to them. They demand action. I will fight for both.

QUESTIONS FOR PRESIDENT TRUMP

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, let me raise several questions for President Donald Trump. The American people and Members of Congress would like to know the answers.

I am deeply concerned the President is compromising the national security of our Nation. Why would a President share intelligence information with the highest ranking operatives of Russia close to President Vladimir Putin?

Though the President's cavalier and, frankly, outrageous behavior conveniently sucked up the airwaves last week, Americans cannot be distracted from his simultaneous firing of FBI Director James Comey, an official who spent his life protecting and defending the Constitution of our country on liberty's behalf.

Let me ask: Why were no U.S. journalists allowed into the President's historic meeting with the Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and Russia's Ambassador to the United States for many years, Ambassador Kislyak, one of probably the highest ranking intelligence officers as well as Ambassador from Russia to the United States? To my knowledge, no U.S. President has ever received officials from Russia in the Oval Office and then brought only Russian journalists with digital recording equipment into that office. Let me repeat that. We don't know who they were, but they brought equipment, digital recording equipment.

Think about that. Think about that.

Meanwhile, the President excluded American press. Not a single journalist from this country was allowed in. He replaced them with Russian state media operatives. Today, CNN reports that, how conveniently, President Vladimir Putin has now said he will

make available to America the transcript of that meeting. He is willing to share it. Well, isn't that nice?

It is further alarming that his National Security Advisor, General McMaster, said that, despite the President being unaware of the source of the information, at that meeting he made a spur-of-the-moment decision to tell the Russians what he knew about very important intelligence we received from an ally.

It is starting to pile up, Mr. President: more and more reckless and cavalier behavior every day with America's security stakes very high.

I don't have to remind my colleagues, it is on the record. Russia has been buzzing into U.S. airspace over Alaska. Her submarines are along the East Coast. This isn't exactly a friend to us. If you want to make America great again, you do not compromise America's national security.

Not only is the President struggling for a coherent foreign policy that keeps Americans safe and secure and doesn't make our allies quizzical, he fails to keep his attention on promises to working Americans here on home turf, particularly on trade and jobs. Let's take the promises he made to our steelworkers in Ohio, that they will not lose their jobs, that America will be great again, that the coalfields will just boom; right?

Well, in Lorain, Ohio, thousands of steelworkers are losing their jobs, with hundreds more, as I stand here today, being pink-slipped and getting termination notices unless the President takes action by the end of the first week in June. This is not the only community in America facing this, but it is not getting any publicity because all this other stuff is all over the front pages.

We know we need direct and immediate action to save America's steel industry that has been dumped on by Chinese, Russian, and South Korean steel for years now. We need to stop foreign-dumped steel. These workers' jobs are directly impacted by what is happening at our borders with all that stuff coming in here.

I have invited the President and his Commerce Secretary, Wilbur Ross, to Lorain, Ohio, to witness firsthand this unfolding tragedy. Well, no promises are firm yet, not getting any acceptances while our workers need to be thrown a life raft in the typhoon that they are enduring. Perhaps it is hard to make America great again if you are moving from one self-made crisis to another and losing attention on the homeland.

Lorain County carried for Hillary Clinton, but only by 104 votes. It is a Democratic county. They were hoping jobs might actually begin to be increased in that area, not zeroed out.

So let's recap: a roller coaster foreign policy confusing not just us, but our allies, and broken promises regarding jobs.

How about healthcare? Well, let's take this—more confusion.

We can be certain TrumpCare removes—removes—protections for our seniors and does not address the rising costs of medications. His bill will take away assistance that closed the Medicare prescription drug hole after seniors reach a level of $2,500, costing them over $1,000 more a year.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve security, they deserve jobs, they deserve affordable education, and there is no better time to start than today.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HELPS VETERANS

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

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, too many men and women who have served our Nation in uniform find themselves without stable, secure housing. Statistics show a veteran is almost twice as likely as a civilian to experience homelessness.

I rise today to recognize the work the Huntington, West Virginia, Area Habitat for Humanity is doing to reduce veterans' homelessness thanks to its Veterans Housing Initiative. Because of this Habitat initiative and support from the Huntington VA Medical Center's Homeless Veterans Resource Center, veterans can now make down payments and complete volunteer hours to buy their homes.

I recently toured some of the homes built through this program in the historic Fairfield neighborhood in my hometown of Huntington. So far, 10 homes have been built, and 5 are now called home by veterans and their families.

The housing not only helps veterans, but it also helps the community. These homes will help revitalize the neighborhood, an area filled with possibilities. It also frees up more housing for other veterans in need. As a veteran moves into one of these homes, his or her previous rental or apartment or room is now available to someone else in need.

I am grateful to all the Habitat volunteers and staff who are part of this life-changing project. Thank you for what you are doing to give back to those who gave so much for our Nation. Veterans in Huntington now have a brighter future and a path to homeownership.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

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

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and May 14 through 20 as National Police Week. I stand in support of those who put their lives on the line day in and day out for the protection of those within the State of Nebraska and all over the United States.

My district is home to two sheriff's offices, a large urban police force, numerous community police departments, the Nebraska State Patrol, and a handful of Federal agencies. They have unique differences in their responsibilities, yet they are strikingly similar in how they function. The different shapes of the badges they wear on their chests proudly proclaim their distinct alliance to their home agency, but it is also a symbol that binds them all together into one brotherhood.

These gallant law enforcement professionals are driven to serve the public of their jurisdictions. They protect the life, limb, and property in their assigned patrol areas during their long hours for which they have this solemn duty. To those on the front line of our safety, it is not about the pay, the hours, or the conditions they work in. What is of importance to them is the satisfaction of making the world a better and safer place. They are the thin blue line that stands between us and some of the darkest parts of our society.

When one of these brave individuals puts on the uniform and departs their home for the streets, they are not worried about their own safety. They know their fellow officer has their back when needed. At great personal sacrifice, they are pained by missing the baseball games or recitals of beloved children, the birthdays and the holidays that they have worked instead of being home with their family.

I, like so many other members of the military, have a very personal connection and appreciation for those who choose this profession. I spent nearly 30 years in the military, and much of that time was deployed with combat forces protecting our freedoms overseas. The men and women in the military uniform depend on those back home in the blue uniform.

Like so many others in the military, when I was overseas, I left my wife and children in the U.S. As a five-time former commander, I can tell you that the fastest way to negatively affect a soldier, sailor, airman, or marine within a combat situation was to have them worry about their family back home. Our great police officers allow the military to be a success. I am in awe of the dedication that each officer displays daily. When our military is reunited with their family after a deployment, they can relax knowing their fellow public servants provide a shield of protection.

This is a profession that takes a different type of individual: someone who is consistently putting their life on the line, someone that I have always looked up to, and a group of individuals that I cannot thank enough for the blanket of security they provide.

There are members of the law enforcement community who serve, retire, and move on with their lives. Eventually they go home, lay down their badge in retirement, but they will no longer miss those family functions and events. These professionals have the gratitude of the constituents of my

district, and I want to thank them for their dedication to protect and serve.

I would like to honor some of these courageous people who have long, distinguished careers or who have recently retired: Sergeant Joe Eaton from the Sarpy County Sheriff's Office, 38 years and retired; Sergeant Troy Kister, Omaha Police Department, 29 years and retired; Captain Kevin Pokorny, LaVista Police Department, 32 years and retired; Deputy Stephanie Squiers, Sarpy County Sheriff's Office, 32 years and retired; Sergeant Don Voss, Sarpy County Sheriff's Office, 39 years and will soon retire; Deputy Dennis Yeaman, Douglas County Sheriff's Office, 42 years and still serving, nearing retirement.

I want to thank these officers and all others for their service and sacrifice.

□ 1045

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I am often asked, as a 30-year, retired military officer, to pay tribute to our law enforcement and to compare. And what strikes me is I used to operate or train in the safety of home, but we would deploy into harm's way. Our law enforcement, every single day, put themselves in harm's way. So we love our law enforcement, we respect them, and we thank them.

REMEMBERING AND HONORING ENDY EKPANYA

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, as National Police Week ends, the 800,000 Texans I work for back home want to say ''thank you'' to all of the Americans who came to Washington, D.C., and all those that rose up in hometowns all across America to support our police officers—our sheriffs, our JPs, our consuls—and to join our heroes on that thin blue line.

In Pearland, Texas, we want to thank all Americans for remembering and honoring one of our own: Pearland Police Officer Endy Ekpanya. In 2016, 145 police officers were killed all across America. Endy, sadly, joined that group.

Endy was killed at 3:15 in the morning on Sunday, June 12, 2016, end of watch, 339 days ago. He was killed on a nonemergency call by a driver who was high on drugs or booze. She T-boned his car. He was 30 young years old.

Endy left behind the love of his life, his fiance, Lucy, and his 2-year-old son, Julian. They mourned in front of Endy's flag-draped coffin at his service back home the week of his death.

Endy's loss brought out the best in Pearland, Brazoria County, in southeast Texas. They shared tears with Lucy and Julian. They swarmed them with love. Every single Pearland police officer left duty on that day to be there, but Pearland was protected by police officers all over southeast Texas rising to the occasion.

We continue working to ensure the woman who killed Endy goes to prison for a long time. The people of Pearland are building a memorial at their police station with Endy's life on one wall. He will be there with two others who lost their lives in Pearland, Texas: Officer Henry Wendell, Jr., end of watch, November 6, 1967; and Officer James Cassidy, Jr., end of watch, May 16, 1973.

I have kept up with Lucy. The last time we talked was early January. I called to tell her that the entire Texas House delegation—36 strong, Republicans and Democrats—signed my bill to name the post office in Pearland after Endy. She was happy, but she still felt pain. That was the first Christmas back home with Endy's parents in New York.

Sadly, losses like Endy are still happening. This week, we learned that a deputy sheriff in Montana was shot and killed during a routine traffic stop; and a police chief was shot in response to a domestic violence incident in upstate New York. And that was just yesterday. This violence against our law enforcement officials must end.

During National Police Week, we honor these heroes, the ones we have lost, and we say a humble ''thank you'' to their families. We will never, ever forget their sacrifice. We pray for the day that Lucy and Julian can join Endy in Heaven. God bless Endy Ekpanya and all of the heroes who gave their lives on duty.

HONORING PETER CYBULSKI AND HAMEED ARMANI

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

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, many Americans, when faced with that split-second decision to act in a crisis with selfless valor, or to flee, answer the call of duty in service to their fellow man.

In June 2016, NYPD Officers Peter Cybulski and Hameed Armani, both of whom I had the privilege to meet last month, were on patrol in Times Square when a suspected bomb was thrown into their vehicle. Rather than vacating their vehicle in place, these officers selflessly drove their car one-and-a-half blocks away from the public in a crowded Times Square.

In that moment, when others might have simply fled the scene to save their own lives, Officers Cybulski and Armani were prepared to sacrifice everything to save the people they were sworn to protect. This selfless act of bravery is just one of so many acts of heroism by our police officers every single day.

This week is National Police Week, where we honor our members of law enforcement and remember the sacrifices of those who have lost their lives in the line of duty. The brave men and women protecting our communities deserve recognition for their selfless acts of courage and commitment to serving our Union.

This special week began in 1962, when President John F. Kennedy signed a proclamation which designated May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day. Every year, the week on which that date falls is designated as National Police Week. Since then, thousands of our officers and their families from all across our great Nation come to Washington, D.C., during this week to be recognized for their selfless duty and to honor those who have fallen in service to their community.

I have always believed that our Nation has a perennial obligation to provide our police officers with every ounce of support that we have to offer. These heroes deserve to know that the people of this Nation, for whom they have given so much, are forever grateful. It really is the least that we can do for these brave men and women.

As a Member of Congress, I have committed myself to ensuring law enforcement is given all of the support necessary, and more, to carry out their selfless mission. Last year, around this time, we passed five key pieces of legislation which both honor our police and ensure those still serving possess the tools and equipment needed to carry out this responsibility.

Some of these bills included the Fallen Heroes Flag Act of 2016, the Federal Law Enforcement Self-Defense and Protection Act, and the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program and Reauthorization Act. And again this year, this week, we are doing the same: passing legislation to protect our law enforcement who sacrifice so much to protect us.

In recent years, our Nation has become fractured, and our police have been subject to acts of violence and hatred. It is more important now than ever before that law enforcement receives our unwavering appreciation, support, and respect. Courage, leadership, and a commitment to service, these are the qualities embedded within our members of law enforcement, the traits by which they uphold deeply with dignity and honor.

This week, and every week, it is so important to honor those who have put themselves into harm's way to protect us, our families, and our communities. Their sacrifices will, and should, be revered for generations to come.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 54 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

Rabbi Thomas A. Louchheim, Congregation Or Chadash, Tucson, Arizona, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, each day raise up these good women and men who are serving our country with honor. Renew in them the faith, hope, and love that brought them to this vital work. Rekindle in them the passion that first called them to serve.

May you, our elected Representatives from every State in our great Nation, be granted today the courage of your convictions; and may your eyes, your ears, and your hearts be open to the possibilities not yet imagined.

Compassionate God, may our fellow Americans remember that these, Your servants, are each made in the divine image. They are our brothers and sisters in a family bridging all philosophical lines. May we treat them with respect, for we know not the hard battles they must fight.

May Your blessings be on our military and diplomats serving overseas. Keep them safe from harm. Keep their souls strong, and strengthen them to serve with honor and courage.

May our prayers for kindness, justice, freedom, and peace, be answered in our own day.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. WILLIAMS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

WELCOMING RABBI THOMAS A. LOUCCHEIM

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Rabbi Thomas Louccheim, who led us in the opening prayer. He is a rabbi at the Congregation Or Chadash in Tucson, Arizona. Rabbi Louccheim moved to Tucson with his wife, Marcia, in 1989 and has been a pillar in our community ever since.

Having served as a rabbi at Temple Emanu-El and as an executive for Handmaker Hospice, he is a strong advocate for peace and religious harmony. He worked closely with the Muslim community in the aftermath of September 11 and has continued to promote understanding by organizing annual Muslim-Jewish peace walks.

He founded the first Jewish-Christian-Muslim Scriptural study group in our community and has contributed to interfaith literature. In a world where religion too often divides us, Rabbi Louccheim has shown that we are all stronger together.

Rabbi Louchheim's influence extends past southeastern Arizona. In fact, his influence reaches beyond this Earth. The rabbi is a namesake for the only space object in the universe named after a rabbi, Asteroid 9584 Louccheim.

I was honored to join Rabbi Louccheim in a Holocaust Remembrance walk last year. I have personally witnessed his compassion and leadership in the faith community in southeastern Arizona. I am honored to welcome him to the House of Representatives today and to personally thank him for offering this morning's prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand before the House today to recognize National Police Week.

Every year at this time, law enforcement officials from around the country gather here to pay tribute to their fallen brethren and to stand with their families. It is yet another measure of their commitment to protect and serve.

Over just this last year, four of Wisconsin's finest have lost their lives in the line of duty: Trooper Anthony Borostowski of the Wisconsin State Patrol; Deputy Dan Glaze of the Rusk County Sheriff's Office; Officer Michael Venture of the Town of Salem's Department of Public Safety; Detective Jason Weiland of the Everest Metropolitan Police Department.

Earlier this year, Detective Weiland was killed establishing a perimeter during a standoff with a shooter who took the lives of three people. Jason left behind a wife and two children.

Anna, his daughter, almost 11 years old, spoke at the funeral: ''Our dad was an amazing man that saved lives every day,'' she said. ''We all know he is always and will be forever in our hearts. He'll be looking down on us, laughing and crying.''

Looking down that day, Anna's dad saw some remarkable things: He saw thousands of people, many of whom he had never met, lined up to pay their respects; he saw cops in uniform from all over the country, from New York, Chicago, Oregon, and Canada; he saw mourners and even pallbearers in green and gold to honor his love of the Green Bay Packers; and he saw blue ribbons everywhere.

In a time when law enforcement is targeted and too often politicized, we must never take for granted the dangers that they face. Every day and every night, they leave their homes and their families to protect ours. They put their lives on the line to protect ours.

For their loved ones, all they hope for, all they pray for, is to hear the car pull into the driveway and see that familiar face come through the door.

And when the unspeakable happens, when their watch is cut short, ours is only beginning. The support that we give to their families, the respect and the appreciation we show for their fellow officers—it is the least we can do as citizens, and must do, this week and every week.

Today I ask the whole House to join me in expressing our profound gratitude to law enforcement officers here in the Capital and across the Nation.

CELEBRATING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF REUNIFICATION OF JERUSALEM

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

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce bipartisan H. Res. 328 with my colleague from Florida, FRANCIS ROONEY, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem.

For centuries, the Jewish people yearned to pray at the Western Wall, the only remaining connection to the Great Temple destroyed in 70 A.D., a cry that infused their daily prayers.

Fifty years ago, in 1967, this mere hope became a reality when Jerusalem was finally reunified at the conclusion of the Six-Day War.

Of that precious moment, Yitzhak Rabin recounted: ''We stood among a tangle of rugged, battle-weary men who were unable to believe their eyes or restrain their emotions. Their eyes were moist with tears, their speech incoherent. The overwhelming desire was to cling to the Wall, to hold on to that great moment as long as possible.''

The reunification of Jerusalem restored the city as a beacon of religious freedom for all of the Abrahamic religions and the rights of Jews, Muslims, and Christians to pray at their respective holy sites.

We share the joy of our brothers and sisters as we celebrate this special milestone and as we continue to strive for a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians. In a world of increasing instability, our enduring relationship with Israel was never more

vital, and I am honored to stand with our close friend and ally.

HONORING BRANCH COUNTY SHERIFF POSSE DEPUTY MICHAEL WINTER

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember Branch County, Michigan, Sheriff Posse Deputy Michael Winter, who lost his life in the line of duty. He is survived by his wife, Connie, and two daughters, Cheyenne and Sierra.

Deputy Winter was known as a committed family man with a sense of humor and a big smile. He loved being around horses and loved the posse.

From his time in the United States Navy to the Branch County Sheriff's Posse, Deputy Winter was the type of person who put his community and country before himself. He is a hero in every sense of the word.

This week, during National Police Week, his name was carved into the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial here in Washington, D.C. It is a lasting tribute to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice to protect us.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of a grateful nation, we honor Deputy Winter's memory and his service to Branch County and our country. He will not be forgotten.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SHOULD APPOINT AN INDEPENDENT PROSECUTOR

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

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, last night we learned that President Trump may have tried to interfere with an ongoing investigation, asking the FBI Director to end an investigation into his former National Security Adviser's ties to Russia.

The Justice Department today should appoint an independent prosecutor to aggressively pursue the truth. There are a lot of informational dots. They either connect or they don't.

There is no dispute that Russia interfered with the United States' Presidential election. The question is: Did Russia interfere with the Presidential election in coordination with the Trump campaign?

It is deeply troubling that the Attorney General recused himself—a self-declared conflict—from the Russian investigation and then played a role in firing the man leading it.

The American people rightfully suspect the decision to fire the FBI Director is part of a coverup. Appoint a special prosecutor to pursue the truth.

Despots all over the world like Putin want to discredit American democracy to keep their own people from wanting it. We as Americans, Republicans and Democrats all, cannot allow this to happen, ever.

RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

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

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of law enforcement not only in my district, but around the Nation.

This week is National Police Week, and it marks an important time for our country. These men and women are an elite group worthy of our praise and recognition. They are true American patriots whose acts of courage must be honored and acknowledged.

Too many heroes lost their lives in the line of duty last year. Multiple of them were in my home State of Texas, as well as in my district.

Every single day, Federal, State, and local police officers around the country put their lives on the line to protect their fellow Americans. Mr. Speaker, I came up here to speak on behalf of all Americans and express our appreciation for our law enforcement. These are the men and women who dedicate their lives to keeping the peace and carrying out justice.

Congress has worked and will continue to work hard to guarantee that these brave men and women are provided with the tools needed to do their jobs and maintain public safety. We will also remain persistent to ensure those who harm law enforcement officers are brought to justice.

I applaud those in law enforcement who have voluntarily put their lives on the line for all of us.

In God we trust.

IT IS TIME TO PUT COUNTRY BEFORE PARTY

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, it seems like, with this White House, there is a new crisis every single day.

On Monday, it was reported that the President revealed classified information in the Oval Office to Russians, compromising our national security, compromising our ability to gather intelligence on ISIS, compromising our ability to keep America safe.

Now we learn that the President tried to interfere with an ongoing investigation, asking the head of the FBI to lay off his National Security Adviser, Mr. Flynn, to leave it alone, to let it go.

This is an abuse of power, there is no two ways about it, and Democrats and Republicans have to stand up and do our constitutional duty to protect this democracy. Partisanship has to be set aside. We have to do our job. We have to serve the American people, and we have to protect this precious democracy and do our constitutional duty. Democrats and Republicans both have to stand together on this.

We need an independent commission to investigate this problem, and we need to do it now.

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

HONORING KIRKERSVILLE POLICE CHIEF STEVEN DiSARIO

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

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, this week is Police Week, a time we honor all our officers, especially those who have fallen in the line of duty keeping us safe. So today I rise in honor and remember Kirkersville, Ohio, Police Chief Steven DiSario.

Chief DiSario, a father of six with a baby on the way, was killed in the line of duty on May 12, 2017. He died at the hands of a gunman who also killed two employees at a local nursing home, Marlina Medrano and Cindy Krantz.

This is a tragedy that truly tests the strength of a community, the strength of neighbors, and the strength of our law enforcement community.

To Chief DiSario's family: I can't imagine the grief and the anguish you must be feeling. We are heartbroken for your loss. Please know that your husband, your father, your son, was an American hero. His memory will never be forgotten, and it is there that I pray you find hope. Today and every day, may God bless you and all our police officers and their families.

□ 1215

AMERICA'S DRINKING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call urgent attention to America's drinking water infrastructure. Every day, more than 700 water mains break in cities, towns, and villages across our great country. Every day, 7 billion gallons of clean drinking water are lost due to leaks and breaks in our water infrastructure. That is treated water and our tax dollars down the drain.

With as many as 10 million lead service lines in use today and dozens of new unregulated contaminants, the threat to public health goes far beyond Flint, Michigan, and Hoosick Falls, New York. Our Federal Government has a duty to protect the people of this country. We must act decisively to address this growing challenge.

We maintain roads and bridges and ports and railways and so much more, but our investment in our water systems has not kept up, and now these systems are failing. Many State and local governments can't keep up. They

need our help. This job needs to get done now, this year, in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you to join me in supporting H.R. 1071, the AQUA Act. Let's respond to these great Nation's drinking water challenges with strength, compassion, and passion.

IVY FRANCES SHOEMAKER AKA NUMBER 12

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, she was born at evening time as a full Moon rose over Texas. Ivy Frances Shoemaker joined the world weighing 7 pounds and was 20 inches long. Her birth was on May 9 in Dallas.

The miracle of birth is God's blessing to the rest of us. It is a blessing to Ivy's parents, Kellee and Anthony, and her sisters, Olivia and Rosalyn.

Ivy, of course, is a beautiful, smart-looking baby. She has the privilege to be born to wonderful parents who will raise her to grow in widsom and stature in the Lord.

My wife, Carol, and I are the proud grandparents of Ivy, whom I will call from time to time, number 12.

Mr. Speaker, you see, I refer to my other grandchildren by their birth numbers as well. There are 11 of them.

My hope for Ivy is that she sees the importance of being good to others; that she makes the world a better place; that she is faithful to the Lord; that she appreciates her heritage; and that, of course, she always lives in Texas.

And that is just the way it is.

THE OPIOID CRISIS

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, our Nation is in the middle of a public health crisis. Drug overdoses are now killing more Americans each year than car accidents. And 336 Rhode Islanders died last year as a result of a drug overdose. That is up from 290 in 2015 and 238 deaths in 2014.

Nationwide, overdose deaths involving prescription and illicit opioids have quadrupled since 1999. This is a crisis that threatens Americans of all different backgrounds—young and old, Black and White, urban and rural. It is a crisis, plain and simple.

All of us who serve the government have a responsibility to stop it. That is why I was so alarmed earlier this month when I learned that President Trump is considering slashing funding for the Office of National Drug Control Policy by 95 percent. Slashing funding for the lead Federal agency in this fight would have a devastating impact on families in Rhode Island and all across our country.

Let's work together. Let's work across the aisle, Democrats and Republicans, to defeat this short-sighted proposal and, instead, advance real, comprehensive solutions to this public health epidemic.

THE UNITED STATES AND TAIWAN

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the mutual relationship between the United States and Taiwan—enshrined in the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 and reinforced by the Six Assurances of 1982—has endured, due to our shared beliefs in democratic government, freedom of expression, the rule of law, and a market economy.

It is my hope that this relationship will continue to deepen and strengthen in all areas. I hope the Trump administration will move expeditiously with a military sales package that will help to guarantee Taiwan's security and freedom for the future.

The people of Taiwan have great friends in the people of the United States. I know many of my colleagues will join me in expressing our shared desire to work together with our friends on the old and new challenges that Taiwan faces.

Mr. Speaker, I wish President Tsai and the people of Taiwan all the best on their first anniversary of her administration.

HONORING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

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

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is National Police Week, and I rise to honor law enforcement officials who protect our communities. I also pay tribute to the thousands of men and women who have died in the line of duty. There are few jobs more important or more perilous than that of a police officer.

Since I took office in January, there have been at least four incidents in or near my central Florida district where a police office was shot. In one of those cases, an officer, Orlando Police Lieutenant Debra Clayton, lost her life.

Because they run towards danger, police officers face unimaginable challenges. Last June, an armed attacker entered the Pulse nightclub in Orlando and opened fire, killing 49 people. Showing no regard for their own safety, Orlando officers charged into the club, eventually bringing that long, dark night to an end.

Mr. Speaker, despite the risks, they put on their uniforms every day. So to all the brave officers around this country, I say: Thank you.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

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

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Police Week, a time to honor and thank law enforcement officers for all they do in service to our communities.

As a former State and Federal prosecutor, I have worked with law enforcement officers at every level: local, State, and Federal. I watched as they tirelessly worked to carry out justice and keep our communities safe.

As a Member of Congress, I have the privilege of representing a district that is both rural and urban. I have seen the different challenges that our officers have faced. They have done it in a tremendous way, both at the local police level and at the sheriff level. The work and effort put in by the officers in each community never ceases to amaze me. It is a big reason why our district has continued to thrive with vibrant and safe communities.

This work does not come without its risks. Far too many officers pay the ultimate price. Last year in South Jacksonville, Illinois, in my district, one of its own was killed in the line of duty. Losses like this are devastating for both the families and our communities. We must never forget their sacrifices and we must continue to work to keep our officers protected.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the work the House is doing this week to do just that. I thank every law enforcement officer for their commitment and dedication towards keeping America safe.

OUR WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, today we are talking about infrastructure. I want to focus on one aspect of infrastructure that touches the lives of all Americans, especially in my home State of California, and that is water.

I know firsthand the urgent challenges facing our water infrastructure. The crippling recent drought and subsequent record rainfall has prompted more discussion on a need for a smart water management strategy to improve drinking water, water reuse, and recycled water systems for communities across the United States.

We must take meaningful steps to increase our water conservation, reduce unnecessary energy use, and cut costs for Americans. Let's commit to investing in technology and science-based solutions that will address the weaknesses in our water drinking systems from threats like climate change, crumbling pipes, and water source contamination.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to focus on legislation that will put Americans back to work building the systems we need to support the future of this great country.

NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE WEEK

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

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in celebrating the fifth annual National Infrastructure Week and to highlight the urgent need for Congress to pass a comprehensive transportation and infrastructure bill.

Mr. Speaker, in the summer of 2003, a power outage swamped the Eastern United States and Canada, including Detroit, which I represent, and left 50 million people without power for several days.

In 2007, a bridge on I–35 West in Minneapolis collapsed into the Mississippi River. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, these are not isolated incidents.

In my home State of Michigan, our cities are home to some of the worst roads in the country. A recent study by a nonprofit ranked Detroit's roads the fourth worst in the country.

Mr. Speaker, Michigan deserves better, and Americans across the country deserve and demand more. I, as an excited member of the Congressional Infrastructure Committee, stand ready to work on future infrastructure bills and to work for the needs of the people.

FOCUSING ON OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, on the first day of this month, President Trump promised an infrastructure package ''in the next 2 to 3 weeks, maybe sooner.''

Here we are into week three and in the middle of National Infrastructure Week. So, Mr. President, where is the plan?

I wish we were spending today working together to create jobs by making meaningful investments in our roads, our bridges, our rail, and our airports. That is what the hardworking men and women I represent wish Washington would focus on, too. But, instead, at breakfast tables all over the country, moms and dads turn on the morning news and have to explain to their kids what is an obstruction of justice before putting their kids on the school bus and traverse our bumpy and potholed roads.

This is a dark moment in our Nation's history. History demands that we rise to the occasion. Nobody is above the law, not even the President of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to do the right thing for the good of our country. Join us in demanding a true and independent investigation to get to the bottom of the President's ties to Vladimir Putin and any possible attempted coverup.

THE NEED FOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

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

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize National Infrastructure Week and to urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work together and pass a bipartisan infrastructure bill.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, we cannot run a 21st century economy on a mid-20th century infrastructure.

Our roads are filled with potholes, costing commuters, on average, $520 a year in repairs. Traffic congestion adds another $960 per year in fuel and lost productivity.

Too many of our bridges are structurally deficient and past their 50-year lifespan. As the Flint lead crisis painfully demonstrated, our water infrastructure is failing to provide too many Americans with water that is safe to drink.

It is time to stop talking about infrastructure. It is time for Congress to act. The systems that allow us to travel from place to place, provide us with clean drinking water, and dispose of waste are not luxuries; they are essentials.

Mr. Speaker, let's pass a bipartisan infrastructure plan. Let's invest in safety, jobs, and the competitiveness of American businesses.

INVESTING IN OUR NATION'S INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize National Infrastructure Week.

In my first few months in Congress, I made it a priority to meet with elected officials from every municipality and jurisdiction in my Washington State congressional district. I met with them to understand their critical transportation and infrastructure needs. Today I am releasing a report on those needs.

I am proud that my district continues to draw in more and more people and that we have assets like a natural deep water port that facilitates commerce from across our State.

Unfortunately, between 1990 and 2015, as our State's population increased by 45 percent, Seattle has now got the second worst evening rush hour traffic in the country. We have failed to invest in our infrastructure.

This administration made promises but has done nothing to actually fulfill those promises to invest in infrastructure and to ensure that our country actually moves forward. Instead, it has just been lurching from crisis to crisis.

Investing in infrastructure is not only essential, it creates jobs. I intend to do everything I can to make sure that I fight for my district's priorities and to ensure that Congress invests in our infrastructure.

□ 1230

COMPROMISING SENSITIVE INFORMATION

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

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. Speaker, I find it deeply disturbing that highly classified intelligence information from Israel, our indispensable ally, was carelessly compromised by President Trump in a meeting with Russian officials.

By recklessly sharing this sensitive intelligence, the President has not only endangered our troops, intelligence officials, and sources who risk their lives every day to keep us safe, but he has jeopardized the relationship we have with our most important ally in the Middle East, Israel.

If we wish to defeat ISIS, the President must rectify this unacceptable blunder. The American people must receive immediate assurances that this administration is doing everything necessary to repair any damage caused by the President's reckless actions.

The role of Commander in Chief is one that must be taken seriously and should never result in the compromising of our most sensitive information, especially to a foreign adversary at the expense of one of our strongest allies.

HONORING JONATHAN DE GUZMAN AND ALL OFFICERS DURING NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

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

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, every day men and women in the police force put their lives on the line to keep us safe. Let me tell you about one of these extraordinary heroes: San Diego Police Department Officer Jonathan De Guzman, or JD, as his friends knew him.

JD dedicated his life to protecting the San Diego community he loved. His bravery shows the kind of unique selflessness found in police officers. After suffering a brutal stabbing from a suspect, JD went back to the force, and that same year he won the San Diego Police Department Purple Heart award for bravery in the line of duty.

Tragically, on July 28, 2016, Officer De Guzman, a 16-year veteran of the force, was shot and killed, a hero taken from us too early.

There is a special honor in representing those who serve us every single day, those like San Diego's own JD, Officer De Guzman. Thank you to the brave men and women of our police force. Your sacrifice and your strength keep us safe.

NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE WEEK

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

Mr. CARBAJAL. Mr. Speaker, today I urge President Trump again to make good on his promise of partnering with Congress to invest $1 trillion in America's infrastructure.

This week marks National Infrastructure Week; and yet, disappointingly, little action has been taken by this President and the majority in Congress to provide substantive funds for our Nation's crumbling infrastructure. Easing congestion on our highways is just one investment that will have a significant return, getting central coast residents to their jobs and back home to their families faster.

This is also an issue of safety for our constituents. California currently has over 1,300 structurally deficient bridges, 678 high-hazard dams, and 50 percent of its nearly 200,000 miles of public roads are in poor condition.

I urge my colleagues to work together in a bipartisan way to address the infrastructure crisis in our country.

HONORING BEN AND DAN MATHESON

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

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the House's attention two fine Texans who are sitting up in the House gallery, Ben and Dan Matheson.

Ben has been on my Air Force advisory committee down in Texas for the entire 32 years that I have been in Congress. He and the other two members of that nominating committee have recommended to me over 100 young men and women whom we have nominated to the Air Force Academy and who are now serving, defending our Nation.

His son is Dan Matheson, one of my best friends, a proud graduate of the University of Texas Law School, former head of the Texas State Fed office, and a successful practicing attorney in Austin, Texas.

I am very proud to have their friendship, and I am glad to bring to the attention of the House these two fine Americans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members not to refer to persons in the gallery.

NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE WEEK

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

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, this is National Infrastructure Week; yet, at the same time, our current President promised that, as soon as he took office, he was going to put forth a trillion-dollar infrastructure package. Where is that package? We haven't seen it.

The economy is the number one thing we should all be focusing on. Everything else should fall into place after that. Yet this White House is too busy in turmoil to take care of the core business of this country.

It is actually White House crisis week again. That is a sad comment, but it is the truth. Once again we hear about a President who is not respecting the fact that we have allies around the world who are there sharing information that should not be shared with the Russians, and yet, at the same time, this President chooses to violate that responsibility.

The American people and economy are losing confidence in our President and our White House. They shouldn't be given these disturbing reports that come out almost every day. The actions are undermining our economy. It is undermining the confidence in our infrastructure, and it is undermining our confidence of the United States around the world.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 17, 2017.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on May 17, 2017, at 9:20 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 419.
That the Senate passed S. 583.
That the Senate passed S. 867.
That the Senate agreed to S.J. Res. 22.
Appointments:
Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 115, THIN BLUE LINE ACT

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 323 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 323

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 115) to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide additional aggravating factors for the imposition of the death penalty based on the status of the victim. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–17 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

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

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

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and the underlying legislation.

As a former Federal and State prosecutor, I often hear how Americans value and respect our law enforcement officers, firefighters, and first responders. We talk about their heroism, their selflessness, their willingness to protect and serve no matter the cost.

These fearless individuals truly are the fabric that holds our communities together. However, in recent years, a violent and disturbing trend has developed. Law enforcement officers, firefighters, and first responders are increasingly being targeted for violence and cruelty based solely on the uniform they wear.

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, there were 64 police shooting deaths in 2016. That number is 56 percent higher than the previous year. The National Association of Police Organizations also notes that ambush-style killings of law enforcement officers increased by 167 percent in 2016.

Allowing this appalling trend to continue unchecked is not only unacceptable, it is indefensible. Congress must take concrete steps to address this deadly problem.

Current Federal law provides 16 aggravating factors that a jury must consider when deciding whether a death sentence is warranted. These factors include whether the defendant acted in an especially heinous, cruel, or depraved manner; whether the defendant engaged in substantial planning and premeditation; whether the victim was

particularly vulnerable; whether the victim was a high public official, which includes high-ranking public persons, from the President to a foreign head of state, to a judge or a Federal law enforcement officer. However, State and local police officers, firefighters, prosecutors, and first responders are excluded from these protections.

In response, my friend, Mr. BUCHANAN, introduced H.R. 115, the Thin Blue Line Act. This legislation amends Federal law to include murdering, attempting to murder, or targeting of State and local law enforcement officers, firefighters, prosecutors, and first responders as an aggravating factor a jury must consider when determining whether a death sentence is justified. Furthermore, these protections extend to all public safety officers who are murdered or targeted while engaging in their official duties, because of the performance of their duties, or because of their status as a public official or employee.

This bill sends a clear message: Those who target our police officers, firefighters, or first responders with violence will be met with an equally harsh punishment.

We offer our thoughts and prayers to the families of our fallen officers, but we must do more to protect these brave individuals. We can't stand idly by as the individuals who protect our homes and communities are targeted because of the uniform they wear. We must act to ensure those individuals who would commit an act of violence against our public safety officers know they will face the gravest of sentences if they go through with their heinous plot.

We must send the message that Congress stands with those fearless individuals who dedicate their lives to protecting our communities, no matter the cost. We can't continue allowing them to suffer the price of our inaction. I support this effort and thank Chairman GOODLATTE and the Committee on the Judiciary for bringing this bill to the floor.

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

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank my friend, the gentleman from Colorado, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes for debate.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to debate the rule for consideration of H.R. 115, the Thin Blue Line Act.

Mr. Speaker, law enforcement and first responders play an important role in the safety and security of our communities. I know about that because of the reason that, when I was a lawyer, I had the privilege of representing a firefighters association and a police officers association.

I have represented police officers in court, and I have been in situations where I have interfaced with them as a lawyer in other circumstances. They are an invaluable resource represented by the hard work of dedicated men and women across our Nation.

Most importantly, our admiration for police officers is not a partisan issue. We universally agree that those officers who diligently work to protect our communities warrant our praise as we honor them on this National Police Week.

□ 1245

They are our friends, our neighbors, our family, and they are even our colleagues. I am honored to serve in this institution with a number of persons who, in their other activities, were either police officers or police chiefs that served in that capacity in law enforcement.

We have a new Member here from my State, my good friend, Representative VAL DEMINGS, a career law enforcement officer herself—27 years she served—serving as Orlando's first female chief of police. I have just a footnote to add to that. Val's husband is the sheriff of Orange County.

It is because of this admiration and bipartisan support that, in some respects, I was dismayed to see that, as we celebrate National Police Week, my Republican colleagues decided now was the time to bring this, in my view, unnecessary messaging bill to the floor simply to score political points.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 115 would add the murder, attempted murder, or targeting of a law enforcement official, first responder, or firefighter as an aggravating factor when determining if a death sentence is warranted for a defendant convicted of murder in Federal court.

The problem, Mr. Speaker, is this bill is unnecessary. It is, in short, really good messaging, but bad policy. Under current law, there is already an exhaustive list of 16 statutory aggravating factors for homicide for a jury or court to consider.

Having been involved in the justice system for a protracted time in my career, I am trying to think of a time that a police officer was killed and a person was tried and convicted; and I ask my colleagues to answer that question, that anybody that was convicted for killing a police officer didn't get the death penalty. I know in my State, in every instance that that occurred—and they were too numerous, and I regret that they occurred at all—all of those people got the death penalty.

We also remember that Federal prosecutors can and do seek the death penalty in the killing of law enforcement or first responders, as our friends from Massachusetts are well aware after a death sentence was handed down in the case involving the Boston Marathon bomber. And that was in Massachusetts, a nondeath penalty State.

Mr. Speaker, on this front, the system is working. Federal prosecutors already have the tools to seek the death penalty in cases where a first responder or law enforcement official was murdered. What's more, they are using these tools.

Given this duplicity, it is a shame that we are here today debating the need for a seventeenth new aggravating factor to keep members of the law enforcement community safe when we could be considering measures that would actually keep them and their communities they protect far safer.

Let's be clear. This legislation does nothing to keep law enforcement officers and first responders safe. By its own purported purpose, this bill addresses the tragic scenario in which the officer has already been killed. We need to be working together to create legislation that has a real impact on keeping our communities and police safer, as opposed to slapping a catchy name on an unnecessary bill and pretend we are doing something.

If my Republican colleagues were serious about advancing protections for law enforcement during National Police Week, we would be discussing providing them with the tools, the resources, and the training to engage in beneficial community policing initiatives. Our law enforcement officers and the communities they police deserve more than messaging. They deserve real action.

I ask one more question. Ask police officers what their attitude is about assault weapons. I think you would find that, if we passed an assault weapons measure, we would be pleasing police officers a great deal more than messaging to them our concern for their safety.

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

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, we are here because we are making sure that local police officers, sheriff's deputies, prosecutors, first responders, and firefighters have the same protections that those in the Federal system have.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON).

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, law enforcement officers across this country go to work every day to serve and protect our communities. These brave men and women risk everything to keep our communities and our families safe and secure, and they do it selflessly.

I recently attended a ceremony in Putnam County, Indiana, honoring the service and sacrifice of the Indiana State Police officers who have given their lives in the line of duty. Yesterday I was at the White House with Vice President PENCE to recognize the dedication of the Indiana Fraternal Order of Police and to remember the service of the late sheriff's deputy of Howard County, Carl Koontz, who was killed in the line of duty.

Events like these are somber reminders of what these heroes who stand on the thin blue line, and their families, sacrifice on our behalf. We should all be grateful.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation ensures that officers who fall in the line of duty, and their families, receive the justice they deserve. I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation that confirms the United States Congress stands behind our law enforcement.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and then I will yield to a speaker to speak for the previous question.

Mr. Speaker, it may sound like we are getting ready to change the subject; and, to a relative degree, we are.

We are in very interesting and troubling times in this Nation, and we have some concerns that need to be addressed. One of the things that is allowed to the minority is an opportunity to present a previous question.

In this particular instance, we are deeply concerned by last night's revelations that, earlier this year, President Trump may have attempted to obstruct justice when he asked then-FBI Director James Comey to end the Bureau's investigation of former National Security Advisor Flynn's ties to Russia. This news came only days after the President acknowledged that he later fired Director Comey over the Bureau's investigation into the links between the Trump campaign and Russia, and only a day after we learned the President shared highly classified intelligence with Russian officials last week.

I served for 8 years on the Intelligence Committee in this Congress, and the kind of information that the President shared with the Russians—even as an Intelligence member, I saw secret, I saw top secret, I saw high secret, but I did not see code word information, the highest that is only shared with a few people in the congressional body—that is what was allowed to be transmitted.

It is time that the Republican-controlled Congress does its job and acts to defend our democracy.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I am going to offer an amendment to the rule to bring up a bipartisan bill, H.R. 356, which would create a nonpartisan commission to investigate Russian interference in our 2016 election. This marks the seventh time we tried to bring this bill to the House floor. On the previous six occasions, the Republican majority regrettably refused the House to even debate this important legislation.

As more and more facts have come to light, I hope my colleagues will finally put country ahead of party and get serious about this investigation. My goodness, the allegation here is that people impacted our fundamental premise of our existence: our elections. We need to create this commission with legislation rather than just tweeting about the need for facts.

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California, (Mr. SWALWELL), a member of the Intelligence Committee of the House, to discuss our proposal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Before recognizing the gentleman from California, Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I have heard that often. Will the Speaker direct me to what I said that was anything more than what is a fact here. Can the Chair tell me what I said that was dealing with the personality of the President.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may have, perhaps not in words, but perhaps gave some indication of illegal activities by the President.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding.

I urge my colleagues to defeat the previous question and allow an amendment to come forward so that we can debate having an independent commission on Russia's interference in our past election.

The events over the past few weeks have demonstrated that there is a high cost—a cost that is too high to bear with regard to the White House and its ties with Russia.

What is the cost exactly?

What is the cost of alleged abuses and the President's firing of Acting Attorney General Sally Yates and Director James Comey?

What is the cost of the question swirling around the President's ties to Russia?

Well, the cost, clearly, with the leaking that occurred in the Oval Office, is now our national security.

The cost is our democracy has been left in ruins. It is a mess right now here in Washington.

The cost is that this House is unable to bring forward legislation to do anything to help people put food on the table, to seek to put a roof over their home, and to provide opportunity to their children.

It is a high cost that we are paying right now for all these questions. It is too much for us to bear.

The best thing we can do is to charter an independent commission to take this outside of Congress so that they can follow the facts and the evidence and report back to the American people just exactly how we were so vulnerable this last election.

What was our response?

Were any U.S. persons involved?

And, most importantly, what are we going to do?

What reforms can we make?

What awareness should we all have so that we never find ourselves in a mess like this again?

It is not disputed, Russia attacked our democracy. It was ordered by Vladimir Putin. They used a multifaceted campaign of social media trolls, the dissemination of fake news, the hacking of Democratic emails, and the breaking into State voter registration systems. They had a preferred candidate in mind in Donald Trump. And they didn't do it because they were bored. They didn't do it because they were testing software. They did it because they wanted something in return. They saw a candidate who admired their President, they wanted sanctions rolled back, and they wanted to reduce the role of NATO.

But the most disturbing and the most bone-chilling finding that the intelligence community made was that Russia intends to do it again. And by the looks of things, they will be more successful next time because, since this past attack, we have done nothing to improve the structural integrity of our elections. We have done nothing to have a frank conversation with the American people about how we all need to be more aware about what a foreign adversary's intent is when they hack emails and then disseminate fake news.

This is a time for Republicans and Democrats to unite. Democrats may have been the victim of this most recent attack. If history has its way, another adversary perhaps could attack us and Republicans may be the victim.

□ 1300

But the constant should always be that both parties say we will never tolerate foreign interference. The first step to doing that is to defeat this previous question, allow an amendment to take place so we can debate having an independent commission, a commission that would be bipartisan appointed, have a wide mandate to follow the evidence, explore all the facts, and then report to the American people recommendations so that this never happens again. We have a discharge petition right now to also do that. There are a number of names on it.

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

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

Mr. SWALWELL of California. I saw how our country responded after the last serious attack that occurred on September 11. Outside, on the Capitol steps, Republicans and Democrats joined hands. They sang ''God Bless America.'' But more importantly were the reforms that they undertook over the next few years to understand the vulnerability, to put policies in place to make sure we were never vulnerable again, and report to the American people what they had done.

We have an opportunity again to unite. Our constituents are counting on us to show that unity, to wear the same uniform, and make sure that this democracy is still one we protect.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT) to get this debate

back on track and to protect local law enforcement officials.

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I come to you, not just as a Representative from my district today but someone who served for 18 years as a Los Angeles police officer on the streets, someone who has been in uniform, at attention, at several police officer and deputy funerals as tears were rolling down my face, and looking side to side and seeing the same of my brothers and sisters in law enforcement.

I am sure that everyone who speaks today will have a story, a horrible story that affected their community. On October 5 of last year, one such story happened in our community. Sergeant Steve Owen was basically executed. He was shot from a far distance, and then the killer came up and put four more shots into him at close range to make sure that he was dead.

These are the types of things that we are seeing in our communities across this country at an alarmingly high rate over the last few years.

I think that the Thin Blue Line Act is one more of those types of issues that we can do to protect our first responders, our police officers, our firefighters, to give these people justice, to give their families justice, so I urge you to support the Thin Blue Line Act.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, would the Chair be so kind as to advise my good friend and I what amount of time remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida has 14½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Colorado has 24½ minutes remaining.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I would advise my friend that I anticipate one more speaker, but at this time I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE), chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule to consider H.R. 115, the Thin Blue Line Act, introduced by my friend and colleague from Florida, Mr. VERN BUCHANAN.

Mr. Speaker, this week, National Police Week, we take time to honor our Nation's law enforcement officers for the work they do and the sacrifices they make to keep us safe on a daily basis. It is unconscionable that law enforcement officers are being targeted and are making the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty; and this bill aims to make the killing or attempted killing of a law enforcement officer an aggravating factor for the imposition of the death penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I served for 6 years as a city commissioner and two of those as the mayor of my small town of Johnson City, Tennessee, and had the privilege of working with first responders, firemen, and police officers every day. It was a privilege to do it. I put on a scrub suit to go to work. They put on a Kevlar vest and put their lives in danger. I cannot say thank you enough to them and their families for the sacrifices that they make.

I commend my colleague on introducing this legislation and for the House considering it today. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation in honor of our law enforcement officers.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO).

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in support of H.R. 115, the Thin Blue Line Act, which will act as a deterrent against criminals who seek to harm first responders. Increasing the Federal penalties that can be imposed against those who would kill or attempt to kill policemen, firemen, or first responders is a just response to such heinous crimes.

This week is National Police Week, and I am reminded of the words etched on the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington, D.C., which states: ''The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion.'' This is from the Book of Proverbs.

It takes a special kind of person to willingly run toward danger and to shield the innocent from the wicked. That is what our law enforcement and first responders do every day.

I am very grateful for the men and women who serve and protect our communities; and I was honored to be present for Police Week in a small town in our district, Green Cove Springs, in Clay County, Florida, where they had the Police Memorial; and on that was a verse from John 15:13: ''Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.''

I hope that God watches over our first responders and keeps them safe to bring them home to their families.

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

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS).

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, as a former Tuscaloosa County prosecutor and Madison County district attorney, I fully understand the importance of the rule of law that, in turn, protects us from anarchy, crime, destruction, and death. Without the rule of law, criminal brute force prevails.

Unfortunately, leftist political forces who care more about inciting racial division for political gain and less about crime and terror victims regularly second-guess those who wear the uniform to protect and serve.

For emphasis, antipolice, leftist political rhetoric has helped incite ambush-style attacks against police in places like Dallas, Baton Rouge, Des Moines, and Palm Springs.

I support the Thin Blue Line Act because I appreciate the sacrifice of law enforcement officers, and because it is morally right to help protect officers who risk their lives to protect ours.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS).

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with our law enforcement officers and in support of the rule and passage of the Thin Blue Line Act. This bill makes sure that anyone who targets and attacks a State or local law enforcement officer is held accountable.

The men and women who serve in our local police forces put their lives on the line to keep us safe. They are our everyday heroes, Mr. Speaker.

In 2014, Tarpon Springs Police Officer Charles Kondek was shot and killed by a fugitive while on duty. Officer Kondek represented Tarpon Springs. He worked there for 17 years and did a wonderful job keeping us safe.

These ambush-style killings of law enforcement officers have increased across the country by 167 percent. This is unacceptable.

The Thin Blue Line Act brings us one step closer to justice for these horrific crimes, so let's pass this bill. Of course, we have to pass the rule first so that we can pass this good bill.

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

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN).

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Thin Blue Line Act, which will make murder or attempted murder of a law enforcement officer, or first responders, an aggravating factor in death penalty determinations.

The officers of the thin blue line put their lives at risk every day and are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice so that we can rest easy at night. Our law enforcement and first responders run into danger so that others can run away from it. They do this despite the rise in violence against them.

We have witnessed a 167 percent increase in ambush-style killings of police officers in 2016 alone. This is tragic, and it is unacceptable.

The Thin Blue Line Act will hold cop killers accountable and seek justice for those murdered in the line of duty, and it will show our resolve as citizens to protect the officers who have sworn to protect us.

During this week, National Police Week, we can also show our gratitude to law enforcement and their families by passing the Thin Blue Line Act. It is an honor to represent them in Congress.

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

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN).

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, at this time in our Nation, protecting our local law

enforcement and first responders could not be more important. Tens of thousands of law enforcement and first responders around the country put their lives on the line every single day to serve their communities. Sadly, statistics show that simply doing their jobs has become very dangerous for these individuals.

In 2016, police officer shootings increased by 56 percent nationally, with ambush-style killings of law enforcement officers increasing by a staggering 167 percent. These dramatic numbers demonstrate that more protection is needed for our law enforcement officers.

In my home State of Texas, 17 law enforcement officers gave their lives just last year, including five who were killed in the horrible assault that targeted police officers in Dallas, Texas. On Monday, in recognition of National Police Week, we honored fallen law enforcement officers at a memorial ceremony in Deer Park, Texas, in my district.

We need the Thin Blue Line Act, which would make the killing of a local or State law enforcement officer or first responder an aggravating factor in Federal death penalty determinations. It is important that our local and State police officers and first responders have the same safeguards that Federal law enforcement officers already have.

The local law enforcement and first responders that I know in my district not only serve their communities through their jobs but also give back to their communities in positions such as Little League coaches, City Council members, Sunday-school teachers, and in countless other positions of service. These individuals put their communities first, Mr. Speaker, and they deserve to be protected by much stronger laws.

I rise in strong support of the Thin Blue Line Act and encourage my colleagues in the House to support its passage today.

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

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK), a former special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. BUCK, for his leadership on this important issue, and I rise in strong support.

Mr. Speaker, my great-uncle, Phil Fitzpatrick, was a proud patrolman with the NYPD. He was also a poet, often referring to police officers as soldiers of peace. This week, as we recognize Police Week 2017, I find myself thinking of him and a line from one of his poems, where he wrote: ''When he kisses his wife and children goodbye, there's the chance he will see them no more.''

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, these words were true for my family. This month marks 70 years since my great-uncle was shot while attempting to disarm a robber in a Manhattan bar, a fatal injury he succumbed to days later.

Mr. Speaker, for too long, law enforcement across this country has been forgotten or, worse yet, ostracized. At the same time, their vital mission continues, and it continues to grow more dangerous. Just last year, ambush-style killings of law enforcement officers increased by 167 percent, according to the National Association of Police Organizations. Despite all this, each day, tens of thousands of brave women and men continue to put their lives on the line to serve and protect our communities.

This week, we recognize Police Week 2017, but the dedication and sacrifice of our blue line deserves to be respected every day. As a former law enforcement officer, I am proud to stand here today in support of those brave women and men.

Today, the House has a chance to take decisive action to protect our law enforcement officers by passing the legislation before us. The Thin Blue Line Act sends a clear message to those who intentionally target our police officers. Vicious attacks on law enforcement officers will be met with justice.

I urge my colleagues to stand up for law enforcement today, support this rule, and pass H.R. 115, the Thin Blue Line Act. The bipartisan support it deserves must be delivered today.

□ 1315

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

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES).

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK) for his efforts and leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I think it is really important that we talk about law enforcement; we talk about what their role is. These are the peacekeepers. The men and women right here on Capitol Hill, the Capitol Police, they are the ones who prevent chaos, that allow for order to stand here in the Capitol complex.

In the State of Louisiana, in my hometown of Baton Rouge, back on July 17, we had an extraordinary event. We had five of our law enforcement officers who were responding to a shooter with a long gun; clearly, someone that was dressed and armed in a way to not be helpful to the community. While the rest of us were running away from that shooter, these five men were running toward him.

As a result of that, Deputy Brad Garafola lost his life, and his wife, Tonja, is right now a widow.

Matthew Gerald lost his life, and Dechia, his wife, is now a widow. Dechia found out 2 weeks after his death that she was pregnant, and he has never seen that baby. That baby doesn't have a father today.

We had Montrell Jackson, another Baton Rouge police officer, who lost his life, and his wife, Trenisha, is now a widow.

We had Bruce Simmons who got shot, and while he did survive, he is still struggling with recovery, and he and his wife, Pam, continue to go through that from the July 17 shooting from last year.

Nick Tullier was also involved in that shooting, and I have been wearing my ''Pray for Nick'' band now for months. Nick Tullier continues to be in the hospital even today.

This bill allows for the protection of our officers. It clearly distinguishes that these are the peacekeepers, these are the people who are putting their lives on the line to make sure that we have order, no longer chaos.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation, and I urge everyone to support this unanimously.

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

I am sure that my friends across the aisle have their hearts in the right place, but we need to be clear that these messaging bills do little to nothing to protect our police officers.

If we truly wanted to help our brave officers and first responders, we would pass sensible gun reform legislation. We would take guns out of the hands of the mentally ill and domestic abusers; not make it easier for them to acquire such weapons as my friends across the aisle have done on so many occasions.

If we truly wanted to protect our officers and first responders, we would work diligently to provide them with the best mental health and wellness programs money can buy rather than leaving them to mend unseen wounds on their own.

If my friends across the aisle truly wanted to help this country's law enforcement officers, they would champion funding for community policing initiatives because I think we all know that a community that trusts its police officers, and police officers who trust their community, will live a far safer and richer life.

I might add, my colleague DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and I, along with law enforcement officials in south Florida, have been about the business of trying to make that a reality, and funding for those programs is particularly important to all of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, we all applaud and thank our law enforcement officers and first responders for the brave and invaluable work that they do, day in and day out, in our communities.

But we cannot bury our heads in the sand any longer and believe that, by simply passing messaging bills, we are actually making our communities safer for our officers or the citizens for whom they swear an oath to protect.

We have heard outstanding comments from our friends and our colleagues who came to speak today. All of them spoke of heartfelt circumstances regarding fallen officers.

And toward that end, there is absolutely nothing that I disagree with that has been said.

I just simply ask that we take into consideration how we can best help and keep safe law enforcement officers.

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

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I include in the RECORD four letters which I will briefly describe:

The first is from the Major County Sheriffs of America, supporting the Thin Blue Line Act; the second is from the National Association of Police Organizations, Inc., again, supporting the Thin Blue Line Act; the third is from the National Fraternal Order of Police, supporting H.R. 115, the Thin Blue Line Act; and then finally, from the Sergeants Benevolent Association in strong support of H.R. 115, the Thin Blue Line Act.

MAJOR COUNTY SHERIFFS OF AMERICA,
April 25, 2017.

Hon. VERN BUCHANAN,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN BUCHANAN: I write to you today on a matter of significant importance to the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA) and all of America's law enforcement professionals. MCSA is an association of elected Sheriffs representing the Nation's largest counties with populations of 500,000 or more. Collectively, we represent more than 100 million Americans.

As Vice President in charge of Government Affairs for the MCSA, I am pleased to express our association's support of your legislation, the Thin Blue Line Act. This legislation would make the murder of law enforcement officers, firefighters and other first responders an aggravating factor in capital punishment determinations.

In 2016, one hundred forty-four officers died in the line of duty and to date, line of duty deaths are up 10 percent. The targeting of law enforcement officers is unconscionable and those who commit such heinous acts should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Law enforcement officers and other first responders have the right to go home to their families at the end of their shifts.

The Thin Blue Line Act is a step in the right direction and your work on this legislation is sincerely appreciated. We value your support and look forward to working with you in the future.

MICHAEL J. BOUCHARD,
Sheriff, Oakland County (MI),
Vice President—Government Affairs.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.,
Alexandria, VA, January 5, 2017.

Hon. VERN BUCHANAN,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN BUCHANAN: On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), I am writing to you to express our strong support for the Thin Blue Line Act.

NAPO is a coalition of police units and associations from across the United States that serves to advance the interests of America's law enforcement through legislative and legal advocacy, political action, and education. Founded in 1978, NAPO now represents more than 1,000 police units and associations, including the Florida Police Benevolent Association, 241,000 sworn law enforcement officers, and more than 100,000 citizens who share a common dedication to fair and effective crime control and law enforcement.

The Thin Blue Line Act increases penalties on those who harm or target for harm public safety officers by making the murder or attempted murder of a local police officer, firefighter, or first responder an aggravating factor in death penalty determinations.

This bill is critical, as law enforcement officer assaults, injuries, and deaths have increased sharply in recent years. In 2016 alone, ambush-style killings of law enforcement officers increased by 167 percent. Establishing stricter penalties for those who harm or target for harm law enforcement officers will deter crime. Any persons contemplating harming an office must know that they will face serious punishments. NAPO strongly believes that increased penalties make important differences in the attitudes of criminals toward public safety officers, and ensure protection for the community.

We thank you for your continued support of the law enforcement community and we look forward to working with you to pass this important legislation. If we can provide any assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. JOHNSON,
Esq., CAE, Executive Director.

NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE,
Washington, DC, January 9, 2017.

Hon. VERNON G. BUCHANAN,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BUCHANAN: I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our strong support for H.R. 115, the ''Thin Blue Line Act.''

The ''Thin Blue Line Act'' increases the penalty for an individual who targets, kills, or attempts to kill a person who is a law enforcement officer, firefighter or any other public safety officer, while he or she was engaged in the performance of his or her official duties, because of the performance of his or her official duties, or because of his or her status as a public official or employee.

Law enforcement officers have always faced threats while on duty but within the past few years, officers have become a target for violence solely because of the uniform they wear. As you know, the FOP has called upon Congress to expand the current Federal hate crimes law to include law enforcement officers for this very reason.

Of the 63 deaths by gunfire suffered by law enforcement in 2016, 21 of them—that's 33%—were ambush killings. These were deliberate and sadly successful efforts by individuals who set out to kill a police officer:

The ambush attack against the Dallas Police Department; the deadliest day for law enforcement since 9/11 that saw 5 officers killed from gunfire;

The ambush attack against members of the Baton Rouge Police Department that saw 3 officers killed from gunfire;

The ambush attack against 2 Iowa police officers, Scott Martin and Anthony Beminio who were killed as they sat in their respective patrol cars;

Officer Thomas Cottrell of the Danville Police Department (OH) was killed by ambush.

All of these officers died because of the uniforms they were wearing. Those in our profession have always been in harm's way. It is our job to protect others but it should not be ''part of the job'' to be a target of someone who is looking simply to kill a cop. We do not accept that our uniforms alone make us targets because someone was driven to rage over a perceived injustice or desires to strike a blow against our civil government.

On behalf of more than 330,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I want to thank you for introducing this legislation and amendment. If I can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington office.

Sincerely,

CHUCK CANTERBURY,
National President.

SERGEANTS BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION, POLICE DEPARTMENT, CITY OF NEW YORK,
New York, NY, January 17, 2017.

Hon. VERN BUCHANAN,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BUCHANAN: I am writing on behalf of the more than 13,000 members of the Sergeants Benevolent Association of the New York City Police Department to advise you of our strong support for H.R. 115, the ''Thin Blue Line Act.''

For too long, members of the NYPD, along with law enforcement officers across this nation, have been targets. There has been a proliferation of groups and pundits impugning the motives and mission of law enforcement. They do so with no regard for the impact it has on our ability to protect life, property, and the freedoms we all hold dear. These constant attacks and the excessive, exaggerated rhetoric of anti-police elements have led some to declare an open season on police officers, and to welcome with cheers and praise the cowardly criminals who target law enforcement officers with acts of violence. We saw this first hand in New York City in December 2014, when Officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos were ambushed and senselessly murdered as they sat in their radio car on a Brooklyn street corner. Unfortunately, they are not alone. According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, in 2016 there were 21 police officers killed in ambush-style attacks. Shockingly, 20 of these officers were killed in eight multiple-shooting death incidents—such as those that claimed the lives of 8 officers in Baton Rouge, LA and Dallas, TX—the highest total of any year since 1932.

It is for these reasons and many others that the legislation you have introduced is so important. The ''Thin Blue Line Act'' would make the murder or attempted murder of police officers, prosecutors, firefighters, and other first responders at any level of government an aggravating factor in federal death penalty determinations. The bill applies to things like the interstate homicide of an officer, and is applicable whether the officer is murdered on duty, because of the performance of their duty, or because of their status as a public official. While we know that law enforcement officers will continue to be targets, regardless of their uniform and whether they are on duty or off, active or retired, this legislation sends the message that any action to target law enforcement officers for murder or violence will be met with the harshest of penalties. And that is a message that is long overdue.

On behalf of the membership of our organization, thank you for your leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working with you to see it swiftly enacted into law. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or our Washington Representatives Andrew Siff and Chris Granberg if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

ED MULLINS,
President.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, the rule before the House today is simple. It provides for the consideration of the Thin Blue Line Act. We often talk of how resolute our law enforcement officers, firefighters, and first responders are in the face of immense danger. These heroic individuals charge into burning buildings, face down violence, and stand ready to jump into the fray at a moment's notice.

Simply putting on a uniform should not be one of those dangers. It is our duty to ensure that law enforcement officers, firefighters, and first responders have every tool at their disposal to do their job safely and effectively and to ensure they return home to their families.

Countless spouses and children kiss their loved ones good-bye as they head to work, praying that it will not be their last day. We must never forget this as we work to ensure our police officers, firefighters, and first responders have every possible protection.

There is no greater deterrent than the threat of losing one's life. It is my hope that this legislation makes individuals who would consider taking the life of an officer stop to consider the consequences before going through with an attack; that we one day reach a point where our Nation's finest can go to work without worrying about being targeted because of the uniform on their back; that one day our officers' families have one less reason to worry.

But until that day, we must continue standing resolutely against this evil. I ask my colleagues in the House to support our law enforcement community, firefighters, and first responders. Protect them from the heinous acts of violence. Give their families some assurance that we have their backs. Vote ''yes'' on the resolution, vote ''yes'' on the underlying bill, vote ''yes'' to give our law enforcement officers the protections they so desperately need.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman GOODLATTE and Chairman SESSIONS for bringing this bill before us.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about the rule for H.R. 115, "Thin Blue Line Act of 2017."

I would like to acknowledge and commend our law enforcement officers in the room today and across this country who have worked tirelessly on our behalf.

I know personally the level of stress and challenges posed, because I have many friends that have and are currently serving my Congressional district in Houston and our country very well and with great distinction.

I support our policies that are necessary so long as we are doing so with fairness, in accordance with our Constitution, and in a manner that is not duplicative of statutory measures already in place.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 115 imposes the death penalty for the killing or targeting of law enforcement officers, firefighters, and first responders as a 17th aggravated factor for homicide.

H.R. 115 is duplicative and unnecessary because under 18 U.S.C. 3592(c), there already exists an aggravated factor that achieves the goal of punishing by death, a defendant who kills a law enforcement officer, thereby, making.

This bill does nothing to protect our law enforcement; instead, it raises constitutional questions as to its validity because "targeting law enforcement" is substantially vague language that will subject many innocent lives to death, based purely on their desire to exercise their First Amendment rights about the well-documented racial disparity in treatment throughout our communities.

We must ensure that we do not create legislation of broad scope and vagueness that will have a chilling effect on an insular group.

H.R. 115 is laced with a discriminatory effect that will trigger strict scrutiny under the 14th Amendment, and open the gateway for draconian habeas laws.

This bill will create a slippery slope, further adding to recent turbulence caused by Attorney General Jeff Session's memo and destroying whatever trust remains between law enforcement and communities.

This bill sends troubling messages around the world about how we view and measure life in America in this 21st century.

It is time to get serious about this epidemic and not hide behind vague language because 'all' lives matter, blue, black, brown, white.

Mr. Speaker, while some may say that any adverse effects of the bill before us are de minimis, and thus, will not severely impact the racial disparity found in the use of the death penalty, it is neither the amount of words in this bill nor the amount of time used to utter them that is significant; rather, it is the discriminatory effect that will result in communities disproportionately impacted by the death penalty.

Let us take for example, the case of Buck v. Davis, 580 U.S. _____ (2017) where the death penalty verdict was based merely on 'whether defendant is likely to commit acts of violence in the future' and a psychologist opined that being black did increase the probability. The trial court reasoned that "introduction of any mention of race was de minimis," in other words, insignificant.

As Chief Justice John Roberts stated for the Court in reversing the lower court; "Some toxins can be deadly in small doses."

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 115 is extremely deadly because it will undoubtedly contribute to the continuation of well-documented and pervasive racial disparities in the imposition of the death penalty.

Since 1976 only 20 white prisoners have been executed for the murder of an African American victim, while an alarming 286 African American prisoners have been executed for the death of white victims, and 42% of African Americans currently remain on death row.

Death penalty generally, has been criticized over the years by legal scholars and by Supreme Court Justices who have opined in several instances, that 'the death penalty violates the Eighth Amendment, which prohibits cruel and unusual punishment.'

Even in 1958, when the Court first explicitly spoke about the death penalty as having constitutional challenges, it said in Trop v. Dulles, "the Eighth Amendment's Cruel and Unusual Punishment clause must draw its meaning from the 'evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society' rather than from its original meaning."

Mr. Speaker, there is no argument that we have evolved and matured significantly since we first implemented the death penalty in the 1600s and thus, we must evaluate cautiously, laws that seek to further advance this flawed, astronomically costly and unjust practice.

Capital punishment does not work; it is discriminatory and is used disproportionately against the poor, minorities and members of racial, ethnic and religious communities.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976, 82% of all executions have occurred in the South (37% in Texas alone), which contributed to the United States status as one of five countries in the world to account for the most executions in 2012.

FBI data has shown that the death penalty is not a deterrent and in fact, 14 states without capital punishment in 2008, had homicide rates at or below the national rate.

Taking another life does not stop violence.

Like mandatory minimums, public opinion for the death penalty is currently at its lowest with a 42% opposition, evidenced in a 2016 Pew Research report, which found that the U.S. now dropped to number seven worldwide in countries accountable for the most executions.

Mr. Speaker, over two-thirds of the world's countries have abolished the death penalty either in law or practice, and the U.S. is the only Western country that still uses the death penalty.

Even family members of murder victims and other individuals who have witnessed live executions of death row inmates, particularly, in the recent botched and questionable executions, have called for a repeal of this practice and ask instead for alternative sentencing.

In fact the death penalty solves nothing, and may even perpetuate the suffering of the parents, children, or siblings left behind.

We do not need to expand the use of the death penalty where public opinion is at its lowest, but instead, implement sound and practical legislation that will save lives of our officers and the people they serve, where public opinion for this measure is extremely high.

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

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 323 OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS

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

SEC. 2. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 356) to establish the National Commission on Foreign Interference in the 2016 Election. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole

rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 3. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 356.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

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

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

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

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

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of the adoption of the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 230, nays 189, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 259]

YEAS—230

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

NAYS—189

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

NOT VOTING—11

Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Cole
Garrett
Gutiérrez
Johnson, Sam
Lieu, Ted
Napolitano
Newhouse
Pelosi
Shuster

□ 1349

Miss RICE of New York, Mr. McEACHIN, and Ms. BONAMICI changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

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

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

RECORDED VOTE

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

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 233, noes 184, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 260]

AYES—233

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

NOES—184

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

NOT VOTING—13

Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Cole
Ellison
Franks (AZ)
Gutiérrez
Harris
Johnson, Sam
Lieu, Ted
Napolitano
Newhouse
Pelosi
Takano

□ 1357

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 260.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2266) to amend title 28 of the United States Code to authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges; and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2266

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. CONVERSION OF THE TEMPORARY OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGE TO THE PERMANENT OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGE IN CERTAIN JUDICIAL DISTRICTS.

(a) DISTRICT OF DELAWARE.—

(1) The temporary office of 4 bankruptcy judges authorized for the district of Delaware by section 1223(b)(1)(C) of Public Law 109–8 (119 Stat. 197; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), and extended by section 2(a)(1)(C) of Public Law 112–121 (126 Stat. 346; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), is converted hereby to the permanent office of bankruptcy judge and represented in the amendment made by section 3(1) of this Act, and may be filled.

(2) The temporary office of bankruptcy judge authorized for the district of Delaware by section 3(a)(3) of Public Law 102–361 (106 Stat. 966; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), and extended by section 1223(c)(1) of Public Law 109–8 (119 Stat. 198; 28 U.S.C. 152 note) and section 2(b)(1) of Public Law 112–121 (126 Stat. 347; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), is converted hereby to the permanent office of bankruptcy judge and represented in the amendment made by section 3(1) of this Act, and may be filled.

(b) SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA.—The temporary office of 2 bankruptcy judges authorized for the southern district of Florida by section 1223(b)(1)(D) of Public Law 109–8 (119 Stat. 197; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), and extended by section 2(a)(1)(D) of Public Law 112–121 (126 Stat. 346; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), is converted hereby to the permanent office of bankruptcy judge and represented in the amendment made by section 3(3) of this Act, and may be filled.

(c) DISTRICT OF MARYLAND.—The temporary office of 1 bankruptcy judge first appointed as authorized for the district of Maryland by section 1223(b)(1)(F) of Public Law 109–8 (119 Stat. 197; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), and extended by section 2(a)(1)(F) of Public Law 112–121 (126 Stat. 346; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), is converted hereby to the permanent office of bankruptcy judge and represented in the amendment made by section 3(4) of this Act, and may be filled.

(d) EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judge authorized for the eastern district of Michigan by section 1223(b)(1)(G) of Public Law 109–8 (119 Stat. 197; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), and extended by section 2(a)(1)(G) of Public Law 112–121 (126 Stat. 346; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), is converted hereby to the permanent office of bankruptcy judge and represented in the amendment made by section 3(5) of this Act, and may be filled.

(e) DISTRICT OF NEVADA.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judge authorized for the district of Nevada by section 1223(b)(1)(T) of Public Law 109–8 (119 Stat. 197; 28 U.S.C. 152 note),

and extended by section 2(a)(1)(Q) of Public Law 112–121 (126 Stat. 346; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), is converted hereby to the permanent office of bankruptcy judge and represented in the amendment made by section 3(6) of this Act, and may be filled.

(f) EASTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judge authorized for the eastern district of North Carolina by section 1223(b)(1)(M) of Public Law 109–8 (119 Stat. 197; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), and extended by section 2(a)(1)(J) of Public Law 112–121 (126 Stat. 346; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), is converted hereby to the permanent office of bankruptcy judge and represented in the amendment made by section 3(7) of this Act, and may be filled.

(g) DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO.—

(1) The temporary office of bankruptcy judge authorized for the district of Puerto Rico by section 1223(b)(1)(P) of Public Law 109–8 (119 Stat. 197; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), and extended by section 2(a)(1)(M) of Public Law 112–121 (126 Stat. 346; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), is converted hereby to the permanent office of bankruptcy judge and represented in the amendment made by section 3(8) of this Act, and may be filled.

(2) The temporary office of bankruptcy judge authorized for the district of Puerto Rico by section 3(a)(7) of Public Law 102–361 (106 Stat. 966; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), and extended by section 1223(c)(1) of Public Law 109–8 (119 Stat. 198; 28 U.S.C. 152 note) and section 2(b)(1) of Public Law 112–121 (126 Stat. 347; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), is converted hereby to the permanent office of bankruptcy judge and is represented in the amendment made by section 3(8) of this Act, and may be filled.

(h) EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA.—The temporary office of bankruptcy judge authorized for the eastern district of Virginia by section 1223(b)(1)(R) of Public Law 109–8 (119 Stat. 197; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), and extended by section 2(a)(1)(P) of Public Law 112–121 (126 Stat. 346; 28 U.S.C. 152 note), is converted hereby to the permanent office of bankruptcy judge and is represented in the amendment made by section 3(9) of this Act, and may be filled.

SEC. 3. PERMANENT OFFICE OF BANKRUPTCY JUDGE AUTHORIZED.

To reflect the conversion of the temporary office of bankruptcy judge to the permanent office of bankruptcy judge made by the operation of section 2, and to authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges, section 152(a)(2) of title 28 of the United States Code is amended—

(1) in the item relating to the district of Delaware by striking ''1'' and inserting ''8'',

(2) in the item relating to the middle district of Florida by striking ''8'' and inserting ''9'',

(3) in the item relating to the southern district of Florida by striking ''5'' and inserting ''7'',

(4) in the item relating to the district of Maryland by striking ''4'' and inserting ''5'',

(5) in the item relating to the eastern district of Michigan by striking ''4'' and inserting ''6'',

(6) in the item relating to the district of Nevada by striking ''3'' and inserting ''4'',

(7) in the item relating to the eastern district of North Carolina by striking ''2'' and inserting ''3'',

(8) in the item relating to the district of Puerto Rico by striking ''2'' and inserting ''4'', and

(9) in the item relating to the eastern district of Virginia by striking ''5'' and inserting ''6''.

SEC. 4. BANKRUPTCY FEES.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 28 OF THE UNITED STATES CODE.—Section 1930(a)(6) of title 28 of the United States Code is amended—

(1) by striking ''(6) In'' and inserting ''(6)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), in'', and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) In any fiscal year, the quarterly fee payable for a quarter in which disbursements equal or exceed $1,000,000 shall be 1 percent of such disbursements or $250,000, whichever is less, unless the balance in the United States Trustee System Fund as of September 30 immediately preceding such fiscal year exceeds $200,000,000.''.

(b) DEPOSITS OF CERTAIN FEES FOR FISCAL YEARS 2018 THROUGH 2022.—Notwithstanding section 589a(b) of title 28 of the United States Code, for each of the fiscal years 2018 through 2022—

(1) 97.5 percent of the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6) of such title shall be deposited as offsetting collections to the appropriation ''United States Trustee System Fund'', to remain available until expended, and

(2) 2.5 percent of the fees collected under section 1930(a)(6) of such title shall be deposited in the general fund of the Treasury.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICATION AMENDMENTS.—

(1) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), this section shall take effect on July 1, 2017, or on the date of the enactment of this Act, whichever is later.

(2) APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to quarterly fees payable under section 1930(a)(6) of title 28 of the United States Code, as amended by this section, for disbursements made in any calendar quarter that begins on or after the effective date of the amendments made by this section.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2266, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

We are here today to address an imposing threat to one of the foundational aspects of our economy, the national bankruptcy system. A well-functioning bankruptcy system provides relief to consumers, allows businesses to reorganize, preserves jobs, maximizes the value of assets, and ensures the proper allocation of resources. Our bankruptcy judiciary is the heartbeat that keeps this system moving. If that judiciary is strained and undermanned, that system will grind to a halt, eliminating the essential benefits it provides and sending repercussions throughout the economy.

There are presently 29 temporary bankruptcy judgeships in the bankruptcy system with a lapse date of May 25. These temporary judgeships comprise more than 8 percent of the current bankruptcy judgeships nationwide. After May 25, 2017, these judgeships are at risk of being permanently lost, resulting in larger caseloads shared by fewer judges and causing further strain on our judiciary system.

The Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017 converts 14 of the existing temporary judgeships to permanent status and creates 4 new permanent bankruptcy judgeships in districts with some of the highest caseloads in the country. In fact, since the enactment of the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2005, when a majority of the temporary judgeships were created, these districts have seen weighted filings increase by more than 55 percent.

This bill is based on a comprehensive study of judicial resource needs conducted by the Judicial Conference and is supported by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. The Conference has assured us that its request comes only after it has taken steps to maximize all other alternatives to reduce judicial workloads. Moreover, the Conference has demonstrated that, while a district may have a permanent judgeship, it will not be filled unless completely necessary.

Importantly, this bill will not present any new costs for the taxpayers. The Bankruptcy Judgeship Act includes an increase in the quarterly U.S. Trustee fees for large chapter 11 debtors, excluding small businesses. This fee increase is directly tied to the balance of the United States Trustee System Fund and will only be applied when the balance of the fund falls below a $200 million threshold, thereby ensuring that the Office of the U.S. Trustee is properly funded.

These temporary bankruptcy judgeships were first set to lapse in 2010. Most have been extended for over 12 years, and some even longer. Despite this committee's efforts to address the issue, to date there have been only limited, short-term fixes. Additional permanent bankruptcy judgeships have not been authorized since 1992.

The time has come for Congress to address bankruptcy judgeship needs more permanently. We need a bankruptcy system that has a sufficient number of judges to be able to manage the caseloads in a just, economical, and timely manner. The efficiency of this system is too important to our economy to risk. This bill helps ensure that we have such a system.

I would like to thank Ranking Member CONYERS for his efforts on this issue. I would also like to thank Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law Subcommittee Chairman MARINO and Ranking Member CICILLINE for joining me as original cosponsors of the bill. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2266, the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017, which would make 14 temporary bankruptcy judgeships permanent and authorize four additional bankruptcy judgeships.

I introduced this bipartisan legislation together with the support of Judiciary Committee Chairman GOODLATTE, along with Regulatory Reform,

Commercial and Antitrust Law Subcommittee Chairman MARINO and Ranking Member CICILLINE. H.R. 2266 warrants the support from my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for several reasons.

To begin with, this measure reflects the recommendations of the Judicial Conference of the United States with respect to the judicial resource needs of our Nation's bankruptcy courts. These recommendations are themselves based on a comprehensive survey of all judicial circuits.

This analysis consists of two components. The first is premised on a caseweight formula devised by the Federal Judicial Center that is intended to provide a more accurate and useful measure of judicial workload than a mere count of case filings.

The second component considers a broad array of other factors, including the nature of a court's caseload, filing trends, demographic considerations, geographic issues, and economic aspects, among other items.

Taken together, the resulting analysis provides a reliable basis upon which Congress may assess the necessity of authorizing additional judgeships and extending temporary judgeships.

In addition, H.R. 2266 addresses an immediate need. All of the temporary judgeships addressed in H.R. 2266 will lapse as of May 25, which is just a week away.

Once a temporary judgeship lapses, any ensuing vacancy may not be filled, which presents a serious concern. As the Judicial Conference warns, these bankruptcy courts would ''face a serious and, in many cases, debilitating workload crisis if their temporary judgeships were to expire.''

This is particularly true with respect to the Eastern District of Michigan, which has a weighted caseload well in excess of the minimum necessary to trigger additional judicial resources.

Although Congress has previously extended temporary bankruptcy judgeships from time to time, some have also lapsed as a result of Congress' failure to timely act. So to avoid future lapses in judicial resources, my legislation converts 14 of these temporary judgeships to permanent status.

Finally, I am pleased to report that H.R. 2266 pays for all of these judgeships without having to require consumer debtors to bear that expense. The cost of this legislation is offset by increasing the quarterly fees that the largest 10 percent of chapter 11 debtors pay to the United States Trustee System Fund, a proposal initially made by the Obama administration as part of the President's budget request for 2017.

Specifically, the fee increase would apply only to chapter 11 debtors that have quarterly disbursements in excess of $1 million and only during the period when the fund has less than $200 million.

For all of these various reasons, I support this legislation.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Delaware (Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER).

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Judicial Conference.

JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, April 3, 2017.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: On behalf of the Judicial Conference of the United States, I write to transmit the Conference's bankruptcy judgeship recommendations and corresponding draft legislation for the 115th Congress. The Conference recommends to Congress that it authorize four additional permanent bankruptcy judgeships and convert 14 existing temporary bankruptcy judgeships to permanent status, as set forth in the enclosures.

The preservation of current on-board resources in these courts is of great concern to the Conference. All 14 temporary bankruptcy judgeships included in the Conference's recommendation have a lapse date of May 25, 2017. These bankruptcy courts would face a serious and, in many cases, debilitating workload crisis if these temporary judgeships were to expire. The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware, for example, would be crippled as five of their six authorized judgeships are temporary, all with the risk of expiring in 2017.

Although bankruptcy filings nationwide have been declining in recent years, the districts included in these recommendations generally have experienced an increase in filings resulting in stress on existing judicial resources. Indeed, since the enactment of the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act in 2005, Pub. L. No. 109–8—the last time additional judgeship resources were authorized for most of the courts included in the Conference's recommendation—these districts have seen weighted filings increase by more than 55 percent.

Section 152(b)(2) of title 28, United States Code, requires the Judicial Conference to recommend to Congress the authorization of additional bankruptcy judgeships. Following a formal survey of all judicial circuits, the Conference determines where additional resources are needed based upon the circuit councils' requests and established criteria including each court's workload and case filing statistics, geographic needs, and pertinent additional factors. As part of this survey, the Judicial Conference also considers requests from the circuits to convert or extend existing temporary bankruptcy judgeships based upon the district's needs for stable judicial resources.

The Judicial Conference respectfully requests that you give your full consideration to the Judiciary's resource needs as identified in this proposed legislation. Additional caseload information concerning these recommendations is available upon request.

If we may be of further assistance to you in this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or the Office of Legislative Affairs, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

Sincerely,

JAMES C. DUFF,
Secretary.

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. CONYERS and my colleagues on the House Judiciary Committee for their work on this important legislation and for bringing this bill to the floor today.

An efficient bankruptcy system is important to the smooth functioning of our economy. The preservation and addition of these positions will add needed certainty to our legal system.

As the Judicial Conference of the United States highlighted in their report to Congress, these resources will benefit individuals and corporations, and are necessary to keep this system working. I am proud of the work that the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware does to protect jobs, creditors, and economic engines in our communities across the country.

This legislation is a perfect example of Congress hearing the needs of independent experts in the judiciary and acting in a bipartisan, collaborative manner to address a looming problem.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on other pressing problems for our constituents in such collaborative ways. I urge all of my colleagues to support the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017.

□ 1415

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

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I am pleased to note that H.R. 2266 is supported by the American Bar Association, the Federal Bar Association, the American College of Bankruptcy, and the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges.

I want to also express appreciation to our Judiciary chairman, Mr. GOODLATTE, to Chairman MARINO and Ranking Member CICILLINE, as well as their staffs, for their cooperative efforts in working with me on this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Speaker, given the time-sensitive nature of the temporary judgeships addressed by H.R. 2266 and the immediate need for additional bankruptcy judgeships to be authorized, it is my hope that our colleagues in the Senate will expeditiously consider this important legislation. I urge all of the Members here to support this measure.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, permanent bankruptcy judgeships have not been authorized since 1992. Over the past 25 years, we have limited our protection of the bankruptcy system to short-term temporary fixes. A well-functioning bankruptcy system, however, is too important to our economy to risk. Now is the time for Congress to address bankruptcy judgeship needs more permanently.

The Bankruptcy Judgeship Act is a measured, long-term solution carefully crafted and based on the well-developed recommendation of the Administrative Office of the Courts. Not only does it ensure the viability of our bankruptcy

system, but it also addresses the funding concerns of the Office of the United States Trustee.

This bill is a bipartisan measure that enjoys broad support from outside groups, including the American Bar Association, the Federal Bar Association, the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges, and the American College of Bankruptcy. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important legislation.

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2266, the "Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017," which authorizes the establishment of four additional permanent bankruptcy judgeships and converts 14 temporary bankruptcy judgeships to permanent status.

I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of this legislation, which is a necessary response to alleviate the strain on certain bankruptcy courts that have experienced a significant increase in bankruptcy filings over the past decade or more.

Importantly, this legislation adopts the recommendations of the Judicial Conference of the United States, the national policymaking body of the federal courts, and does not impose additional fees on ordinary consumer debtors or small businesses.

As the Conference notes in support of this measure, while bankruptcy filings have decreased nationwide, the bankruptcy courts that would receive permanent or new judgeships under this legislation "have seen weighted filings increase by more than 55 percent."

Furthermore, without this legislation, all 14 temporary judgeships covered by this bill will lapse later this month on May 25.

Allowing a lapse in these judgeships would have potentially crippling effects on the bankruptcy system.

For example, five of the six authorized judgeships of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court of the District of Delaware—the preferred venue for corporate reorganization under Chapter 11—are temporary.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

I thank Ranking Member CONYERS, the bill's sponsor, for his leadership on this bill, along with Judiciary Committee Chairman GOODLATTE and Subcommittee Chairman MARINO for their support.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2266, the "Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017."

H.R. 2266, the "Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017," would authorize four additional permanent bankruptcy judgeships and convert 14 temporary bankruptcy judgeships to permanent status based on the most recent recommendation of the Judicial Conference of the United States.

H.R. 2266 was introduced on May 1, 2017 by Ranking Member JOHN CONYERS, Jr. (D–MI) together with Chairman BOB GOODLATTE and Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law Chair TOM MARINO (R–PA) and Ranking Member DAVID CICILLINE (D–RI) as original cosponsors.

This bipartisan legislation is time-sensitive as the temporary judgeships are due to expire on May 25, 2017. No hearing has been held on this legislation.

A bankruptcy judge may hear and determine all cases arising under the Bankruptcy Code and certain related proceedings. A district court, however, may withdraw—in whole or in part—any case or proceeding referred to a bankruptcy judge. If designated by the district to exercise such authority, a bankruptcy judge may conduct a jury trial on consent of all the parties.

Currently pending before Congress is H.R. 244, the "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017," which extends for one year the temporary judgeships for the District of Delaware (two judgeships), the Southern District of Florida (two judgeships); the Eastern District of Michigan; the District of Puerto Rico; and the Eastern District of Virginia.

In analyzing bankruptcy judgeship needs, the Judicial Conference employs, as a first step, a case weight formula devised by the Federal Judicial Center that is intended to provide a more accurate and useful measure of judicial workload than a mere count of filings does.

Pursuant to Conference policy, "if a district's annual weighted caseload per authorized judgeship is 1,500 weighted filings or more, the district will receive consideration for an additional judgeship."

With respect to the Conference's current request for additional bankruptcy judgeships, the weighted case filings have increased by more than 55 percent for most of these districts since the last time additional judgeships were authorized in 2005, according to the Conference.

In addition, all 14 of the temporary bankruptcy judgeships that the bill converts to permanent status are set to lapse as of May 25, 2017.

To offset the cost of this legislation, H.R. 2266 increases the quarterly fee payable that chapter 11 debtors pay to the United States Trustee System Fund, but only with respect to debtors that have quarterly disbursements in excess of $1 million dollars during the period when the Fund has less than $200 million.

This provision is substantively identical to a legislative proposal made by the prior Administration as represented in President Barack Obama's budget request for 2017.

Taken together, the resulting analysis provides a reliable basis upon which Congress may assess the necessity of authorizing additional judgeships and extending temporary judgeships.

For all of these reasons, I support this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2266, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 419) to require adequate reporting on the Public Safety Officers' Benefits program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 419

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. REPORTS.

Section 1205 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796c) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting "Rules, regulations, and procedures issued under this part may include regulations based on standards developed by another Federal agency for programs related to public safety officer death or disability claims." before the last sentence;

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by inserting "(1)" before "In making"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) In making a determination under section 1201, the Bureau shall give substantial weight to the evidence and all findings of fact presented by a State, local, or Federal administrative or investigative agency regarding eligibility for death or disability benefits.

"(3) If the head of a State, local, or Federal administrative or investigative agency, in consultation with the principal legal officer of the agency, provides a certification of facts regarding eligibility for death or disability benefits, the Bureau shall adopt the factual findings, if the factual findings are supported by substantial evidence."; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(e)(1)(A) Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Bureau shall make available on the public website of the Bureau information on all death, disability, and educational assistance claims submitted under this part that are pending as of the date on which the information is made available.

"(B) Not less frequently than once per week, the Bureau shall make available on the public website of the Bureau updated information with respect to all death, disability, and educational assistance claims submitted under this part that are pending as of the date on which the information is made available.

"(C) The information made available under this paragraph shall include—

"(i) for each pending claim—

"(I) the date on which the claim was submitted to the Bureau;

"(II) the State of residence of the claimant;

"(III) an anonymized, identifying claim number; and

"(IV) the nature of the claim; and

"(ii) the total number of pending claims that were submitted to the Bureau more than 1 year before the date on which the information is made available.

"(2) Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Bureau shall publish on the public website of the Bureau a report, and shall update such report on such website not less than once every 180 days thereafter, containing—

"(A) the total number of claims for which a final determination has been made during the 180-day period preceding the report;

"(B) the amount of time required to process each claim for which a final determination has been made during the 180-day period preceding the report;

"(C) as of the last day of the 180-day period preceding the report, the total number of claims submitted to the Bureau on or before that date for which a final determination has not been made;

''(D) as of the last day of the 180-day period preceding the report, the total number of claims submitted to the Bureau on or before the date that is 1 year before that date for which a final determination has not been made;

''(E) for each claim described in subparagraph (D), a detailed description of the basis for delay;

''(F) as of the last day of the 180-day period preceding the report, the total number of claims submitted to the Bureau on or before that date relating to exposure due to the September 11th, 2001, terrorism attacks for which a final determination has not been made;

''(G) as of the last day of the 180-day period preceding the report, the total number of claims submitted to the Bureau on or before the date that is 1 year before that date relating to exposure due to the September 11th, 2001, terrorism attacks for which a final determination has not been made;

''(H) for each claim described in subparagraph (G), a detailed description of the basis for delay;

''(I) the total number of claims submitted to the Bureau relating to exposure due to the September 11th, 2001, terrorism attacks for which a final determination was made during the 180-day period preceding the report, and the average award amount for any such claims that were approved;

''(J) the result of each claim for which a final determination was made during the 180-day period preceding the report, including the number of claims rejected and the basis for any denial of benefits;

''(K) the number of final determinations which were appealed during the 180-day period preceding the report, regardless of when the final determination was first made;

''(L) the average number of claims processed per reviewer of the Bureau during the 180-day period preceding the report;

''(M) for any claim submitted to the Bureau that required the submission of additional information from a public agency, and for which the public agency completed providing all of the required information during the 180-day period preceding the report, the average length of the period beginning on the date the public agency was contacted by the Bureau and ending on the date on which the public agency submitted all required information to the Bureau;

''(N) for any claim submitted to the Bureau for which the Bureau issued a subpoena to a public agency during the 180-day period preceding the report in order to obtain information or documentation necessary to determine the claim, the name of the public agency, the date on which the subpoena was issued, and the dates on which the public agency was contacted by the Bureau before the issuance of the subpoena; and

''(O) information on the compliance of the Bureau with the obligation to offset award amounts under section 1201(f)(3), including—

''(i) the number of claims that are eligible for compensation under both this part and the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001 (49 U.S.C. 40101 note; Public Law 107–42) (commonly referred to as the 'VCF');

''(ii) for each claim described in clause (i) for which compensation has been paid under the VCF, the amount of compensation paid under the VCF;

''(iii) the number of claims described in clause (i) for which the Bureau has made a final determination; and

''(iv) the number of claims described in clause (i) for which the Bureau has not made a final determination.

''(3) Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this subsection, and 2 years thereafter, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

''(A) conduct a study on the compliance of the Bureau with the obligation to offset award amounts under section 1201(f)(3); and

''(B) submit to Congress a report on the study conducted under subparagraph (A) that includes an assessment of whether the Bureau has provided the information required under subparagraph (B)(ix) of paragraph (2) of this subsection in each report required under that paragraph.

''(4) In this subsection, the term 'nature of the claim' means whether the claim is a claim for—

''(A) benefits under this subpart with respect to the death of a public safety officer;

''(B) benefits under this subpart with respect to the disability of a public safety officer; or

''(C) education assistance under subpart 2.''.

SEC. 3. AGE LIMITATION FOR CHILDREN.

Section 1212(c) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796d–1(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''No child'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), no child''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) DELAYED APPROVALS.—

''(A) EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION.—If a claim for assistance under this subpart is approved more than 1 year after the date on which the application for such assistance is filed with the Attorney General, the age limitation under this subsection shall be extended by the length of the period—

''(i) beginning on the day after the date that is 1 year after the date on which the application is filed; and

''(ii) ending on the date on which the application is approved.

''(B) CLAIM FOR BENEFITS FOR DEATH OR PERMANENT AND TOTAL DISABILITY.—In addition to an extension under subparagraph (A), if any, for an application for assistance under this subpart that relates to a claim for benefits under subpart 1 that was approved more than 1 year after the date on which the claim was filed with the Attorney General, the age limitation under this subsection shall be extended by the length of the period—

''(i) beginning on the day after the date that is 1 year after the date on which the claim for benefits is submitted; and

''(ii) ending on the date on which the claim for benefits is approved.''.

SEC. 4. DUE DILIGENCE IN PAYING BENEFIT CLAIMS.

Subpart 1 of part L of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 1206. DUE DILIGENCE IN PAYING BENEFIT CLAIMS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Bureau, with all due diligence, shall expeditiously attempt to obtain the information and documentation necessary to adjudicate a benefit claim filed under this part, including a claim for financial assistance under subpart 2.

''(b) SUFFICIENT INFORMATION UNAVAILABLE.—If a benefit claim filed under this part, including a claim for financial assistance under subpart 2, is unable to be adjudicated by the Bureau because of a lack of information or documentation from a third party, such as a public agency, and such information is not readily available to the claimant, the Bureau may not abandon the benefit claim unless the Bureau has utilized the investigative tools available to the Bureau to obtain the necessary information or documentation, including subpoenas.''.

SEC. 5. PRESUMPTION THAT OFFICER ACTED PROPERLY.

Section 1202 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796a) is amended—

(1) by striking ''No benefit'' and inserting the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—No benefit''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) PRESUMPTION.—In determining whether a benefit is payable under this part, the Bureau—

''(1) shall presume that none of the limitations described in subsection (a) apply; and

''(2) shall not determine that a limitation described in subsection (a) applies, absent clear and convincing evidence.''.

SEC. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICABILITY.

The amendments made by this Act shall—

(1) take effect on the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) apply to any benefit claim or application under part L of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796 et seq.) that is—

(A) pending before the Bureau of Justice Assistance on the date of enactment; or

(B) received by the Bureau on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on S. 419, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, in 1976 Congress passed and the President signed into law the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Act. The act was designed to offer peace of mind to men and women seeking careers as public safety officers, namely, that if something happened to them in their dangerous roles, their families would have support.

It shows that America places enormous value on those in our communities who protect and serve, those whose response to danger is to face it head-on and who put others before themselves daily.

The PSOB program, administered by the Department of Justice, provides death benefits in the form of a one-time financial payment to eligible survivors of public safety officers who have died in the line of duty.

The program also provides benefits to public safety officers who are permanently and totally disabled because of injuries sustained in the line of duty.

Finally, the PSOB program provides financial assistance to help pay higher education costs for the spouses and children of public safety officers who have died or been injured in the line of duty.

It is a program that is meant to help the loved ones of fallen officers move forward in the aftermath of tragedies.

Unfortunately, in recent years, the PSOB program has had some incidents of delay, and some families were left in the dark about the status of applications. These families were unable to move forward after their tragic losses, and we recognize that is not acceptable for a family that has sacrificed so much for their communities.

Legislation was introduced in the last Congress, and again this Congress as S. 419, to address these regrettable failings. This bill provides for transparency in the processing of claims in the PSOB program and codifies measures to ensure the system is streamlined and operates in a fair manner.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleagues for their work and strong support of these law enforcement families. I would especially like to commend the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING) for his unwavering support of the families of law enforcement.

In his second inaugural address, President Lincoln reminded the American people: ''To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan.'' This legislation is designed to do exactly that for the brave men and women in blue who protect and serve all of us every day.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday this bill passed the Senate unanimously. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation today.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today also in strong support of S. 419, the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act, a bill which was just passed by the Senate yesterday.

Each day, public safety officers put their lives on the line for the greater good of those whom they have taken an oath to serve and protect. Unfortunately, for some of these brave men and women, the ultimate sacrifice is made, and they will die while in the line of duty.

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits program, which is administered by the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance, was established in 1976 to provide certain benefits to the families of these officers as well as to officers who are disabled as a result of their service.

The death benefit is provided to eligible survivors of public safety officers whose deaths are a direct and proximate result of a traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty or death from certain heart attacks, strokes, and vascular ruptures sustained while on duty.

An education benefit is provided to spouses and children of public safety officers killed or disabled while on duty. The program provides disability benefits to officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty.

Mr. Speaker, I support S. 419 because it will significantly improve in several respects how benefits claims of fallen and injured officers are processed under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits program. To begin with, the bill responds to the fact that, all too often, these officers and their families, after experiencing a loss of life or traumatic injury, must then endure months, sometimes years, of uncertainty and delay concerning their benefit claims.

S. 419 requires the Bureau to give substantial weight to evidence and facts presented by a Federal, State, or local agency when determining eligibility for death or disability benefits. In addition, the measure authorizes the Bureau of Justice Assistance to establish rules based on standards for the Benefits program. These two requirements will help facilitate and expedite the Benefits program claims processed and, thereby, reduce the backlog of families awaiting a decision on their benefit claims.

S. 419 also increases transparency of the Bureau's claims processing. It requires, for example, the Bureau to publish and update a report with information on the status of pending claims regarding death, disability, and educational claims submitted, which will increase transparency.

As we all know, transparency often leads to accountability, and this bill will make the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Department of Justice more accountable to the families of fallen and traumatically injured officers, Congress, and the public as well. By requiring that updates or pending benefit claims be posted on public websites, Congress and the public will be able to evaluate the performance of the Bureau in timely processing pending claims.

Finally, S. 419 will help ensure that families, who are the ultimate victims of those who sacrifice their lives for our protection, are not deprived of benefits they are due under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits program.

We all have a responsibility to take care of surviving family members when a first responder is tragically killed or injured in the line of duty. This bill is a step in the right direction of ensuring that families are not overly burdened and that the public is aware of how the Bureau and the Justice Department are handling claims submitted by family members.

Mr. Speaker, the sacrifice of these first responders should not be taken for granted, and their families should not be unduly burdened when applying for benefits under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits program. Accordingly, I support S. 419. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, it is particularly significant to note that S. 419 is being considered in the midst of National Police Week, a period dedicated to honor our Nation's fallen law enforcement heroes.

President John Kennedy, by proclamation signed in 1962, designated May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which that date falls as National Police Week.

S. 419 memorializes our commitment to public safety officers, who daily risk their lives for us, by removing barriers that prevent beneficiaries under the Benefits program from obtaining the benefits they so justly deserve. Families of our first responders deserve timely consideration of benefit claims when their loved ones give the ultimate sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support this measure so that it may be sent to the President for signature.

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

□ 1430

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time only to say that I very much appreciate the work on both sides of the aisle, particularly the gentleman from Michigan.

This is a good, bipartisan bill which should be passed today. I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 419, the ''Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act of 2017''.

The Public Safety Officers' Benefits program or PSOB Program provides death, disability, and education benefits to public safety officers and their survivors.

The PSOB Program is administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, or BJA, which is a component of the Department of Justice.

Under the Program, the death benefit is provided to eligible survivors of public safety officers whose death was a direct and proximate result of a traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty or certain work-related heart attacks or strokes.

The Program provides a disability benefit to public safety officers who have been permanently and totally disabled as the direct and proximate result of a catastrophic injury sustained in the line of duty, if that injury permanently prevents the officer from performing any gainful employment.

The education benefit provides assistance to spouses and children of public safety officers killed or disabled in the line of duty who attend an educational program at an eligible education institution.

All too often, these first responders and their families needlessly suffer months and years of uncertainty after experiencing a loss of life or a traumatic injury.

This bill is a show of appreciation for the brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in the line of duty as well as an expression of appreciation and support to the families of these first responders.

S. 419 improves how the Department of Justice processes claims under the PSOB Program.

The measure authorizes the Bureau of Justice Assistance to establish rules based on standards for the PSOB Program and it requires the Bureau of Justice Assistance to give substantial weight to evidence and facts

presented by a federal, state, or local agency when determining eligibility for death or disability benefits.

These two requirements will decrease the time in which claims are processed, thereby reducing the backlog of families awaiting a decision on their benefits claim.

S. 419 also increases the level of transparency regarding claims processed by requiring the Bureau of Justice Assistance to publish and update information on the status of pending claims.

By requiring that updates on pending benefits claims be posted on public websites, the public will be able to evaluate the performance of the Bureau of Justice Assistance in timely processing claims.

As we honor our fallen heroes this week during National Police Week, I think now is as greater a time as any to ensure that we remove barriers that hinder their families from obtaining benefits we promised them when we enacted the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Act.

Accordingly, I strongly support S. 419.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 419.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THOMASINA E. JORDAN INDIAN TRIBES OF VIRGINIA FEDERAL RECOGNITION ACT OF 2017

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 984) to extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe—Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 984

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act of 2017''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978.

TITLE I—CHICKAHOMINY INDIAN TRIBE

Sec. 101. Findings.
Sec. 102. Definitions.
Sec. 103. Federal recognition.
Sec. 104. Membership; governing documents.
Sec. 105. Governing body.
Sec. 106. Reservation of the Tribe.
Sec. 107. Hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and water rights.

TITLE II—CHICKAHOMINY INDIAN TRIBE—EASTERN DIVISION

Sec. 201. Findings.
Sec. 202. Definitions.
Sec. 203. Federal recognition.
Sec. 204. Membership; governing documents.
Sec. 205. Governing body.
Sec. 206. Reservation of the Tribe.
Sec. 207. Hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and water rights.

TITLE III—UPPER MATTAPONI TRIBE

Sec. 301. Findings.
Sec. 302. Definitions.
Sec. 303. Federal recognition.
Sec. 304. Membership; governing documents.
Sec. 305. Governing body.
Sec. 306. Reservation of the Tribe.
Sec. 307. Hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and water rights.

TITLE IV—RAPPAHANNOCK TRIBE, INC.

Sec. 401. Findings.
Sec. 402. Definitions.
Sec. 403. Federal recognition.
Sec. 404. Membership; governing documents.
Sec. 405. Governing body.
Sec. 406. Reservation of the Tribe.
Sec. 407. Hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and water rights.

TITLE V—MONACAN INDIAN NATION

Sec. 501. Findings.
Sec. 502. Definitions.
Sec. 503. Federal recognition.
Sec. 504. Membership; governing documents.
Sec. 505. Governing body.
Sec. 506. Reservation of the Tribe.
Sec. 507. Hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and water rights.

TITLE VI—NANSEMOND INDIAN TRIBE

Sec. 601. Findings.
Sec. 602. Definitions.
Sec. 603. Federal recognition.
Sec. 604. Membership; governing documents.
Sec. 605. Governing body.
Sec. 606. Reservation of the Tribe.
Sec. 607. Hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and water rights.

TITLE VII—EMINENT DOMAIN

Sec. 701. Limitation.

SEC. 2. INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT OF 1978.

Nothing in this Act affects the application of section 109 of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. 1919).

TITLE I—CHICKAHOMINY INDIAN TRIBE

SEC. 101. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) in 1607, when the English settlers set shore along the Virginia coastline, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe was one of about 30 tribes that received them;

(2) in 1614, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe entered into a treaty with Sir Thomas Dale, Governor of the Jamestown Colony, under which—

(A) the Chickahominy Indian Tribe agreed to provide 2 bushels of corn per man and send warriors to protect the English; and

(B) Sir Thomas Dale agreed in return to allow the Tribe to continue to practice its own tribal governance;

(3) in 1646, a treaty was signed which forced the Chickahominy from their homeland to the area around the York Mattaponi River in present-day King William County, leading to the formation of a reservation;

(4) in 1677, following Bacon's Rebellion, the Queen of Pamunkey signed the Treaty of Middle Plantation on behalf of the Chickahominy;

(5) in 1702, the Chickahominy were forced from their reservation, which caused the loss of a land base;

(6) in 1711, the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg established a grammar school for Indians called Brafferton College;

(7) a Chickahominy child was one of the first Indians to attend Brafferton College;

(8) in 1750, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe began to migrate from King William County back to the area around the Chickahominy River in New Kent and Charles City Counties;

(9) in 1793, a Baptist missionary named Bradby took refuge with the Chickahominy and took a Chickahominy woman as his wife;

(10) in 1831, the names of the ancestors of the modern-day Chickahominy Indian Tribe began to appear in the Charles City County census records;

(11) in 1901, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe formed Samaria Baptist Church;

(12) from 1901 to 1935, Chickahominy men were assessed a tribal tax so that their children could receive an education;

(13) the Tribe used the proceeds from the tax to build the first Samaria Indian School, buy supplies, and pay a teacher's salary;

(14) in 1919, C. Lee Moore, Auditor of Public Accounts for Virginia, told Chickahominy Chief O.W. Adkins that he had instructed the Commissioner of Revenue for Charles City County to record Chickahominy tribal members on the county tax rolls as Indian, and not as White or colored;

(15) during the period of 1920 through 1930, various Governors of the Commonwealth of Virginia wrote letters of introduction for Chickahominy Chiefs who had official business with Federal agencies in Washington, DC;

(16) in 1934, Chickahominy Chief O.O. Adkins wrote to John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, requesting money to acquire land for the Chickahominy Indian Tribe's use, to build school, medical, and library facilities and to buy tractors, implements, and seed;

(17) in 1934, John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, wrote to Chickahominy Chief O.O. Adkins, informing him that Congress had passed the Act of June 18, 1934 (commonly known as the ''Indian Reorganization Act'') (25 U.S.C. 461 et seq.), but had not made the appropriation to fund the Act;

(18) in 1942, Chickahominy Chief O.O. Adkins wrote to John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, asking for help in getting the proper racial designation on Selective Service records for Chickahominy soldiers;

(19) in 1943, John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, asked Douglas S. Freeman, editor of the Richmond News-Leader newspaper of Richmond, Virginia, to help Virginia Indians obtain proper racial designation on birth records;

(20) Collier stated that his office could not officially intervene because it had no responsibility for the Virginia Indians, ''as a matter largely of historical accident'', but was ''interested in them as descendants of the original inhabitants of the region'';

(21) in 1948, the Veterans' Education Committee of the Virginia State Board of Education approved Samaria Indian School to provide training to veterans;

(22) that school was established and run by the Chickahominy Indian Tribe;

(23) in 1950, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe purchased and donated to the Charles City County School Board land to be used to build a modern school for students of the Chickahominy and other Virginia Indian tribes;

(24) the Samaria Indian School included students in grades 1 through 8;

(25) in 1961, Senator Sam Ervin, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, requested Chickahominy Chief O.O. Adkins to provide assistance in analyzing the status of the constitutional rights of Indians ''in your area'';

(26) in 1967, the Charles City County school board closed Samaria Indian School and converted the school to a countywide primary school as a step toward full school integration of Indian and non-Indian students;

(27) in 1972, the Charles City County school board began receiving funds under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 458aa et seq.) on behalf of

Chickahominy students, which funding is provided as of the date of enactment of this Act under title V of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 458aaa et seq.);

(28) in 1974, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe bought land and built a tribal center using monthly pledges from tribal members to finance the transactions;

(29) in 1983, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe was granted recognition as an Indian tribe by the Commonwealth of Virginia, along with 5 other Indian tribes; and

(30) in 1985, Governor Gerald Baliles was the special guest at an intertribal Thanksgiving Day dinner hosted by the Chickahominy Indian Tribe.

SEC. 102. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) TRIBAL MEMBER.—The term ''tribal member'' means—

(A) an individual who is an enrolled member of the Tribe as of the date of enactment of this Act; and

(B) an individual who has been placed on the membership rolls of the Tribe in accordance with this title.

(3) TRIBE.—The term ''Tribe'' means the Chickahominy Indian Tribe.

SEC. 103. FEDERAL RECOGNITION.

(a) FEDERAL RECOGNITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Federal recognition is extended to the Tribe.

(2) APPLICABILITY OF LAWS.—All laws (including regulations) of the United States of general applicability to Indians or nations, Indian tribes, or bands of Indians (including the Act of June 18, 1934 (25 U.S.C. 461 et seq.)) that are not inconsistent with this title shall be applicable to the Tribe and tribal members.

(b) FEDERAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On and after the date of enactment of this Act, the Tribe and tribal members shall be eligible for all services and benefits provided by the Federal Government to federally recognized Indian tribes without regard to the existence of a reservation for the Tribe.

(2) SERVICE AREA.—For the purpose of the delivery of Federal services to tribal members, the service area of the Tribe shall be considered to be the area comprised of New Kent County, James City County, Charles City County, and Henrico County, Virginia.

SEC. 104. MEMBERSHIP; GOVERNING DOCUMENTS.

The membership roll and governing documents of the Tribe shall be the most recent membership roll and governing documents, respectively, submitted by the Tribe to the Secretary before the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 105. GOVERNING BODY.

The governing body of the Tribe shall be—

(1) the governing body of the Tribe in place as of the date of enactment of this Act; or

(2) any subsequent governing body elected in accordance with the election procedures specified in the governing documents of the Tribe.

SEC. 106. RESERVATION OF THE TRIBE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Upon the request of the Tribe, the Secretary of the Interior—

(1) shall take into trust for the benefit of the Tribe any land held in fee by the Tribe that was acquired by the Tribe on or before January 1, 2007, if such lands are located within the boundaries of New Kent County, James City County, Charles City County, or Henrico County, Virginia; and

(2) may take into trust for the benefit of the Tribe any land held in fee by the Tribe, if such lands are located within the boundaries of New Kent County, James City County, Charles City County, or Henrico County, Virginia.

(b) DEADLINE FOR DETERMINATION.—The Secretary shall make a final written determination not later than three years of the date which the Tribe submits a request for land to be taken into trust under subsection (a)(2) and shall immediately make that determination available to the Tribe.

(c) RESERVATION STATUS.—Any land taken into trust for the benefit of the Tribe pursuant to this paragraph shall, upon request of the Tribe, be considered part of the reservation of the Tribe.

(d) GAMING.—The Tribe may not conduct gaming activities as a matter of claimed inherent authority or under the authority of any Federal law, including the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.) or under any regulations thereunder promulgated by the Secretary or the National Indian Gaming Commission.

SEC. 107. HUNTING, FISHING, TRAPPING, GATHERING, AND WATER RIGHTS.

Nothing in this title expands, reduces, or affects in any manner any hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, or water rights of the Tribe and members of the Tribe.

TITLE II—CHICKAHOMINY INDIAN TRIBE—EASTERN DIVISION

SEC. 201. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) in 1607, when the English settlers set shore along the Virginia coastline, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe was one of about 30 tribes that received them;

(2) in 1614, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe entered into a treaty with Sir Thomas Dale, Governor of the Jamestown Colony, under which—

(A) the Chickahominy Indian Tribe agreed to provide 2 bushels of corn per man and send warriors to protect the English; and

(B) Sir Thomas Dale agreed in return to allow the Tribe to continue to practice its own tribal governance;

(3) in 1646, a treaty was signed which forced the Chickahominy from their homeland to the area around the York River in present-day King William County, leading to the formation of a reservation;

(4) in 1677, following Bacon's Rebellion, the Queen of Pamunkey signed the Treaty of Middle Plantation on behalf of the Chickahominy;

(5) in 1702, the Chickahominy were forced from their reservation, which caused the loss of a land base;

(6) in 1711, the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg established a grammar school for Indians called Brafferton College;

(7) a Chickahominy child was one of the first Indians to attend Brafferton College;

(8) in 1750, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe began to migrate from King William County back to the area around the Chickahominy River in New Kent and Charles City Counties;

(9) in 1793, a Baptist missionary named Bradby took refuge with the Chickahominy and took a Chickahominy woman as his wife;

(10) in 1831, the names of the ancestors of the modern-day Chickahominy Indian Tribe began to appear in the Charles City County census records;

(11) in 1870, a census revealed an enclave of Indians in New Kent County that is believed to be the beginning of the Chickahominy Indian Tribe—Eastern Division;

(12) other records were destroyed when the New Kent County courthouse was burned, leaving a State census as the only record covering that period;

(13) in 1901, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe formed Samaria Baptist Church;

(14) from 1901 to 1935, Chickahominy men were assessed a tribal tax so that their children could receive an education;

(15) the Tribe used the proceeds from the tax to build the first Samaria Indian School, buy supplies, and pay a teacher's salary;

(16) in 1910, a 1-room school covering grades 1 through 8 was established in New Kent County for the Chickahominy Indian Tribe—Eastern Division;

(17) during the period of 1920 through 1921, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe—Eastern Division began forming a tribal government;

(18) E.P. Bradby, the founder of the Tribe, was elected to be Chief;

(19) in 1922, Tsena Commocko Baptist Church was organized;

(20) in 1925, a certificate of incorporation was issued to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe—Eastern Division;

(21) in 1950, the 1-room Indian school in New Kent County was closed and students were bused to Samaria Indian School in Charles City County;

(22) in 1967, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe and the Chickahominy Indian Tribe—Eastern Division lost their schools as a result of the required integration of students;

(23) during the period of 1982 through 1984, Tsena Commocko Baptist Church built a new sanctuary to accommodate church growth;

(24) in 1983 the Chickahominy Indian Tribe—Eastern Division was granted State recognition along with 5 other Virginia Indian tribes;

(25) in 1985—

(A) the Virginia Council on Indians was organized as a State agency; and

(B) the Chickahominy Indian Tribe—Eastern Division was granted a seat on the Council;

(26) in 1988, a nonprofit organization known as the ''United Indians of Virginia'' was formed; and

(27) Chief Marvin ''Strongoak'' Bradby of the Eastern Band of the Chickahominy presently chairs the organization.

SEC. 202. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) TRIBAL MEMBER.—The term ''tribal member'' means—

(A) an individual who is an enrolled member of the Tribe as of the date of enactment of this Act; and

(B) an individual who has been placed on the membership rolls of the Tribe in accordance with this title.

(3) TRIBE.—The term ''Tribe'' means the Chickahominy Indian Tribe—Eastern Division.

SEC. 203. FEDERAL RECOGNITION.

(a) FEDERAL RECOGNITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Federal recognition is extended to the Tribe.

(2) APPLICABILITY OF LAWS.—All laws (including regulations) of the United States of general applicability to Indians or nations, Indian tribes, or bands of Indians (including the Act of June 18, 1934 (25 U.S.C. 461 et seq.)) that are not inconsistent with this title shall be applicable to the Tribe and tribal members.

(b) FEDERAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On and after the date of enactment of this Act, the Tribe and tribal members shall be eligible for all future services and benefits provided by the Federal Government to federally recognized Indian tribes without regard to the existence of a reservation for the Tribe.

(2) SERVICE AREA.—For the purpose of the delivery of Federal services to tribal members, the service area of the Tribe shall be considered to be the area comprised of New Kent County, James City County, Charles City County, and Henrico County, Virginia.

SEC. 204. MEMBERSHIP; GOVERNING DOCUMENTS.

The membership roll and governing documents of the Tribe shall be the most recent membership roll and governing documents, respectively, submitted by the Tribe to the Secretary before the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 205. GOVERNING BODY.

The governing body of the Tribe shall be—

(1) the governing body of the Tribe in place as of the date of enactment of this Act; or

(2) any subsequent governing body elected in accordance with the election procedures specified in the governing documents of the Tribe.

SEC. 206. RESERVATION OF THE TRIBE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Upon the request of the Tribe, the Secretary of the Interior—

(1) shall take into trust for the benefit of the Tribe any land held in fee by the Tribe that was acquired by the Tribe on or before January 1, 2007, if such lands are located within the boundaries of New Kent County, James City County, Charles City County, or Henrico County, Virginia; and

(2) may take into trust for the benefit of the Tribe any land held in fee by the Tribe, if such lands are located within the boundaries of New Kent County, James City County, Charles City County, or Henrico County, Virginia.

(b) DEADLINE FOR DETERMINATION.—The Secretary shall make a final written determination not later than three years of the date which the Tribe submits a request for land to be taken into trust under subsection (a)(2) and shall immediately make that determination available to the Tribe.

(c) RESERVATION STATUS.—Any land taken into trust for the benefit of the Tribe pursuant to this paragraph shall, upon request of the Tribe, be considered part of the reservation of the Tribe.

(d) GAMING.—The Tribe may not conduct gaming activities as a matter of claimed inherent authority or under the authority of any Federal law, including the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.) or under any regulations thereunder promulgated by the Secretary or the National Indian Gaming Commission.

SEC. 207. HUNTING, FISHING, TRAPPING, GATHERING, AND WATER RIGHTS.

Nothing in this title expands, reduces, or affects in any manner any hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, or water rights of the Tribe and members of the Tribe.

TITLE III—UPPER MATTAPONI TRIBE

SEC. 301. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) during the period of 1607 through 1646, the Chickahominy Indian Tribes—

(A) lived approximately 20 miles from Jamestown; and

(B) were significantly involved in English-Indian affairs;

(2) Mattaponi Indians, who later joined the Chickahominy Indians, lived a greater distance from Jamestown;

(3) in 1646, the Chickahominy Indians moved to Mattaponi River basin, away from the English;

(4) in 1661, the Chickahominy Indians sold land at a place known as ''the cliffs'' on the Mattaponi River;

(5) in 1669, the Chickahominy Indians—

(A) appeared in the Virginia Colony's census of Indian bowmen; and

(B) lived in ''New Kent'' County, which included the Mattaponi River basin at that time;

(6) in 1677, the Chickahominy and Mattaponi Indians were subjects of the Queen of Pamunkey, who was a signatory to the Treaty of 1677 with the King of England;

(7) in 1683, after a Mattaponi town was attacked by Seneca Indians, the Mattaponi Indians took refuge with the Chickahominy Indians, and the history of the 2 groups was intertwined for many years thereafter;

(8) in 1695, the Chickahominy and Mattaponi Indians—

(A) were assigned a reservation by the Virginia Colony; and

(B) traded land of the reservation for land at the place known as ''the cliffs'' (which, as of the date of enactment of this Act, is the Mattaponi Indian Reservation), which had been owned by the Mattaponi Indians before 1661;

(9) in 1711, a Chickahominy boy attended the Indian School at the College of William and Mary;

(10) in 1726, the Virginia Colony discontinued funding of interpreters for the Chickahominy and Mattaponi Indian Tribes;

(11) James Adams, who served as an interpreter to the Indian tribes known as of the date of enactment of this Act as the ''Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe'' and ''Chickahominy Indian Tribe'', elected to stay with the Upper Mattaponi Indians;

(12) today, a majority of the Upper Mattaponi Indians have ''Adams'' as their surname;

(13) in 1787, Thomas Jefferson, in Notes on the Commonwealth of Virginia, mentioned the Mattaponi Indians on a reservation in King William County and said that Chickahominy Indians were ''blended'' with the Mattaponi Indians and nearby Pamunkey Indians;

(14) in 1850, the census of the United States revealed a nucleus of approximately 10 families, all ancestral to modern Upper Mattaponi Indians, living in central King William County, Virginia, approximately 10 miles from the reservation;

(15) during the period of 1853 through 1884, King William County marriage records listed Upper Mattaponis as ''Indians'' in marrying people residing on the reservation;

(16) during the period of 1884 through the present, county marriage records usually refer to Upper Mattaponis as ''Indians'';

(17) in 1901, Smithsonian anthropologist James Mooney heard about the Upper Mattaponi Indians but did not visit them;

(18) in 1928, University of Pennsylvania anthropologist Frank Speck published a book on modern Virginia Indians with a section on the Upper Mattaponis;

(19) from 1929 until 1930, the leadership of the Upper Mattaponi Indians opposed the use of a ''colored'' designation in the 1930 United States census and won a compromise in which the Indian ancestry of the Upper Mattaponis was recorded but questioned;

(20) during the period of 1942 through 1945—

(A) the leadership of the Upper Mattaponi Indians, with the help of Frank Speck and others, fought against the induction of young men of the Tribe into ''colored'' units in the Armed Forces of the United States; and

(B) a tribal roll for the Upper Mattaponi Indians was compiled;

(21) from 1945 to 1946, negotiations took place to admit some of the young people of the Upper Mattaponi to high schools for Federal Indians (especially at Cherokee) because no high school coursework was available for Indians in Virginia schools; and

(22) in 1983, the Upper Mattaponi Indians applied for and won State recognition as an Indian tribe.

SEC. 302. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) TRIBAL MEMBER.—The term ''tribal member'' means—

(A) an individual who is an enrolled member of the Tribe as of the date of enactment of this Act; and

(B) an individual who has been placed on the membership rolls of the Tribe in accordance with this title.

(3) TRIBE.—The term ''Tribe'' means the Upper Mattaponi Tribe.

SEC. 303. FEDERAL RECOGNITION.

(a) FEDERAL RECOGNITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Federal recognition is extended to the Tribe.

(2) APPLICABILITY OF LAWS.—All laws (including regulations) of the United States of general applicability to Indians or nations, Indian tribes, or bands of Indians (including the Act of June 18, 1934 (25 U.S.C. 461 et seq.)) that are not inconsistent with this title shall be applicable to the Tribe and tribal members.

(b) FEDERAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On and after the date of enactment of this Act, the Tribe and tribal members shall be eligible for all services and benefits provided by the Federal Government to federally recognized Indian tribes without regard to the existence of a reservation for the Tribe.

(2) SERVICE AREA.—For the purpose of the delivery of Federal services to tribal members, the service area of the Tribe shall be considered to be the area within 25 miles of the Sharon Indian School at 13383 King William Road, King William County, Virginia.

SEC. 304. MEMBERSHIP; GOVERNING DOCUMENTS.

The membership roll and governing documents of the Tribe shall be the most recent membership roll and governing documents, respectively, submitted by the Tribe to the Secretary before the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 305. GOVERNING BODY.

The governing body of the Tribe shall be—

(1) the governing body of the Tribe in place as of the date of enactment of this Act; or

(2) any subsequent governing body elected in accordance with the election procedures specified in the governing documents of the Tribe.

SEC. 306. RESERVATION OF THE TRIBE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Upon the request of the Tribe, the Secretary of the Interior—

(1) shall take into trust for the benefit of the Tribe any land held in fee by the Tribe that was acquired by the Tribe on or before January 1, 2007, if such lands are located within the boundaries of King William County, Caroline County, Hanover County, King and Queen County, and New Kent County, Virginia; and

(2) may take into trust for the benefit of the Tribe any land held in fee by the Tribe, if such lands are located within the boundaries of King William County, Caroline County, Hanover County, King and Queen County, and New Kent County, Virginia.

(b) DEADLINE FOR DETERMINATION.—The Secretary shall make a final written determination not later than three years of the date which the Tribe submits a request for land to be taken into trust under subsection (a)(2) and shall immediately make that determination available to the Tribe.

(c) RESERVATION STATUS.—Any land taken into trust for the benefit of the Tribe pursuant to this paragraph shall, upon request of the Tribe, be considered part of the reservation of the Tribe.

(d) GAMING.—The Tribe may not conduct gaming activities as a matter of claimed inherent authority or under the authority of any Federal law, including the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.) or under any regulations thereunder promulgated by the Secretary or the National Indian Gaming Commission.

SEC. 307. HUNTING, FISHING, TRAPPING, GATHERING, AND WATER RIGHTS.

Nothing in this title expands, reduces, or affects in any manner any hunting, fishing,

trapping, gathering, or water rights of the Tribe and members of the Tribe.

TITLE IV—RAPPAHANNOCK TRIBE, INC.

SEC. 401. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) during the initial months after Virginia was settled, the Rappahannock Indians had 3 encounters with Captain John Smith;

(2) the first encounter occurred when the Rappahannock weroance (headman)—

(A) traveled to Quiyocohannock (a principal town across the James River from Jamestown), where he met with Smith to determine whether Smith had been the ''great man'' who had previously sailed into the Rappahannock River, killed a Rappahannock weroance, and kidnapped Rappahannock people; and

(B) determined that Smith was too short to be that ''great man'';

(3) on a second meeting, during John Smith's captivity (December 16, 1607, to January 8, 1608), Smith was taken to the Rappahannock principal village to show the people that Smith was not the ''great man'';

(4) a third meeting took place during Smith's exploration of the Chesapeake Bay (July to September 1608), when, after the Moraughtacund Indians had stolen 3 women from the Rappahannock King, Smith was prevailed upon to facilitate a peaceful truce between the Rappahannock and the Moraughtacund Indians;

(5) in the settlement, Smith had the 2 Indian tribes meet on the spot of their first fight;

(6) when it was established that both groups wanted peace, Smith told the Rappahannock King to select which of the 3 stolen women he wanted;

(7) the Moraughtacund King was given second choice among the 2 remaining women, and Mosco, a Wighcocomoco (on the Potomac River) guide, was given the third woman;

(8) in 1645, Captain William Claiborne tried unsuccessfully to establish treaty relations with the Rappahannocks, as the Rappahannocks had not participated in the Pamunkey-led uprising in 1644, and the English wanted to ''treat with the Rappahannocks or any other Indians not in amity with Opechancanough, concerning serving the county against the Pamunkeys'';

(9) in April 1651, the Rappahannocks conveyed a tract of land to an English settler, Colonel Morre Fauntleroy;

(10) the deed for the conveyance was signed by Accopatough, weroance of the Rappahannock Indians;

(11) in September 1653, Lancaster County signed a treaty with Rappahannock Indians, the terms of which treaty—

(A) gave Rappahannocks the rights of Englishmen in the county court; and

(B) attempted to make the Rappahannocks more accountable under English law;

(12) in September 1653, Lancaster County defined and marked the bounds of its Indian settlements;

(13) according to the Lancaster clerk of court, ''the tribe called the great Rappahannocks lived on the Rappahannock Creek just across the river above Tappahannock'';

(14) in September 1656, (Old) Rappahannock County (which, as of the date of enactment of this Act, is comprised of Richmond and Essex Counties, Virginia) signed a treaty with Rappahannock Indians that—

(A) mirrored the Lancaster County treaty from 1653; and

(B) stated that—

(i) Rappahannocks were to be rewarded, in Roanoke, for returning English fugitives; and

(ii) the English encouraged the Rappahannocks to send their children to live among the English as servants, who the English promised would be well-treated;

(15) in 1658, the Virginia Assembly revised a 1652 Act stating that ''there be no grants of land to any Englishman whatsoever de futuro until the Indians be first served with the proportion of 50 acres of land for each bowman'';

(16) in 1669, the colony conducted a census of Virginia Indians;

(17) as of the date of that census—

(A) the majority of the Rappahannocks were residing at their hunting village on the north side of the Mattaponi River; and

(B) at the time of the visit, census-takers were counting only the Indian tribes along the rivers, which explains why only 30 Rappahannock bowmen were counted on that river;

(18) the Rappahannocks used the hunting village on the north side of the Mattaponi River as their primary residence until the Rappahannocks were removed in 1684;

(19) in May 1677, the Treaty of Middle Plantation was signed with England;

(20) the Pamunkey Queen Cockacoeske signed on behalf of the Rappahannocks, ''who were supposed to be her tributaries'', but before the treaty could be ratified, the Queen of Pamunkey complained to the Virginia Colonial Council ''that she was having trouble with Rappahannocks and Chickahominies, supposedly tributaries of hers'';

(21) in November 1682, the Virginia Colonial Council established a reservation for the Rappahannock Indians of 3,474 acres ''about the town where they dwelt'';

(22) the Rappahannock ''town'' was the hunting village on the north side of the Mattaponi River, where the Rappahannocks had lived throughout the 1670s;

(23) the acreage allotment of the reservation was based on the 1658 Indian land act, which translates into a bowman population of 70, or an approximate total Rappahannock population of 350;

(24) in 1683, following raids by Iroquoian warriors on both Indian and English settlements, the Virginia Colonial Council ordered the Rappahannocks to leave their reservation and unite with the Nanzatico Indians at Nanzatico Indian Town, which was located across and up the Rappahannock River some 30 miles;

(25) between 1687 and 1699, the Rappahannocks migrated out of Nanzatico, returning to the south side of the Rappahannock River at Portobacco Indian Town;

(26) in 1706, by order of Essex County, Lieutenant Richard Covington ''escorted'' the Portobaccos and Rappahannocks out of Portobacco Indian Town, out of Essex County, and into King and Queen County where they settled along the ridgeline between the Rappahannock and Mattaponi Rivers, the site of their ancient hunting village and 1682 reservation;

(27) during the 1760s, 3 Rappahannock girls were raised on Thomas Nelson's Bleak Hill Plantation in King William County;

(28) of those girls—

(A) one married a Saunders man;

(B) one married a Johnson man; and

(C) one had 2 children, Edmund and Carter Nelson, fathered by Thomas Cary Nelson;

(29) in the 19th century, those Saunders, Johnson, and Nelson families are among the core Rappahannock families from which the modern Tribe traces its descent;

(30) in 1819 and 1820, Edward Bird, John Bird (and his wife), Carter Nelson, Edmund Nelson, and Carter Spurlock (all Rappahannock ancestors) were listed on the tax roles of King and Queen County and taxed at the county poor rate;

(31) Edmund Bird was added to the tax roles in 1821;

(32) those tax records are significant documentation because the great majority of pre-1864 records for King and Queen County were destroyed by fire;

(33) beginning in 1819, and continuing through the 1880s, there was a solid Rappahannock presence in the membership at Upper Essex Baptist Church;

(34) that was the first instance of conversion to Christianity by at least some Rappahannock Indians;

(35) while twenty-six identifiable and traceable Rappahannock surnames appear on the pre-1863 membership list, and twenty-eight were listed on the 1863 membership roster, the number of surnames listed had declined to twelve in 1878 and had risen only slightly to fourteen by 1888;

(36) a reason for the decline is that in 1870, a Methodist circuit rider, Joseph Mastin, secured funds to purchase land and construct St. Stephens Baptist Church for the Rappahannocks living nearby in Caroline County;

(37) Mastin referred to the Rappahannocks during the period of 1850 to 1870 as ''Indians, having a great need for moral and Christian guidance'';

(38) St. Stephens was the dominant tribal church until the Rappahannock Indian Baptist Church was established in 1964;

(39) at both churches, the core Rappahannock family names of Bird, Clarke, Fortune, Johnson, Nelson, Parker, and Richardson predominate;

(40) during the early 1900s, James Mooney, noted anthropologist, maintained correspondence with the Rappahannocks, surveying them and instructing them on how to formalize their tribal government;

(41) in November 1920, Speck visited the Rappahannocks and assisted them in organizing the fight for their sovereign rights;

(42) in 1921, the Rappahannocks were granted a charter from the Commonwealth of Virginia formalizing their tribal government;

(43) Speck began a professional relationship with the Tribe that would last more than 30 years and document Rappahannock history and traditions as never before;

(44) in April 1921, Rappahannock Chief George Nelson asked the Governor of Virginia, Westmoreland Davis, to forward a proclamation to the President of the United States, along with an appended list of tribal members and a handwritten copy of the proclamation itself;

(45) the letter concerned Indian freedom of speech and assembly nationwide;

(46) in 1922, the Rappahannocks established a formal school at Lloyds, Essex County, Virginia;

(47) prior to establishment of the school, Rappahannock children were taught by a tribal member in Central Point, Caroline County, Virginia;

(48) in December 1923, Rappahannock Chief George Nelson testified before Congress appealing for a $50,000 appropriation to establish an Indian school in Virginia;

(49) in 1930, the Rappahannocks were engaged in an ongoing dispute with the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States Census Bureau about their classification in the 1930 Federal census;

(50) in January 1930, Rappahannock Chief Otho S. Nelson wrote to Leon Truesdell, Chief Statistician of the United States Census Bureau, asking that the 218 enrolled Rappahannocks be listed as Indians;

(51) in February 1930, Truesdell replied to Nelson saying that ''special instructions'' were being given about classifying Indians;

(52) in April 1930, Nelson wrote to William M. Steuart at the Census Bureau asking about the enumerators' failure to classify his

people as Indians, saying that enumerators had not asked the question about race when they interviewed his people;

(53) in a followup letter to Truesdell, Nelson reported that the enumerators were ''flatly denying'' his people's request to be listed as Indians and that the race question was completely avoided during interviews;

(54) the Rappahannocks had spoken with Caroline and Essex County enumerators, and with John M.W. Green at that point, without success;

(55) Nelson asked Truesdell to list people as Indians if he sent a list of members;

(56) the matter was settled by William Steuart, who concluded that the Bureau's rule was that people of Indian descent could be classified as ''Indian'' only if Indian ''blood'' predominated and ''Indian'' identity was accepted in the local community;

(57) the Virginia Vital Statistics Bureau classed all nonreservation Indians as ''Negro'', and it failed to see why ''an exception should be made'' for the Rappahannocks;

(58) therefore, in 1925, the Indian Rights Association took on the Rappahannock case to assist the Rappahannocks in fighting for their recognition and rights as an Indian tribe;

(59) during the Second World War, the Pamunkeys, Mattaponis, Chickahominies, and Rappahannocks had to fight the draft boards with respect to their racial identities;

(60) the Virginia Vital Statistics Bureau insisted that certain Indian draftees be inducted into Negro units;

(61) finally, 3 Rappahannocks were convicted of violating the Federal draft laws and, after spending time in a Federal prison, were granted conscientious objector status and served out the remainder of the war working in military hospitals;

(62) in 1943, Frank Speck noted that there were approximately 25 communities of Indians left in the Eastern United States that were entitled to Indian classification, including the Rappahannocks;

(63) in the 1940s, Leon Truesdell, Chief Statistician, of the United States Census Bureau, listed 118 members in the Rappahannock Tribe in the Indian population of Virginia;

(64) on April 25, 1940, the Office of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior included the Rappahannocks on a list of Indian tribes classified by State and by agency;

(65) in 1948, the Smithsonian Institution Annual Report included an article by William Harlen Gilbert entitled, ''Surviving Indian Groups of the Eastern United States'', which included and described the Rappahannock Tribe;

(66) in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Rappahannocks operated a school at Indian Neck;

(67) the State agreed to pay a tribal teacher to teach 10 students bused by King and Queen County to Sharon Indian School in King William County, Virginia;

(68) in 1965, Rappahannock students entered Marriott High School (a White public school) by Executive order of the Governor of Virginia;

(69) in 1972, the Rappahannocks worked with the Coalition of Eastern Native Americans to fight for Federal recognition;

(70) in 1979, the Coalition established a pottery and artisans company, operating with other Virginia tribes;

(71) in 1980, the Rappahannocks received funding through the Administration for Native Americans of the Department of Health and Human Services to develop an economic program for the Tribe; and

(72) in 1983, the Rappahannocks received State recognition as an Indian tribe.

SEC. 402. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) TRIBAL MEMBER.—The term ''tribal member'' means—

(A) an individual who is an enrolled member of the Tribe as of the date of enactment of this Act; and

(B) an individual who has been placed on the membership rolls of the Tribe in accordance with this title.

(3) TRIBE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''Tribe'' means the organization possessing the legal name Rappahannock Tribe, Inc.

(B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term ''Tribe'' does not include any other Indian tribe, subtribe, band, or splinter group the members of which represent themselves as Rappahannock Indians.

SEC. 403. FEDERAL RECOGNITION.

(a) FEDERAL RECOGNITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Federal recognition is extended to the Tribe.

(2) APPLICABILITY OF LAWS.—All laws (including regulations) of the United States of general applicability to Indians or nations, Indian tribes, or bands of Indians (including the Act of June 18, 1934 (25 U.S.C. 461 et seq.)) that are not inconsistent with this title shall be applicable to the Tribe and tribal members.

(b) FEDERAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On and after the date of enactment of this Act, the Tribe and tribal members shall be eligible for all services and benefits provided by the Federal Government to federally recognized Indian tribes without regard to the existence of a reservation for the Tribe.

(2) SERVICE AREA.—For the purpose of the delivery of Federal services to tribal members, the service area of the Tribe shall be considered to be the area comprised of King and Queen County, Caroline County, Essex County, and King William County, Virginia.

SEC. 404. MEMBERSHIP; GOVERNING DOCUMENTS.

The membership roll and governing documents of the Tribe shall be the most recent membership roll and governing documents, respectively, submitted by the Tribe to the Secretary before the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 405. GOVERNING BODY.

The governing body of the Tribe shall be—

(1) the governing body of the Tribe in place as of the date of enactment of this Act; or

(2) any subsequent governing body elected in accordance with the election procedures specified in the governing documents of the Tribe.

SEC. 406. RESERVATION OF THE TRIBE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Upon the request of the Tribe, the Secretary of the Interior—

(1) shall take into trust for the benefit of the Tribe any land held in fee by the Tribe that was acquired by the Tribe on or before January 1, 2007, if such lands are located within the boundaries of King and Queen County, Stafford County, Spotsylvania County, Richmond County, Essex County, and Caroline County, Virginia; and

(2) may take into trust for the benefit of the Tribe any land held in fee by the Tribe, if such lands are located within the boundaries of King and Queen County, Richmond County, Lancaster County, King George County, Essex County, Caroline County, New Kent County, King William County, and James City County, Virginia.

(b) DEADLINE FOR DETERMINATION.—The Secretary shall make a final written determination not later than three years of the date which the Tribe submits a request for land to be taken into trust under subsection (a)(2) and shall immediately make that determination available to the Tribe.

(c) RESERVATION STATUS.—Any land taken into trust for the benefit of the Tribe pursuant to this paragraph shall, upon request of the Tribe, be considered part of the reservation of the Tribe.

(d) GAMING.—The Tribe may not conduct gaming activities as a matter of claimed inherent authority or under the authority of any Federal law, including the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.) or under any regulations thereunder promulgated by the Secretary or the National Indian Gaming Commission.

SEC. 407. HUNTING, FISHING, TRAPPING, GATHERING, AND WATER RIGHTS.

Nothing in this title expands, reduces, or affects in any manner any hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, or water rights of the Tribe and members of the Tribe.

TITLE V—MONACAN INDIAN NATION

SEC. 501. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) in 1677, the Monacan Tribe signed the Treaty of Middle Plantation between Charles II of England and 12 Indian ''Kings and Chief Men'';

(2) in 1722, in the Treaty of Albany, Governor Spotswood negotiated to save the Virginia Indians from extinction at the hands of the Iroquois;

(3) specifically mentioned in the negotiations were the Monacan tribes of the Totero (Tutelo), Saponi, Ocheneeches (Occaneechi), Stengenocks, and Meipontskys;

(4) in 1790, the first national census recorded Benjamin Evans and Robert Johns, both ancestors of the present Monacan community, listed as ''white'' with mulatto children;

(5) in 1782, tax records also began for those families;

(6) in 1850, the United States census recorded 29 families, mostly large, with Monacan surnames, the members of which are genealogically related to the present community;

(7) in 1870, a log structure was built at the Bear Mountain Indian Mission;

(8) in 1908, the structure became an Episcopal Mission and, as of the date of enactment of this Act, the structure is listed as a landmark on the National Register of Historic Places;

(9) in 1920, 304 Amherst Indians were identified in the United States census;

(10) from 1930 through 1931, numerous letters from Monacans to the Bureau of the Census resulted from the decision of Dr. Walter Plecker, former head of the Bureau of Vital Statistics of the Commonwealth of Virginia, not to allow Indians to register as Indians for the 1930 census;

(11) the Monacans eventually succeeded in being allowed to claim their race, albeit with an asterisk attached to a note from Dr. Plecker stating that there were no Indians in Virginia;

(12) in 1947, D'Arcy McNickle, a Salish Indian, saw some of the children at the Amherst Mission and requested that the Cherokee Agency visit them because they appeared to be Indian;

(13) that letter was forwarded to the Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, Chicago, Illinois;

(14) Chief Jarrett Blythe of the Eastern Band of Cherokee did visit the Mission and wrote that he ''would be willing to accept these children in the Cherokee school'';

(15) in 1979, a Federal Coalition of Eastern Native Americans established the entity known as ''Monacan Co-operative Pottery'' at the Amherst Mission;

(16) some important pieces were produced at Monacan Co-operative Pottery, including

a piece that was sold to the Smithsonian Institution;

(17) the Mattaponi-Pamunkey-Monacan Consortium, established in 1981, has since been organized as a nonprofit corporation that serves as a vehicle to obtain funds for those Indian tribes from the Department of Labor under Native American programs;

(18) in 1989, the Monacan Tribe was recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia, which enabled the Tribe to apply for grants and participate in other programs; and

(19) in 1993, the Monacan Tribe received tax-exempt status as a nonprofit corporation from the Internal Revenue Service.

SEC. 502. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) TRIBAL MEMBER.—The term ''tribal member'' means—

(A) an individual who is an enrolled member of the Tribe as of the date of enactment of this Act; and

(B) an individual who has been placed on the membership rolls of the Tribe in accordance with this title.

(3) TRIBE.—The term ''Tribe'' means the Monacan Indian Nation.

SEC. 503. FEDERAL RECOGNITION.

(a) FEDERAL RECOGNITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Federal recognition is extended to the Tribe.

(2) APPLICABILITY OF LAWS.—All laws (including regulations) of the United States of general applicability to Indians or nations, Indian tribes, or bands of Indians (including the Act of June 18, 1934 (25 U.S.C. 461 et seq.)) that are not inconsistent with this title shall be applicable to the Tribe and tribal members.

(b) FEDERAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On and after the date of enactment of this Act, the Tribe and tribal members shall be eligible for all services and benefits provided by the Federal Government to federally recognized Indian tribes without regard to the existence of a reservation for the Tribe.

(2) SERVICE AREA.—For the purpose of the delivery of Federal services to tribal members, the service area of the Tribe shall be considered to be the area comprised of all land within 25 miles from the center of Amherst, Virginia.

SEC. 504. MEMBERSHIP; GOVERNING DOCUMENTS.

The membership roll and governing documents of the Tribe shall be the most recent membership roll and governing documents, respectively, submitted by the Tribe to the Secretary before the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 505. GOVERNING BODY.

The governing body of the Tribe shall be—

(1) the governing body of the Tribe in place as of the date of enactment of this Act; or

(2) any subsequent governing body elected in accordance with the election procedures specified in the governing documents of the Tribe.

SEC. 506. RESERVATION OF THE TRIBE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Upon the request of the Tribe, the Secretary of the Interior—

(1) shall take into trust for the benefit of the Tribe any land held in fee by the Tribe that was acquired by the Tribe on or before January 1, 2007, if such lands are located within the boundaries of Amherst County, Virginia; and

(2) may take into trust for the benefit of the Tribe any land held in fee by the Tribe, if such lands are located within the boundaries of Amherst County, Virginia, and those parcels in Rockbridge County, Virginia (subject to the consent of the local unit of government), owned by Mr. J. Poole, described as East 731 Sandbridge (encompassing approximately 4.74 acres) and East 731 (encompassing approximately 5.12 acres).

(b) DEADLINE FOR DETERMINATION.—The Secretary shall make a final written determination not later than three years of the date which the Tribe submits a request for land to be taken into trust under subsection (a)(2) and shall immediately make that determination available to the Tribe.

(c) RESERVATION STATUS.—Any land taken into trust for the benefit of the Tribe pursuant to this paragraph shall, upon request of the Tribe, be considered part of the reservation of the Tribe.

(d) GAMING.—The Tribe may not conduct gaming activities as a matter of claimed inherent authority or under the authority of any Federal law, including the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.) or under any regulations thereunder promulgated by the Secretary or the National Indian Gaming Commission.

SEC. 507. HUNTING, FISHING, TRAPPING, GATHERING, AND WATER RIGHTS.

Nothing in this title expands, reduces, or affects in any manner any hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, or water rights of the Tribe and members of the Tribe.

TITLE VI—NANSEMOND INDIAN TRIBE

SEC. 601. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) from 1607 until 1646, Nansemond Indians—

(A) lived approximately 30 miles from Jamestown; and

(B) were significantly involved in English-Indian affairs;

(2) after 1646, there were 2 sections of Nansemonds in communication with each other, the Christianized Nansemonds in Norfolk County, who lived as citizens, and the traditionalist Nansemonds, who lived further west;

(3) in 1638, according to an entry in a 17th century sermon book still owned by the Chief's family, a Norfolk County Englishman married a Nansemond woman;

(4) that man and woman are lineal ancestors of all of members of the Nansemond Indian tribe alive as of the date of enactment of this Act, as are some of the traditionalist Nansemonds;

(5) in 1669, the 2 Nansemond sections appeared in Virginia Colony's census of Indian bowmen;

(6) in 1677, Nansemond Indians were signatories to the Treaty of 1677 with the King of England;

(7) in 1700 and 1704, the Nansemonds and other Virginia Indian tribes were prevented by Virginia Colony from making a separate peace with the Iroquois;

(8) Virginia represented those Indian tribes in the final Treaty of Albany, 1722;

(9) in 1711, a Nansemond boy attended the Indian School at the College of William and Mary;

(10) in 1727, Norfolk County granted William Bass and his kinsmen the ''Indian privileges'' of clearing swamp land and bearing arms (which privileges were forbidden to other non-Whites) because of their Nansemond ancestry, which meant that Bass and his kinsmen were original inhabitants of that land;

(11) in 1742, Norfolk County issued a certificate of Nansemond descent to William Bass;

(12) from the 1740s to the 1790s, the traditionalist section of the Nansemond tribe, 40 miles west of the Christianized Nansemonds, was dealing with reservation land;

(13) the last surviving members of that section sold out in 1792 with the permission of the Commonwealth of Virginia;

(14) in 1797, Norfolk County issued a certificate stating that William Bass was of Indian and English descent, and that his Indian line of ancestry ran directly back to the early 18th century elder in a traditionalist section of Nansemonds on the reservation;

(15) in 1833, Virginia enacted a law enabling people of European and Indian descent to obtain a special certificate of ancestry;

(16) the law originated from the county in which Nansemonds lived, and mostly Nansemonds, with a few people from other counties, took advantage of the new law;

(17) a Methodist mission established around 1850 for Nansemonds is currently a standard Methodist congregation with Nansemond members;

(18) in 1901, Smithsonian anthropologist James Mooney—

(A) visited the Nansemonds; and

(B) completed a tribal census that counted 61 households and was later published;

(19) in 1922, Nansemonds were given a special Indian school in the segregated school system of Norfolk County;

(20) the school survived only a few years;

(21) in 1928, University of Pennsylvania anthropologist Frank Speck published a book on modern Virginia Indians that included a section on the Nansemonds; and

(22) the Nansemonds were organized formally, with elected officers, in 1984, and later applied for and received State recognition.

SEC. 602. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) TRIBAL MEMBER.—The term ''tribal member'' means—

(A) an individual who is an enrolled member of the Tribe as of the date of enactment of this Act; and

(B) an individual who has been placed on the membership rolls of the Tribe in accordance with this title.

(3) TRIBE.—The term ''Tribe'' means the Nansemond Indian Tribe.

SEC. 603. FEDERAL RECOGNITION.

(a) FEDERAL RECOGNITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Federal recognition is extended to the Tribe.

(2) APPLICABILITY OF LAWS.—All laws (including regulations) of the United States of general applicability to Indians or nations, Indian tribes, or bands of Indians (including the Act of June 18, 1934 (25 U.S.C. 461 et seq.)) that are not inconsistent with this title shall be applicable to the Tribe and tribal members.

(b) FEDERAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On and after the date of enactment of this Act, the Tribe and tribal members shall be eligible for all services and benefits provided by the Federal Government to federally recognized Indian tribes without regard to the existence of a reservation for the Tribe.

(2) SERVICE AREA.—For the purpose of the delivery of Federal services to tribal members, the service area of the Tribe shall be considered to be the area comprised of the cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach, Virginia.

SEC. 604. MEMBERSHIP; GOVERNING DOCUMENTS.

The membership roll and governing documents of the Tribe shall be the most recent membership roll and governing documents, respectively, submitted by the Tribe to the Secretary before the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 605. GOVERNING BODY.

The governing body of the Tribe shall be—

(1) the governing body of the Tribe in place as of the date of enactment of this Act; or

(2) any subsequent governing body elected in accordance with the election procedures specified in the governing documents of the Tribe.

SEC. 606. RESERVATION OF THE TRIBE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Upon the request of the Tribe, the Secretary of the Interior—

(1) shall take into trust for the benefit of the Tribe any land held in fee by the Tribe that was acquired by the Tribe on or before January 1, 2007, if such lands are located within the boundaries of the city of Suffolk, the city of Chesapeake, or Isle of Wight County, Virginia; and

(2) may take into trust for the benefit of the Tribe any land held in fee by the Tribe, if such lands are located within the boundaries of the city of Suffolk, the city of Chesapeake, or Isle of Wight County, Virginia.

(b) DEADLINE FOR DETERMINATION.—The Secretary shall make a final written determination not later than three years of the date which the Tribe submits a request for land to be taken into trust under subsection (a)(2) and shall immediately make that determination available to the Tribe.

(c) RESERVATION STATUS.—Any land taken into trust for the benefit of the Tribe pursuant to this paragraph shall, upon request of the Tribe, be considered part of the reservation of the Tribe.

(d) GAMING.—The Tribe may not conduct gaming activities as a matter of claimed inherent authority or under the authority of any Federal law, including the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.) or under any regulations thereunder promulgated by the Secretary or the National Indian Gaming Commission.

SEC. 607. HUNTING, FISHING, TRAPPING, GATHERING, AND WATER RIGHTS.

Nothing in this title expands, reduces, or affects in any manner any hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, or water rights of the Tribe and members of the Tribe.

TITLE VII—EMINENT DOMAIN

SEC. 701. LIMITATION.

Eminent domain may not be used to acquire lands in fee or in trust for an Indian tribe recognized under this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 984, the Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act of 2017 will extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Tribe, the Eastern Chickahominy Tribe, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe.

My district, the First Congressional District of Virginia, includes the historical tribal areas of several of these tribes. The six tribes are culturally and historically significant to the Commonwealth of Virginia and to the story of America itself. Ancestors from these tribes populated coastal Virginia when Captain John Smith settled at Jamestown in 1607. They were also the first of the American Indian tribes that entered into peace agreements, actually entered into peace agreements with the Crown of England because United States, at that time, was not formally a nation yet. So they were peace-loving even before the United States came of age.

Also, the connections that these tribes have with the Nation and the settlement of the Nation are extraordinarily important. If you go back in time, you know that six of these tribes were part of the Powhatan Nation. We know famously that Pocahontas was a member of the Powhatan Nation, and also there in Werowocomoco, there on the shores of the York River, saved the life of Captain John Smith; so we can see the significant impact that these tribes have had on the Nation's history and where we are today.

They are called first-contact tribes because they were the first tribes to contact the settlers as they came here to America to settle our land. In Jamestown there, the first connection they had was with these Virginia tribes. These first-contact tribes, as I have said, are intertwined with the birth of our Nation over 400 years ago, and they continue today to preserve a culture and heritage integral to Virginia and to the Nation. They are very proud of their history, and the tribal members today do much for our State in many different ways, as well as for our Nation, and are passionate about making sure that they are recognized, as other tribes are, in their critical nature to the government and Nation that we have today.

It is notable that many tribal members have also served our country bravely as part of the United States military. It is unacceptable that these tribal members, who selflessly and proudly served under the American flag during our Nation's conflicts, from the Revolutionary War to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, have not been officially recognized by the Federal Government.

Congressional recognition is also necessary because the record requirements by the Bureau of Indian Affairs administration process unfairly penalizes these Virginia tribes. Tribal records of these tribes were destroyed during the Civil War when many eastern Virginia courthouses were destroyed. Additionally, early 20th century Virginia racial purity laws barred Native Americans from identifying as Indian on State-issued birth certificates.

It is for these reasons that I am proud to have worked along with several of my Virginia colleagues in the House and the Senate to introduce this legislation that has received wide bipartisan support, including from former and current Virginia Governors who strongly supported this effort to recognize these tribes.

During the 114th Congress, the Subcommittee on Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs held a hearing on Virginia tribal recognition. Most recently, the committee marked up and reported the Virginia tribal recognition as part of Chairman BISHOP's Tribal Recognition Act in December. During the legislative hearing, the previous administration's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs testified that they did not object to action by Congress to enact the bill, given Congress' authority under the Constitution to recognize tribes. At the hearing, members of the committee also expressed bipartisan support for recognizing these six first-contact Virginia tribes.

Additionally, this legislation previously passed the House in both the 110th and the 111th Congress. It is clear that there is wide bipartisan support for this issue across the Commonwealth, across our Nation, and here in Congress.

Federal recognition would acknowledge and protect historical and cultural identities of these tribes for the benefit of all Americans. It would affirm the government-to-government relationship between the United States and these first-contact Virginia tribes as a matter of respect out of what they did in working to make this Nation what it is today and also in helping create opportunities to enhance and protect the well-being of tribal members.

This legislation will also provide certainty and finality on the gaming issue for the six Virginia tribes. H.R. 984 clearly prohibits the tribes from conducting gaming activities under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. The Federal Government's failure to recognize the Virginia tribes is a serious injustice, but it is one that we here today can correct.

Congress retains the authority to recognize Indian tribes, and I believe that it is right and just for us to continue to exercise that authority under the Constitution and recognize these six first-contact Virginia tribes. These first-contact tribes deserve equity and parity under the law. It is absolutely long overdue.

I urge your support for H.R. 984.

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

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

We are here today, more than 400 years after the first English settlers landed in what became Jamestown, Virginia, to finally establish a government-to-government relationship with the Indian tribes who greeted those settlers.

The Virginia tribes that are recognized in this bill have treaties with the King of England that date back to the early 1600s. Their ancestors were there at Jamestown and facilitated the very founding and early development of our Nation.

These tribes have been unable to claim their rightful Indian identity in relation to the Federal Government, due in great part to the machinations

of one man, Walter Ashby Plecker, the State registrar for the Commonwealth in the early 20th century. Plecker, an avowed White supremacist, ran Virginia's Bureau of Vital Statistics for over 34 years. From 1912 to 1947, Plecker set out to rid the Commonwealth of any documents that recorded the existence of Indians or Indian tribes living therein.

He was instrumental in ensuring passage of the Racial Integrity Act in 1924, making it illegal for individuals to classify themselves or their newborn children as Indian. But he went even further and spent decades removing the category of Indian from birth and marriage records. Although this paper genocide, as it has been termed, attempted to erase the Virginia Indians from history, the tribal members held firm to their culture and to their identity.

In 1997, State legislation was passed to help correct the records of the Virginia Indians. Soon after, the Virginia Indians began their quest for Federal recognition. Passage of this legislation will finally put to end their 20-year struggle.

I commend and thank our colleague from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) for bringing forth this bill. I also want to give special thanks to former Congressman Jim Moran, who spent several years in this body championing this legislation and tirelessly working toward its goals.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to finally put this issue to rest and correct a historical injustice by extending Federal recognition to these six Virginia tribes. I urge all of my colleagues to join me and support this bill.

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

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

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MCEACHIN).

Mr. MCEACHIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman SOTO for yielding. I also want to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN), my friend and colleague, for bringing this legislation forward.

I rise, 410 years after the first English settlers landed in what became Jamestown, Virginia, to finally grant Federal recognition to some of the Native American tribes who met those early settlers. Today, with the passage of H.R. 984, we are recognizing the rightful status of Virginia tribes in our national history.

It is largely a historical accident that the tribes of Virginia are not recognized. The six tribes have treaties that predate the United States, but because of the systematic destruction of their records, they have been denied Federal recognition for the services that come along with it. We are fixing this injustice today by passing H.R. 984.

Federal recognition will provide what the government has long denied: legal protections and financial obligations. Federal recognition will provide financial assistance for the tribes' social services, their healthcare, their housing needs, educational opportunities, and repatriation of the remains of their ancestors in a respectful manner.

These opportunities will allow Virginia's tribes to flourish culturally and economically. These opportunities will lead to a better, brighter future for the next generation. Federal recognition is an issue I have cared deeply about since my time in the Virginia General Assembly. I am proud and humbled to cosponsor this legislation.

We have waited too long, Mr. Speaker, to recognize Virginia tribes. I urge my colleagues to support passage.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY).

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Virginia for his leadership on this very important piece of legislation, important not only for the Commonwealth of Virginia but for the rights of all Americans, beginning with the original Americans.

When we talk about the Americas, we sometimes talk as if the Americas began in the early 17th century, with Jamestown, with Plymouth, and with the subsequent colonization of the East Coast. But, in fact, there were millions of Native Americans here long before European colonization. They had rich culture. They had incredible artistic expression. They had a way of life. It was disrupted by European colonization.

As if some genocidal policies of the 18th and 19th century weren't bad enough in terms of their terrible impact on this population, the racism my friend from Florida described that went on shamefully in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the early 20th century deeply compounded the problem by denying the identity of individuals and communities as Native American so that the battle for them to have their rights restored that my good friend, Mr. WITTMAN, is trying to right today was made so much more difficult and complex.

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If I destroy your identity papers, I destroy your ability to prove who you are. That is the dilemma and that is the catch-22 in which we find ourselves today.

This is a matter of simple justice. This is a matter of Congress righting a wrong. It is a proud moment to stand shoulder to shoulder, Republican and Democrat from Virginia, to want to right this wrong. And I know we are joined by all of our colleagues and former colleagues, including our friend Jim Moran for his great leadership in this matter.

So I am proud to support the efforts of my colleague. I urge all Members of the House to support this legislation, and let's turn a page in history the right way.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, it is time to right this wrong injustice and bring truth back into our history.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I would like to also recognize the leaders of our Virginia tribes today. Several of those members are with us here in the gallery today to witness a long overdue action by Congress to formally recognize those Virginia tribes. Those Virginia tribal leaders have been tremendous in their resolve and in their support to make sure that we right this injustice.

I want to thank them for what they have done. They have been tireless in their support for the things that they have done to make sure that we all appreciate and understand the great history with these Virginia tribes.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that those members of the tribes today, a number are getting smaller and smaller. And this is really only about making sure we are doing what is right for those tribes and making sure that they get that formal recognition because of many injustices that have happened in the past.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 984. And I believe with the passage out of the House—and I urge my colleagues in the Senate to do likewise—today will be a very proud day for our Nation in coming about and recognizing these Virginia first-contact tribes that has been long overdue.

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

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 984, the Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act and I want to thank my fellow Virginian, Congressman ROB WITTMAN for introducing this bill, and the gentleman from Utah, Chairman Bishop and the gentleman from Arizona, Ranking Member GRIJALVA, for their leadership and cooperation in bringing the bill to the floor.

Four hundred ten years ago, the first English settlers founded Jamestown, Virginia. The founding of Jamestown represented a first step in the creation of our great Republic, and the success of this colony is owed to the help of the indigenous people of Virginia.

With this assistance, the Jamestown colony weathered a difficult first few years in the New World before expanding, with English colonists pushing further inland. The same Native Americans who had helped those first settlers were pushed from their land without compensation. Treaties, many of which precede our own constitution, were made in an effort to compensate Virginia's Native Americans. Unfortunately, as history has repeatedly shown, these treaties were not often honored.

Like many other Native Americans, and many other groups who were not white, and despite their contributions to the founding of our nation, Virginia's Indian Tribes were pushed to the fringes of society. They were deprived of their land, prevented from getting an education, and denied a role in our society. Virginia's Native Americans were denied their

very fundamental human rights and the very freedoms and liberties enshrined in our Constitution.

This bill will finally grant federal recognition to the Chickahominy Tribe, the Eastern Chickahominy Tribe, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Tribe.

Federal recognition of Virginia's Indian Tribes will promote tribal economic development and allow Virginia's tribes to flourish culturally. Federal recognition, a process that has been ongoing for these tribes for over 30 years, will lead to a bright future for a whole new generation of tribe members.

Mr. Speaker, I was a member of the Virginia General Assembly in 1983 when many of these tribes first gained formal recognition from the Commonwealth of Virginia, and I am proud to be here today supporting federal recognition for these tribes.

The time has come for this Congress to act, and I therefore urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. MCEACHIN. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I spoke during debate on H.R. 984, the Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act of 2017.

I rise, 410 years after the first English settlers landed in what became Jamestown, Virginia, to finally grant federal recognition to some of the Native American tribes who met those early settlers.

Today, with passage of H.R. 984, we are recognizing the rightful status of Virginia's tribes in our national history.

These six tribes have treaties that predate the United States but because of the systemic destruction of their records, they have been denied federal recognition and the services that come along with it.

We are fixing this injustice by passing H.R. 984.

Federal recognition will provide what the government has long denied—legal protections and financial obligations.

Federal recognition will provide financial assistance for the tribes' social services, health care and housing needs, educational opportunities, and repatriation of the remains of their ancestors in a respectful manner. These opportunities will allow Virginia's tribes to flourish culturally and economically. These opportunities will lead to a better, brighter future for the next generation.

Federal recognition is an issue I have cared about deeply since my time in the Virginia General Assembly and I am a proud cosponsor this legislation.

We have waited too long to recognize Virginia's tribes. I urge my colleagues to support passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 984.

The question was taken.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

MODERNIZING GOVERNMENT TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 2017

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2227) to modernize Government information technology, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2227

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017'' or the ''MGT Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) The Federal Government spends nearly 75 percent of its annual information technology funding on operating and maintaining existing legacy information technology systems. These systems can pose operational risks, including rising costs and inability to meet mission requirements. These systems also pose security risks, including the inability to use current security best practices, such as data encryption and multi-factor authentication, making these systems particularly vulnerable to malicious cyber activity.

(2) In 2015, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) designated Improving the Management of IT Acquisitions and Operations to its biannual High Risk List and identified as a particular concern the increasing level of information technology spending on operations and maintenance, making less funding available for development or modernization. The GAO also found the Government has spent billions on failed and poorly performing information technology investments due to a lack of effective oversight.

(3) The Federal Government must modernize Federal IT systems to mitigate existing operational and security risks.

(4) The efficiencies, cost savings, and greater computing power offered by modernized solutions, such as cloud computing, have the potential to—

(A) eliminate inappropriate duplication and reduce costs;

(B) address the critical need for cybersecurity by design; and

(C) move the Federal Government into a broad, digital-services delivery model that will transform the ability of the Federal Government to meet mission requirements and deliver services to the American people.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are the following:

(1) Assist the Federal Government in modernizing Federal information technology to mitigate current operational and security risks.

(2) Incentivize cost savings in Federal information technology through modernization.

(3) Accelerate the acquisition and deployment of modernized information technology solutions, such as cloud computing, by addressing impediments in the areas of funding, development, and acquisition practices.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF AGENCY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS MODERNIZATION AND WORKING CAPITAL FUNDS.

(a) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM MODERNIZATION AND WORKING CAPITAL FUNDS.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The head of a covered agency may establish within such agency an information technology system modernization and working capital fund (in this section referred to as the ''IT working capital fund'') for necessary expenses described in paragraph (3).

(2) SOURCE OF FUNDS.—The following amounts may be deposited into an IT working capital fund:

(A) Reprogramming and transfer of funds made available in appropriations Acts subsequent to the date of the enactment of this Act, including transfer of any funds for the operation and maintenance of legacy information technology systems, in compliance with any applicable reprogramming law or guidelines of the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

(B) Amounts made available to the IT working capital fund through discretionary appropriations made available subsequent to the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) USE OF FUNDS.—An IT working capital fund established under paragraph (1) may be used, subject to the availability of appropriations, only for the following:

(A) To improve, retire, or replace existing information technology systems in the covered agency to enhance cybersecurity and to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

(B) To transition legacy information technology systems at the covered agency to cloud computing and other innovative platforms and technologies, including those serving more than one covered agency with common requirements.

(C) To assist and support covered agency efforts to provide adequate, risk-based, and cost-effective information technology capabilities that address evolving threats to information security.

(D) To reimburse funds transferred to the covered agency from the Technology Modernization Fund established under section 4, with the approval of the Chief Information Officer of the covered agency.

(4) EXISTING FUNDS.—An IT working capital fund may not be used to supplant funds provided for the operation and maintenance of any system within an appropriation for the covered agency at the time of establishment of the IT working capital fund.

(5) PRIORITIZATION OF FUNDS.—The head of each covered agency shall prioritize funds within the IT working capital fund to be used initially for cost savings activities approved by the Chief Information Officer of the covered agency, in consultation with the Administrator of the Office of Electronic Government. The head of each covered agency may reprogram and transfer any amounts saved as a direct result of such activities for deposit into the applicable IT working capital fund, consistent with paragraph (2)(A).

(6) RETURN OF FUNDS.—Any funds deposited into an IT working capital fund shall be available for obligation for three years after the last day of the fiscal year in which such funds were deposited.

(7) AGENCY CIO RESPONSIBILITIES.—In evaluating projects to be funded from the IT working capital fund, the Chief Information Officer of the covered agency shall consider, to the extent applicable, guidance issued pursuant to section 4(a)(1) to evaluate applications for funding from the Technology Modernization Fund established under that section that include factors such as a strong business case, technical design, procurement strategy (including adequate use of incremental software development practices), and program management.

(b) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every six months thereafter, the head of each covered agency shall submit to the Director the following, with respect to the IT working capital fund for the covered agency:

(A) A list of each information technology investment funded with estimated cost and completion date for each such investment.

(B) A summary by fiscal year of obligations, expenditures, and unused balances.

(2) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Director shall make the information submitted under paragraph (1) publicly available on a website.

(c) COVERED AGENCY DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''covered agency'' means each agency listed in section 901(b) of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION FUND AND BOARD.

(a) TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION FUND.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Treasury a Technology Modernization Fund (in this section referred to as the ''Fund'') for technology-related activities, to improve information technology, to enhance cybersecurity across the Federal Government, and to be administered in accordance with guidance issued by the Director.

(2) ADMINISTRATION OF FUND.—The Commissioner of the Technology Transformation Service of the General Services Administration, in consultation with the Chief Information Officers Council and with the approval of the Director, shall administer the Fund in accordance with this subsection.

(3) USE OF FUNDS.—The Commissioner shall, in accordance with the recommendations of the Technology Modernization Board established under subsection (b), use amounts in the Fund for the following purposes:

(A) To transfer such amounts, to remain available until expended, to the head of an agency to improve, retire, or replace existing Federal information technology systems to enhance cybersecurity and improve efficiency and effectiveness.

(B) For the development, operation, and procurement of information technology products, services, and acquisition vehicles for use by agencies to improve Government-wide efficiency and cybersecurity in accordance with the requirements of such agencies.

(C) To provide services or work performed in support of the activities described under subparagraph (A) or (B).

(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; CREDITS; AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—

(A) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Fund $250,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2018 and 2019.

(B) CREDITS.—In addition to any funds otherwise appropriated, the Fund shall be credited with all reimbursements, advances, or refunds or recoveries relating to information technology or services provided through the Fund.

(C) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts deposited, credited, or otherwise made available to the Fund shall be available, as provided in appropriations Acts, until expended for the purposes described in paragraph (3).

(5) REIMBURSEMENT.—

(A) PAYMENT BY AGENCY.—For a product or service developed under paragraph (3)(B), including any services or work performed in support of such development under paragraph (3)(C), the head of an agency that uses such product or service shall pay an amount fixed by the Commissioner in accordance with this paragraph.

(B) REIMBURSEMENT BY AGENCY.—The head of an agency shall reimburse the Fund for any transfer made under paragraph (3)(A), including any services or work performed in support of such transfer under paragraph (3)(C), in accordance with the terms established in a written agreement described in paragraph (6). Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an agency may make a reimbursement required by this subparagraph from any appropriation made available subsequent to the date of the enactment of this Act for information technology activities, consistent with any applicable reprogramming law or guidelines of the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate. An obligation to make a payment under a written agreement described in paragraph (6) in a fiscal year after the date of the enactment of this Act shall be recorded pursuant to section 1501 of title 31, United States Code, in the fiscal year in which the payment is due.

(C) PRICES FIXED BY COMMISSIONER.—The Commissioner, in consultation with the Director, shall establish amounts to be paid by an agency and terms of repayment for use of a product or service developed under paragraph (3)(B), including any services or work performed in support of such development under paragraph (3)(C), at levels sufficient to ensure the solvency of the Fund, including operating expenses. Before making any changes to the established amounts and terms of repayment, the Commissioner shall conduct a review and obtain approval from the Director.

(D) FAILURE TO MAKE TIMELY REIMBURSEMENT.—The Commissioner may obtain reimbursement by the issuance of transfer and counterwarrants, or other lawful transfer documents, supported by itemized bills, if payment is not made by an agency—

(i) within 90 days after the expiration of a repayment period described in a written agreement described in paragraph (6); or

(ii) within 45 days after the expiration of the time period to make a payment under a payment schedule for a product or service developed under paragraph (3)(B).

(6) WRITTEN AGREEMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Before the transfer of funds to an agency under paragraph (3)(A), the Commissioner (in consultation with the Director) and the head of the requisitioning agency shall enter into a written agreement documenting the purpose for which the funds will be used and the terms of repayment, which may not exceed five years unless approved by the Director. An agreement made pursuant to this subparagraph shall be recorded as an obligation as provided in paragraph (5)(B).

(B) REQUIREMENT FOR USE OF INCREMENTAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES.—For any funds transferred to an agency under paragraph (3)(A), in the absence of compelling circumstances documented by the Commissioner at the time of transfer, such funds shall be transferred only on an incremental basis, tied to metric-based development milestones achieved by the agency, to be described in a written agreement required under subparagraph (A).

(7) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than six months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director shall publish and maintain a list of each project funded by the Fund on a public website, to be updated not less than quarterly, that includes a description of the project, project status (including any schedule delay and cost overruns), and financial expenditure data related to the project.

(b) TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION BOARD.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a Technology Modernization Board (in this section referred to as the ''Board'') to evaluate proposals submitted by agencies for funding authorized under the Fund.

(2) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The responsibilities of the Board are the following:

(A) Provide input to the Director for the development of processes for agencies to submit modernization proposals to the Board and to establish the criteria by which such proposals are evaluated, which shall include addressing the greatest security and operational risks, having the greatest Government-wide impact, and having a high probability of success based on factors such as a strong business case, technical design, procurement strategy (including adequate use of incremental software development practices), and program management.

(B) Make recommendations to the Commissioner to assist agencies in the further development and refinement of select submitted modernization proposals, based on an initial evaluation performed with the assistance of the Commissioner.

(C) Review and prioritize, with the assistance of the Commissioner and the Director, modernization proposals based on criteria established pursuant to subparagraph (A).

(D) Identify, with the assistance of the Commissioner, opportunities to improve or replace multiple information technology systems with a smaller number of information technology systems common to multiple agencies.

(E) Recommend the funding of modernization projects, in accordance with the uses described in subsection (a)(3), to the Commissioner.

(F) Monitor, in consultation with the Commissioner, progress and performance in executing approved projects and, if necessary, recommend the suspension or termination of funding for projects based on factors such as failure to meet the terms of a written agreement described in subsection (a)(6).

(G) Monitor operating costs of the Fund.

(3) MEMBERSHIP.—The Board shall consist of eight voting members.

(4) CHAIR.—The Chair of the Board shall be the Administrator of the Office of Electronic Government.

(5) PERMANENT MEMBERS.—The permanent members of the Board shall be the following:

(A) The Administrator of the Office of Electronic Government.

(B) A senior official from the General Services Administration having technical expertise in information technology development, appointed by the Administrator of General Services, with the approval of the Director.

(6) ADDITIONAL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.—

(A) APPOINTMENT.—The other members of the Board shall be appointed as follows:

(i) One employee of the National Protection and Programs Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security, appointed by the Secretary of Homeland Security.

(ii) One employee of the Department of Defense, appointed by the Secretary of Defense.

(iii) Four Federal employees primarily having technical expertise in information technology development, financial management, cybersecurity and privacy, and acquisition, appointed by the Director.

(B) TERM.—Each member of the Board described in paragraph (A) shall serve a term of one year, which shall be renewable up to three times, at the discretion of the appointing Secretary or Director, as applicable.

(7) PROHIBITION ON COMPENSATION.—Members of the Board may not receive additional pay, allowances, or benefits by reason of their service on the Board.

(8) STAFF.—Upon request of the Chair of the Board, the Director and the Administrator of General Services may detail, on a nonreimbursable basis, any of the personnel of the Office of Management and Budget or the General Services Administration (as the case may be) to the Board to assist the Board in carrying out its functions under this Act.

(c) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMISSIONER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In addition to the responsibilities described in subsection (a), the Commissioner shall support the activities of the Board and provide technical support to, and, with the concurrence of the Director, oversight of, agencies that receive transfers from the Fund.

(2) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The responsibilities of the Commissioner are the following:

(A) Provide direct technical support in the form of personnel services or otherwise to agencies transferred amounts under subsection (a)(3)(A) and for products, services, and acquisition vehicles funded under subsection (a)(3)(B).

(B) Assist the Board with the evaluation, prioritization, and development of agency modernization proposals.

(C) Perform regular project oversight and monitoring of approved agency modernization projects, in consultation with the Board and the Director, to increase the likelihood of successful implementation and reduce waste.

(D) Provide the Director with information necessary to meet the requirements of subsection (a)(7).

(d) AGENCY DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''agency'' has the meaning given that term in section 551 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CLOUD COMPUTING.—The term ''cloud computing'' has the meaning given that term by the National Institute of Standards and Technology in NIST Special Publication 800–145 and any amendatory or superseding document thereto.

(2) COMMISSIONER.—The term ''Commissioner'' means the Commissioner of the Technology Transformation Service of the General Services Administration.

(3) DIRECTOR.—The term ''Director'' means the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

(4) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.—The term ''information technology'' has the meaning given that term in section 3502 of title 44, United States Code.

(5) LEGACY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM.—The term ''legacy information technology system'' means an outdated or obsolete system of information technology.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 2227, the Modernizing Government Technology Act, or the MGT Act.

Each year, the Federal Government spends over $80 billion a year on information technology, with nearly 75 percent of that directed just towards operating and maintaining existing IT systems. Couple this with innovation and management strategies that are decades behind the private sector when it comes to IT, and the increasing cost of maintaining these aging and insecure systems, this is unsustainable.

These systems pose increasing operational and security risks for the Federal Government, as we saw with the devastating OPM data breach, which impacted over 20 million people.

As we see cybersecurity attacks on the rise across the globe, it is imperative that we modernize and protect our information technology systems. The American people deserve better from their government, especially on an issue that is completely solvable. Our government needs to be able to introduce cutting-edge technology into their networks to improve operational efficiency and decrease operational cost.

This bipartisan IT reform package is designed to reduce wasteful IT spending and strengthen information security by accelerating the Federal Government's transition to modern technology, like cloud computing. This legislation is an innovative solution and a tremendous step forward in strengthening our digital infrastructure.

This bill passed the House on voice vote last year and passed out of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee by voice this year. Unfortunately, we ran out of time on this bill last Congress with the Senate, but we have an opportunity to act this year with an improved bill.

H.R. 2227 authorizes two types of funds to modernize legacy IT and incentivize IT savings in Federal agencies. The bill authorizes funds within individual CFO Act agencies, and it authorizes a centralized fund located within Treasury and overseen by OMB. The two funds will incentivize IT savings and reward cost-sensitive and responsible chief information officers.

Under MGT, savings obtained by Federal agencies, by doing things like streamlining IT systems, replacing legacy products, and transitioning to cloud computing, can be placed in a working capital fund that can be accessed for up to 3 years for further modernization efforts.

This approach eliminates the traditional use-it-or-lose-it approach that has plagued government technology for decades. This approach to technology investments will transform government technology by keeping our information and digital infrastructure secure from cyber attacks while saving billions of taxpayer dollars.

This important bill has enjoyed widespread support from colleagues in the House and the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY), my friend, for her support on this. I thank the gentleman from the Commonwealth of Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for all he has done. I especially thank Chairman CHAFFETZ and Ranking Member CUMMINGS for their support.

The majority leader, KEVIN MCCARTHY, and the minority whip, STENY HOYER, have been vital to the success of getting this bill moving forward.

I thank all of the other Members as well who have provided support and leadership for the MGT Act.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD letters of support from a number of industry and trade groups in support of this bill.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COUNCIL,
Arlington, VA, April 27, 2017.

Hon. JERRY MORAN,
U.S. Senator, Washington, DC.
Hon. WILL HURD,
Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Information Technology, Washington, DC.
Hon. TOM UDALL,
U.S. Senator, Washington, DC.
Hon. GERRY CONNOLLY,
Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Government Operations, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS MORAN AND UDALL, CHAIRMAN HURD AND RANKING MEMBER CONNOLLY: On behalf of the over 400 member companies of the Professional Services Council (PSC), I write to convey our association's strong support for your legislation, the Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017 (the ''MGT Act''), and to thank you for your continued leadership to advance policies that will upgrade the government's legacy IT systems.

The MGT Act would establish a critical source of dependable funding for federal agencies to invest in IT system modernization, incentivize agencies to utilize the funds for agency priorities, and accelerate the transition to the cloud.

PSC supports the Act because we believe the bill will help make government more effective and its networks more secure, while reducing overall costs. Enactment would be a much-needed and critical step to begin addressing the immense challenges associated with upgrading federal information technology systems and limiting cybersecurity vulnerabilities inherent in the government's outdated computer systems.

PSC looks forward to working with you to see this legislation enacted. Thank you for your leadership and attention to this important issue. If you or your colleagues have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Yours Respectfully,
DAVID J. BERTEAU,
President and CEO.

IT ALLIANCE
FOR PUBLIC SECTOR,
Washington, DC, April 28, 2017.

Re The Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017 (MGT Act).

Hon. WILL HURD,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Information Technology, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. ROBIN KELLY,
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Information Technology, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HURD AND RANKING MEMBER KELLY: On behalf of the member companies of the Information Technology Alliance for Public Sector (ITAPS), I am writing to express our strong support for the Modernizing Government Technology (MGT) Act of 2017. We appreciate all the time, effort, and commitment you have dedicated to reforming how the federal government funds and invests in information technology (IT). This bipartisan, bicameral legislation would enable new means to fund IT solutions, including for IT modernization efforts, and provide

funding availability to permit government IT to better keep pace with innovation. We commend your staffs for collaborating and working with ITAPS and our members.

The time is ripe to transform the way the federal government acquires IT, and this bipartisan legislation is a substantial step toward that transformation. The federal government today spends about $60 billion dollars annually sustaining their existing IT and their funding streams allow them to either continue to sustain those systems or modernize, but they do not have the funding to do both at the same time. The MGT Act creates the necessary new options for agencies to be able to sustain what is necessary for their mission, while investing in modernizing and transforming IT capabilities in the federal government for the digital era.

Again, thank you for the engagement you and your staff afforded ITAPS and our members. We look forward to continuing to work with you further as the bill advances through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

A.R. ''TREY'' HODGKINS, III, CAE,
Senior Vice President, Public Sector.

Adobe applauds Congressman Will Hurd (Texas) for reintroducing the Modernizing Government Technology Act, H.R. 2227, and urges Congress to move quickly to enact this important piece of legislation. Modernizing the federal IT infrastructure is crucial to ensuring a stronger cyber security foundation. The federal government on average spends nearly 80 percent of its IT budget on servicing and maintaining legacy IT systems, drowning out investments in newer technologies that often deliver better, more secure and less costly services to citizens.—Adobe VP & Public Sector Chief Technology Officer John Landwehr

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AMAZON WEB SERVICES,
Herndon, VA, April 28, 2017.

Re Support for H.R. 2227, the Modernizing Government Technology Act.

Hon. WILL HURD,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. ROBIN KELLY,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. GERRY CONNOLLY,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. JERRY MORAN,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.
Hon. TOM UDALL,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN HURD, CONGRESSWOMAN KELLY, CONGRESSMAN CONNOLLY, SENATOR UDALL, AND SENATOR MORAN: On behalf of our customers, we applaud your leadership and commitment to transforming federal information technology (IT) through the Modernizing Government Technology Act (MGT Act), H.R. 2227. At Amazon Web Services, we believe in putting our customers first by giving them the right tools to enable success, and similarly this bipartisan and bicameral legislation gives our customers the funding mechanisms they need to move to more modern and secure federal IT systems and services.

The MGT Act allows agencies to modernize aging and vulnerable systems and migrate to innovative technologies such as commercial cloud computing. By giving agencies more control over IT investments, the bill creates more strategic, efficient, and common-sense incentives for agency buyers without compromising transparency and oversight. Flexible funding mechanisms like the agency working capital funds in this piece of legislation enable the adoption of the most secure, cutting-edge commercial technologies that the private sector has long adopted.

The commitment of both Republican and Democrat members in both the House and the Senate on the MGT Act and previous versions of the legislation represents an acknowledgment that Congress must act to improve and secure federal IT. This bill gives the federal government the chance to provide better constituent services that citizens have grown to expect and deserve.

Again, we applaud the introduction of the MGT Act and urge Congress to act this year to pass the legislation.

Sincerely,

STEVE BLOCK,
AWS Public Policy.

BROCADE,
April 27, 2017.

Re Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017.

Hon. JASON CHAFFETZ,
Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives.
Hon.WILL HURD,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Information Technology, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives.
Hon. ELIJAH CUMMINGS,
Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives.
Hon. ROBIN KELLY,
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Information Technology, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives.

DEAR CHAIRMAN CHAFFETZ, CHAIRMAN HURD, RANKING MEMBER CUMMINGS AND RANKING MEMBER KELLY: On behalf of Brocade, I am writing in support of the Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017. This bipartisan bill is an important step forward to accelerate the modernization of federal IT networks. The Modernizing Government Technology Act will provide federal agencies with critical and flexible financing mechanisms to help break the cycle of federal IT investment in outdated technologies. By facilitating federal agency IT modernization, the bills will help agencies improve IT effectiveness, bolster security, reduce maintenance spending and better serve citizens, warfighters and veterans.

As an active partner in federal agency network modernization, Brocade appreciates your leadership in moving this bill forward this year. Brocade is committed to working with other stakeholders to achieve the objectives of the Modernizing Government Technology Act to help agencies transition to modern networks that leverage open standards, multivendor networks, and software-based technologies to achieve their mission.

Sincerely,

JEFF RANGEL,
Senior Director, Corporate Affairs.

CA TECHNOLOGIES,
May 1, 2017.

Hon. WILL HURD,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Information Technology, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. GERALD CONNOLLY,
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Government Operations, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HURD AND RANKING MEMBER CONNOLLY: I am writing to express our support for H.R. 2227, the Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017 (MGT Act). This Act will help address a vital challenge the Federal government faces in providing better services for its citizens.

According to the Government Accountability Office, the Federal government spends more than 75 percent of its IT budget on operations and maintenance, rather than on expenditures for new technologies. This limits the ability of the government to provide innovative and efficient services to citizens and it puts federal IT infrastructure at risk.

The MGT Act will enable agency officials to acquire and deploy new technologies in ways that will help them provide better services and cost savings to citizens in a more secure fashion.

We want to thank you and your staffs for your tireless work and active engagement with industry on this bill. CA Technologies looks forward to continuing to work with Members of the Committees and with House leadership as this bill moves forward in the legislative process.

With warmest regards,

BRENDAN PETER,
Vice President, Global Government Relations.

[From Ian J. Rayder, Government Affairs, Cisco]

Cisco supports the important goals of the Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017, which was introduced with bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate. If passed, the bill will accelerate a pivot away from outmoded legacy systems to modernized solutions, which should cut costs, improve security and boost operational efficiency. The MGTA can help the federal government change the status quo where nearly 80% of IT spending is used to maintain aging, insecure, and expensive legacy federal IT systems. We thank Information Technology Subcommittee Chairman Hurd, Ranking Member Kelly, Government Operations Subcommittee Ranking Member Connolly, and Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Chaffetz for their leadership on this important issue.

COMPUWARE,
MAY 1, 2017.

Hon. WILL HURD,
Washington, DC.

CONGRESSMAN HURD: Compuware, the world's leading mainframe-dedicated software company, is pleased to see the introduction of the Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017. As you know, we are headquartered in Detroit, Michigan with 99% of our development team onsite. Our innovative mainframe software assist the world's largest banks, insurance companies and retail, transportation and government organizations by enabling them to deliver mainframe-supported products and services more quickly, cost-effectively and with a higher level of quality.

A new generation of Federal IT leaders will soon assume responsibility for guiding the agencies through modernization efforts that meet citizens' increasingly tech-centric demands. Having forged their careers in a period of intensive technological innovation, these leaders are by and large well-prepared to do so and the MGT Act provides a viable funding path to support modernization efforts.

We are encouraged that the MGT Act suggests that an IT modernization plan should pair the right applications with the right platforms. One of the major platforms being modernized is the mainframe. The reality is, a large percentage of the mission-critical applications and systems that run on the mainframe today will remain there for decades to come. Organizations and agencies should build on what works well and continue to leverage the decades of investment in business rules and intellectual property.

Mainframe longevity is no accident. No other computing platform comes close to delivering the performance, scalability, reliability and security of the post-modern mainframe. None offers a lower marginal cost. Nor has any other platform come close to demonstrating a similar ability to adapt to the changes in the world around it decade after decade. The correct course of action is to diligently and smartly leverage a post-modern mainframe for what it does best.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments and we look forward to providing additional information for the Committee Report. Compuware is always available to testify.

Sincerely,

CHRIS O'MALLEY,
CEO, Compuware.

CSRA,
Falls Church, VA, April 28, 2017.

Re the Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017.

Hon. JASON CHAFFETZ,
Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.
Hon. ELIJAH CUMMINGS,
Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.
Hon. WILL HURD,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Information Technology, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.
Hon. ROBIN KELLY,
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Information Technology, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS: On behalf of CSRA, I write today to express my strong support for the Modernizing Government Technology Act (MGT Act), which is a shining example of forward-looking leadership from Congress to help move the government into the 21st century. As one of the leading providers of next generation technology to the federal government, CSRA wants to partner in providing solutions that save taxpayer dollars and facilitate a better customer experience for our citizens. The MGT Act is a crucial step forward in creating our shared future of innovation.

Investing in the transformation of aging IT infrastructure, as the MGT Act will do, will help protect networks currently vulnerable to cybersecurity threats and make government more efficient and effective for the American people. We know that investments like these make highest and best use of the taxpayer dollar, saving enormous sums of money down the line. Innovation has long fueled the American economy; technology can now make possible the achievement of national priorities.

I salute Congressman Will Hurd, Congresswoman Robin Kelly, Senator Moran, Senator Udall, and the entire bipartisan, bicameral coalition who have brought us to this moment of opportunity. We urge the support of the entire Congress for this legislation, which is a kick-start in creating a government as dynamic and innovative as America itself.

Sincerely,

LAWRENCE B. PRIOR.

INTEL CORPORATION,
Washington, DC, May 16, 2017.

Hon. WILL HURD,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN HURD: Intel Corporation commends your leadership in enabling the Federal Government to upgrade its legacy IT Infrastructure through the Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017.

Your bill would enable the retirement, replacement, and modernization of legacy IT that is difficult to secure and expensive to maintain. This bill would strengthen the incentives and wherewithal of federal agencies and organizations to invest prudently in IT, thereby saving money and increasing the performance of their IT systems.

Intel applauds your bi-partisan, bi-cameral effort aimed at making our government work better for all citizens by providing the means to enable it to keep pace with IT innovation.

Sincerely,

PETER PITSCH,
Executive Director, Federal Relations. Associate General Counsel, Intel Corporation.

MICROSOFT,
Redmond, WA, May 2, 2017.

Rep. WILL HURD,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Information Technology, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Rep. ROBIN KELLY,
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Information Technology, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HURD AND RANKING MEMBER KELLY: On behalf of Microsoft Corporation, I am writing to congratulate you on introduction of the Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017 (H.R. 2227). Microsoft fully understands the promise modern technology holds for enabling more efficient and effective results for taxpayers and supports your efforts. We commend you for including in the bill a fund to support IT modernization, as it's critically needed by agencies that need to improve their systems but are unable due to budget constraints.

Microsoft also applauds you for working with the White House Office of American Innovation on this legislation. Having strong bipartisan, bicameral partners, combined with Executive Branch support, demonstrates your commitment to improve the federal information technology procurement process.

We look forward to working with you and your bipartisan colleagues in the House and Senate as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

FREDERICK S. HUMPHRIES, JR.,
Corporate Vice President, U.S. Government Affairs (USGA).

UNISYS,
April 28, 2017.

Hon. WILL HURD,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. ROBIN KELLY,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES HURD AND KELLY: On behalf of the Unisys Corporation, thank you for introducing the Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017 (MGT Act). Unisys strongly supports enactment of the MGT Act because it provides needed flexibility and funding resources to enable the Federal Government to modernize its legacy IT systems and leverage government-wide resources to gain efficiencies.

As a global information technology company that provides leading edge security solutions to the government and commercial markets, Unisys recognizes that one of the major challenges facing clients is how to fund modernization investments while maintaining existing mission critical IT systems. The MGT Act addresses this challenge by authorizing new modernization funding mechanisms for Federal agencies that will allow them to build in cyber security by design, effectively share government data, create long-term savings and eliminate duplication.

Thank you again for introducing this much needed legislation.

Sincerely,

VENKATAPATHI PUVVADA,
President, Federal Systems.

LEVEL 3 STATEMENT ON MGT ACT OF 2017

Today, Representatives Will Hurd (R–TX), Robin Kelly (D–IL) and Gerry Connolly (D–VA), and Senators Jerry Moran (R–KS) and Tom Udall (D–NM), introduced the Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017 to provide federal agencies additional resources and flexibility to modernize outdated information technology systems. Below is a statement from Level 3 Communications:

''Level 3 Communications applauds Representatives Hurd, Kelly and Connolly, and Senators Moran and Udall, for championing federal IT reform and their commitment to maximizing the value of taxpayer dollars by transforming how the government invests in technology. Level 3 stands ready to continue our collaboration with federal agencies to transform their networks to improve efficiency, reduce costs and maximize security.''

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I thank my friends, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) and the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY), for their leadership in bringing this bill to the floor.

Of course, I rise in support of the bill, H.R. 2227, the Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, over the past several years, we have all witnessed the chaos and havoc that sophisticated cyber attacks can, and do, wreak on our Nation and around the world.

Just this past week, there was a massive ransomware attack that hit 200,000 victims in 150 countries, and those numbers are expected to grow exponentially. This is just the latest in a string of high-profile attacks, including Sony, Yahoo, the OPM data breach, and even efforts to influence our elections and those in Europe.

These attacks jeopardize America's safety, privacy, and cost untold millions of dollars in the private sector and public sector as well. These attacks affect both the public and private sector, and bad actors repeatedly target our Federal Government. Those attacks often succeed because Federal computer systems are so outdated that they cannot implement network defenses as basic as encryption. Some legacy systems go back a half a century.

The Federal Government spends nearly $60 billion a year sustaining its existing IT systems. When agencies are forced to spend nearly 80 percent of that to maintain legacy computer systems, they have fewer resources to modernize and reinvest. As a result, agencies cannot afford to invest in the modern technologies that other large enterprises need to survive. Many Federal agencies do not use cloud computing to help secure computer networks and improve our ability to deliver services to the American people.

The MGT Act we are talking about today and on which I am proud to be one of the lead Democratic cosponsors is a critical step to help improve the Federal Government's IT systems. The MGT Act of 2017 will help our cyber defenders protect our most important digital resources.

This bill marries two bills from the previous Congress, both of which I was proud to be an original cosponsor of—the IT Modernization Act and the MOVE IT Act. The MGT Act establishes a clear role for both of these pieces of legislation to improve Federal IT systems.

I was an original cosponsor for Minority Whip STENY HOYER's IT Modernization Act, which created a revolving fund using $3 billion appropriations for Treasury to replace legacy systems.

I was pleased to join my friend, Ms. KELLY, the ranking member of the Information Technology Subcommittee, and Mr. HURD, on the MOVE IT Act, which revived a proposal first discussed during the consideration of the legislation FITARA, the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act.

These two bills were different, but complementary, and worked, ultimately, to join the two to create this act in front of us today, the MGT Act. That act lays the foundation for the future of IT modernization funding and reinvestment and investment by the Federal Government long overdue. The act will authorize an upfront investment to retire minimal large-scale legacy systems and affect multiple agencies.

This bipartisan, bicameral legislation will provide mechanisms and much-needed funding for agencies to speed up that slow process of moving from legacy IT systems to cutting-edge, 21st century technologies. It would also provide needed reporting requirements to ensure that agencies are acquiring modern technology and that we can measure that it is being done in a cost-effective way. It places an emphasis on following the practices of private industry and moving toward cloud computing solutions.

The MGT Act language will allow agencies to reinvest those savings, as my friend just indicated, and that is a commonsense proposal, but not one we find commonly in the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I know the gentleman from the Commonwealth of Virginia has a few more speakers, so I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), my friend, the distinguished whip on the Democratic side.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. HURD for his leadership on this issue. I am pleased to work with him on it.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill.

It will not be a controversial bill. It will not make the front page of the paper tomorrow. People will not be seized of this bill passing. But this bill may well have a very great consequence to it and to the efficiency and effectiveness of our Federal Government.

Last July, I outlined a series of reforms to renew America's faith in their government, which included modernizing government technology. Not long after, I introduced the Information Technology Modernization Act to achieve that goal; and, of course, Mr. CONNOLLY was a cosponsor with me on that bill.

I am glad that this bill on the floor today includes my legislation. It would be a major step toward ensuring that our government is using the latest technology systems, is well protected from cyber threats, and can serve the American people more effectively.

□ 1500

Mr. HURD came over to me on the floor and we talked about our two ideas. As the gentleman from Virginia has said, they were complementary, and I am pleased that we could work together to put these bills together and that we now have agreement with the Senate. We passed a bill through the House.

Last week's major global cyber attack was yet another reminder of how critical it is that our government's technology systems are upgraded to the latest and most secure technology. If any lesson was needed, we got it.

Americans count on government agencies to protect their personal data, and our security agencies rely on our government systems to safeguard classified and sensitive information. Unfortunately, our government technology systems are now far behind the latest technology and are in desperate need of upgrades.

I congratulate the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) for her work on this effort.

What this legislation does is authorize the creation of a technology modernization fund to finance rapid upgrades of government technology systems similar to funds that are available in the private sector so they can move quickly and seize the best and latest technology available. It would prioritize the systems that are the most vulnerable, and it would implement best practices from the private sector. In other words, those that are working least well will be the first addressed.

Once upgrades are completed, agencies will pay back into the fund from the savings achieved through greater efficiency, i.e., a revolving fund, making it possible then to finance additional projects in a way that is self-sustaining after the initial investment. All of this would be done in a way that is transparent and accountable.

Once this bill is enacted, we must take the next step and provide, of course, that initial funding.

I have been proud to work across the aisle with Majority Leader MCCARTHY, Chairman CHAFFETZ, Mr. HURD, and, of course, my dear, dear friend from Virginia, my colleague in the Washington metropolitan area, Representative CONNOLLY on our side.

Representative KELLY, whom I just mentioned, and Congressman TED LIEU have also been champions of this effort, and I thank them for their input and their strong support as we worked to bring it to the floor in a bipartisan fashion.

Again, I want to say how pleased I am to work on these issues with all of my colleagues, but particularly with the majority leader, Mr. MCCARTHY, my friend from California, and thank him for his leadership.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting the Modernizing Government Technology Act, and I hope the Trump administration will include investment to capitalize this new fund in their fiscal 2018 budget.

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the distinguished majority leader.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, before the minority whip departs, I want to thank him for his work on this. This has really been a bipartisan effort, and it is really putting the country first. The gentleman is correct: This might not make headlines, but this will have a greater effect on our government being more efficient, effective, and accountable. We thank him for his work on it.

Mr. Speaker, there are some things we get used to hearing, but when you think about it, it is amazing just how much things have changed.

I hear a friend say that all of the photos he took on his phone automatically updated to his cloud—not surprising there. But how long ago was it that we couldn't even take pictures on our phone, much less have them saved automatically on a cloud?

Nowadays, it is not uncommon to cash your checks online, manage your accounts on Mint, pay individuals back online. Many millennials don't even carry cash anymore. That is a revolution in money management that just happened in a matter of years.

So, Mr. Speaker, why in the world would the Department of Defense use a 54-year-old system as a backup to send and receive emergency messages for our nuclear forces, a 54-year-old system that relies on floppy disks? Why would the master file of the public's taxes at the IRS run on a 1950s code?

Eighty percent of the $80 billion we spend each year on IT is used to maintain legacy systems, to buy expensive parts that nobody uses anymore for a 54-year-old system we shouldn't even have.

We would expect more from the private sector. We would expect mobile cameras, cloud computing, online banking. Heck, we would even expect to upgrade our phones and apps and

technology on a rolling basis every single week. Well, why should we expect less from the Federal Government?

I would say this is about more than expectations. We all saw what happened over the weekend with the massive global cyber attack: hospitals shut down, transportation systems. This is a government service issue. It is a government waste issue. It is a national security issue.

Now, government may never be like Silicon Valley, but it should not be stuck in the age of ''Mad Men.'' That is not only costly, it is dangerous.

WILL HURD, an individual that has served his Nation in some of the most dangerous parts of the world, an individual who worked in the private sector when it came to technology, an individual who serves in this body and, I will say this based upon everybody else I have served, probably has the most bipartisan approach of anyone I have ever seen serve in that position—he doesn't care about party. It is just as the time when he worked in the CIA. He cares about his country. He has seen the most deadly things happen, and, through his technology company, he has seen that people fight wars new ways.

So he took it upon himself—it is not the issue that people would campaign upon, but it is an issue that he saw needed a solution. He worked with both sides of the aisle, and he said: Why can't we modernize our own technology?

The Veterans Administration was created in 1921, and if somebody that was a veteran had a problem and a claim, they would write it on a piece of paper. In 1921, on a warm day like today, we would have fans going to try to cool ourselves down. We would rush, after we got done voting, to turn on our radios to see what the news was saying.

Well, the world all changed. We can look at our phones and get the news instantaneously. We got central air to cool ourselves down. And if you have a claim with the VA, lots of times they write it on a piece of paper.

Well, do you know what? That is all going to stop today. That is going to stop because we are going to make a smart investment. We are going to make the Federal Government have the same accountability that we expect in business or anywhere else.

And do you know what will happen? Government will become more effective, more efficient, more accountable, and more transparent.

So I want to tip my hat to both sides of the aisle, and especially to Congressman WILL HURD. He took the leadership, had the tenacity to stay with it and the ability to work with all on, really, the issue that people wouldn't talk about but expect to happen, and he was the right person at the right time to make the push. That is why I support this bill.

Mr. CONNOLLY. May I inquire of the Speaker how much time is left on this side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky). The gentleman from Virginia has 11½ minutes remaining.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 5½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY), my good friend.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support this commonsense, bipartisan bill that updates our woefully outdated IT infrastructure.

I want to say thank you to my good friend and partner on the IT subcommittee, Chairman HURD, for his leadership on this very important measure and to my colleagues who worked so hard on this bill: Chairman CHAFFETZ, Ranking Member CUMMINGS, our House leadership stewards—Democratic Whip HOYER from the majority, Mr. MCCARTHY—and Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia for his energy and work in dealing with this bill. I also want to give a special thanks to all of the staff and a special shout-out to my staff: Jay Cho and Zach Ostro.

The Modernizing Government Technology Act has come a long way from the early days when it was called MOVE IT. It has been a tough and sometimes frustrating journey, but we have made it, and we have a good bill in front of us.

Last year, the House passed this bill only to have it die in the Senate. Despite these roadblocks, we kept working because it is worth it. This bill will revolutionize and upgrade our outdated IT fractured while bringing cost-saving innovation and greater security to government agencies.

In my years serving as the ranking member of the Oversight Committee's IT Subcommittee, I have learned one thing: We need to get back to basics, and this bill does just that.

Our current use-it-or-lose-it approach to Federal IT just isn't working. It is no secret that Federal agencies are struggling to stay up to date, especially when compared to the private sector.

Each year, we spend $80 billion in taxpayer dollars to maintain legacy IT systems that are vulnerable to cyber attacks; and each year that we don't upgrade these systems, they become even more difficult and expensive to secure. This is unacceptable and a waste of taxpayer dollars.

For too long, we have kicked the can down the road and left our outdated IT systems vulnerable to costly attacks. The dangers of our system are clear. Every day we are reminded of the importance of having modern IT systems and robust cybersecurity practices in place.

In 2015, hackers made off with the personal information of more than 20 million Americans, including congressional staffers, in the OPM data breach. Just this past week, as you have heard, a global ransomware attack, WannaCry or WannaCrypt, wreaked havoc worldwide, paralyzing businesses and governments alike. These attacks will only grow more frequent and more difficult to combat.

The MGT Act is a major step in the right direction. It will cut costs and enhance our security. It builds on prior work like Clinger-Cohen and FITARA, and it gives agencies the flexibility needed to modernize vulnerable systems and develop cost savings for taxpayers.

Under this bill, agencies can take the savings from upgrading their systems and reinvest them into their working capital fund for future IT modernization. We are going to go from an outdated method of purchasing IT to one that empowers CIOs to make smart, strategic investments in innovative technologies; and as an end result, our data will be more secure and our government more efficient.

I am proud of this bill, and I am proud of the bipartisan work that made it possible, proud of what we accomplished by working together on the IT Subcommittee.

The MGT Act is a necessary component to strengthening our cybersecurity that saves taxpayers money. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform my friend from the Commonwealth that I have no further speakers and am prepared to close.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

In closing, I think this is an important piece in the information technology modernization effort that our committee and this body has undertaken for the last 5 or 6 years. One of the key pieces of legislation undergirding today's bill is the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act I was proud to cowrite and coauthor with then-Chairman DARRELL ISSA.

I am equally proud today to have worked with my friend Mr. HURD from Texas, my friend Ms. KELLY from Illinois, and, of course, Mr. STENY HOYER, the Democratic whip, in forging this additional piece that we believe will bring the Federal Government into the 21st century—technologically literate and protecting the databases that protect the American people.

Hundreds of millions of pieces of data are at risk in the current cyber environment, and some simple but critical investments can make all the difference. That is what we are voting for today.

I urge passage of the legislation and, again, congratulate my colleagues and friends for working together in a bipartisan way to bring this bill to fruition.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we have some young folks in the Chamber right now, and I hope they recognize that this is how their government is supposed to work: people working together, putting their differences past them for the betterment of our great Nation.

It is an honor for me to have this opportunity to do this with so many of my friends that I have grown to love and respect over these last 2 years. And we get to save government money, protect our digital infrastructure, and make sure that our government is providing the kind of services we should and that the American people demand.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the MGT Act and of continued efforts to improve the federal government's cybersecurity posture. I would like to thank Mr. HURD for his tireless efforts advocating for this bill and his partners on the Oversight Committee, Mr. CONNOLLY and Ms. KELLY for their cybersecurity leadership. I also must acknowledge the House's Minority Whip and my good friend, Mr. HOYER, for his work pushing for IT modernization.

The idea for the kind of revolving fund included as part of the MGT Act grew out of President Obama's Cybersecurity National Action Plan, itself issued in direct response to the massive breach of the Office of Personnel Management. OPM was yet another wake up call to the government about the lax attitude toward security present at many agencies, but, to the prior administration's credit, the CNAP contained a number of needed policy shifts, including the creation of a federal Chief Information Security Officer and the use of DHS's authority to conduct a government-wide review of high value assets.

Central to the CNAP, though, was the realization that attempting to secure antiquated federal IT systems was a losing proposition. Just as the Internet—developed in the 1970s—was not created with security in mind, so, too, are many older government systems devoid of even basic security controls. When we think about the fact that the iPhone turns ten next month and the huge improvements that have been made from the first generation model to today's, it's easy to see how systems that are two or three decades old can hamper security.

Using outdated software also compromises efficiency. There's a reason businesses keep up to date with technology—it saves them money. The cleverness of the revolving fund approach is that it uses these savings to drive further upgrades in a virtuous cycle. I hope that the MGT Act is viewed as a pilot program, as there is a lot more technical debt we have incurred than will be solved by $250 million per year. But it is a very important first step, and I commend the sponsors for their work. And I hope that federal agencies view this bill as license to be innovative in their upgrade planning and to bring us a more efficient—and secure—government.

□ 1515

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2227, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VACATING DEMAND FOR YEAS AND NAYS ON H.R. 984, THOMASINA E. JORDAN INDIAN TRIBES OF VIRGINIA FEDERAL RECOGNITION ACT OF 2017

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the ordering of the yeas and nays on the motion that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 984) to extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe—Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe, be vacated, to the end that the Chair put the question de novo.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 984.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FEDERAL AGENCY MAIL MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 194) to ensure the effective processing of mail by Federal agencies, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 194

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Federal Agency Mail Management Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. RECORD MANAGEMENT.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Section 9 of the Presidential and Federal Records Act Amendments of 2014 (44 U.S.C. 101 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by amending paragraph (3) to read as follows:

''(3) in paragraph (7), by striking 'the Administrator or the Archivist' and inserting 'the Archivist or the Administrator'.'';

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) by amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

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

'' '(a) The Archivist shall provide guidance and assistance to Federal agencies with respect to ensuring—

'' '(1) economical and effective records management;

'' '(2) adequate and proper documentation of the policies and transactions of the Federal Government; and

'' '(3) proper records disposition.';'';

(B) by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively;

(C) by inserting after paragraph (1), the following new paragraph:

''(2) in subsection (b), by striking 'effective records management by such agencies' and inserting 'effective processing of mail by Federal agencies';'';

(D) in paragraph (3), as so redesignated—

(i) in subparagraph (A)(ii), by striking '' 'subsections (a) and (b)' '' and inserting '' 'subsection (a)' ''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(E) in paragraph (4), as so redesignated, by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(F) by inserting at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) by inserting at the end the following new subsection:

'' '(e) The Administrator, in carrying out subsection (b), shall have the responsibility to promote economy and efficiency in the selection and utilization of space, staff, equipment, and supplies for processing mail at Federal facilities.'.'';

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''; and'' at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by inserting at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) by inserting at the end the following new subsection:

'' '(c) The Administrator (or the Administrator's designee) may inspect the mail processing practices and programs of any Federal agency for the purpose of rendering recommendations for the improvement of mail processing practices and programs. Officers and employees of such agencies shall cooperate fully in such inspections of mail processing practices and programs.'.'';

(4) by striking subsection (f); and

(5) by redesignating subsection (g) as subsection (f).

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the Presidential and Federal Records Act Amendments of 2014 (Public Law 113–187).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I present today H.R. 194, the Federal Agency Mail Management Act of 2017. Approximately 2 years ago, President Obama signed into law the Presidential and Federal Records Act Amendments of 2014.

The law modernized and improved Federal recordkeeping statutes by codifying agency responsibilities that have been in practice for decades. Once the law was enacted, the General Services Administration, or GSA, identified technical provisions in the law that the agency interpreted as limiting its ability to regulate Federal agency mailroom operations.

The GSA has been responsible for the regulation and oversight of Federal agency mail management for many years. Congress did not intend for the 2014 law to change the mail management structure.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 194 provides clarification to ensure that the GSA is responsible for mailroom management oversight, and not the National Archives and Records Administration. Both GSA and the National Archives have worked with Congress to make the correction, and both entities support H.R. 194.

Mr. Speaker, an identical bill was passed by the House with unanimous voice vote near the end of last Congress. We hope that this legislation will be signed into law this Congress to correct the unintended consequences of a previous law.

This corrective measure has bipartisan support, and I appreciate having my friend and colleague, Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia, join me as a cosponsor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Federal Agency Mail Management Act, which I introduced along with, of course, the author of the bill, Representative STEVE RUSSELL. I want to thank Representative RUSSELL for working in a bipartisan manner on this legislation.

The bill would make a technical correction to clarify that the Administrator of the General Services Administration is responsible for managing mail in the executive branch. The Administrator of GSA has historically had this responsibility, but when the Federal Records Act was updated in 2014, changes made to the statute left it unclear whether the Administrator's role had changed.

You would think it is a simple commonsense measure, but it requires an act of Congress to clarify. Congress never intended to take away the Administrator's authority to manage mail. The bill was approved by the House without opposition last year. We are hoping the same will pertain this year.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates this bill would cost the Federal Government nothing, because GSA already processes mail for Federal agencies.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the bill and give clarity to the GSA and the National Archives, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 194.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FEDERAL REGISTER PRINTING SAVINGS ACT OF 2017

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 195) to amend title 44, United States Code, to restrict the distribution of free printed copies of the Federal Register to Members of Congress and other officers and employees of the United States, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 195

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Federal Register Printing Savings Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. RESTRICTIONS ON DISTRIBUTION OF FREE PRINTED COPIES OF FEDERAL REGISTER TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.

(a) RESTRICTIONS.—Section 1506 of title 44, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''The Administrative Committee'' and inserting ''(a) COMPOSITION; DUTIES.—The Administrative Committee'';

(2) in subsection (a)(4), by striking ''the number of copies'' and inserting ''subject to subsection (b), the number of copies''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(b) RESTRICTIONS ON DISTRIBUTION OF FREE PRINTED COPIES TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE UNITED STATES.—

''(1) PROHIBITING SUBSCRIPTION TO PRINTED COPIES WITHOUT REQUEST.—Under the regulations prescribed to carry out subsection (a)(4), the Director of the Government Publishing Office may not provide a printed copy of the Federal Register without charge to any Member of Congress or any other office of the United States during a year unless—

''(A) the Member or office requests a printed copy of a specific issue of the Federal Register; or

''(B) during that year or during the previous year, the Member or office requested a subscription to printed copies of the Federal Register for that year, as described in paragraph (2).

''(2) ADMINISTRATION OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.—The regulations prescribed to carry out subsection (a)(4) shall include—

''(A) provisions regarding notifications to offices of Members of Congress and other offices of the United States of the restrictions of paragraph (1);

''(B) provisions describing the process by which Members and other offices may request a specific issue of the Federal Register for purposes of paragraph (1)(A); and

''(C) provisions describing the process by which Members and other offices may request a subscription to the Federal Register for purposes of paragraph (1)(B), except that such regulations shall limit the period for such a subscription to not longer than 1 year.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect January 1, 2018.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

My bill, H.R. 195, the Federal Register Printing Savings Act of 2017, will save taxpayers dollars while providing needed reform in how we conduct day-to-day business in Congress.

The Federal Register contains a large amount of information, including proposed rules and public notices, regulations, executive orders, and Presidential documents. This information is compiled by the National Archives and published daily by the Government Publishing Office, or the GPO. Often described by the National Archives as ''the daily newspaper of the Federal Government,'' this service enables Members, staffs, and agencies to keep track of activity across government.

In 1994, the GPO began publishing the Federal Register online. To improve user experience, the digital version has been enhanced over time to provide navigational aids that include links to related content.

The Federal Register is now fully searchable and downloadable, making for quick access to any document. But sadly, Mr. Speaker, despite the advance of technology, Members of Congress and Federal offices across the entire government still receive printed copies of the Federal Register every day.

In the course of a year, this stack of Registers would be 16-feet high. This results in thousands of copies going directly into the trash each week, unless occasionally used as doorstops. Subscriptions to the Federal Register cost about $1,000 annually, meaning hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars are wasted each year. This same money could pay for the salaries of 50 soldiers who defend our Republic in a given year.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 195 makes a small but significant change to fix the problem and ensure that we operate in the 21st century. Instead of automatically receiving printed copies, Members or offices of the Federal Government who want to continue to receive copies need only submit a request. There will be an opt-in, instead of an opt-out.

Current print and on-demand technologies make this possible. The subscriptions will last for 1 year to ensure Members and offices are able to evaluate if they want to continue the service. For Members in offices that do not use or want the printed version, they will not receive it and will still have full access to the searchable digital version which most Members use.

This change will reduce unnecessary printing and, in context, will prevent 96 Americans from having to work each year so that we can throw Registers in the trash.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this efficient bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 195, the Federal Register Printing Savings Act. My friend, Mr. RUSSELL, is going to develop a reputation around here for being just too commonsense. This bill would prohibit the Government Publishing Office from sending printed copies of the Federal Register to Members of Congress and other Federal offices unless they wanted them.

The Federal Register includes rules, regulations, executive orders, and other Federal documents. It is a very important and useful publication. It does not make sense, however, as my friend from Oklahoma has pointed out, for GPO automatically to send it to offices that don't want it and end up putting it in the garbage, hopefully recycling.

The Federal Register is available online, as my friend has pointed out, which significantly cuts down on the need for printed copies for most of us. This bill would reduce waste both in paper and in Federal dollars.

The Congressional Budget Office says this bill would reduce Federal spending by $1 million a year. It was the late Everett Dirksen of Illinois who said: ''A billion here, a billion there, pretty soon it adds up to real money.'' CBO also estimates this bill would result in 1,000 fewer copies of the Federal Register being printed each day.

This bill is good for the environment, good for taxpayers, and a useful discipline for us all in terms of excess we don't need.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. RUSSELL for his leadership, his common sense, and his collaboration on this committee, and I urge all Members to support the bill.

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

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 195.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FEDERAL INTERN PROTECTION ACT OF 2017

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 653) to amend title 5, United States Code, to protect unpaid interns in the Federal Government from workplace harassment and discrimination, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 653

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Federal Intern Protection Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2302 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(g)(1) All protections afforded to an employee under subparagraphs (A), (B), and (D) of subsection (b)(1) shall be afforded, in the same manner and to the same extent, to an intern and an applicant for internship.

''(2) For purposes of the application of this subsection, a reference to an employee shall be considered a reference to an intern in—

''(A) section 717 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e–16);

''(B) sections 12 and 15 of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (29 U.S.C. 631, 633a); and

''(C) section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791).

''(3) In this subsection, the term 'intern' means an individual who performs uncompensated voluntary service in an agency to earn credit awarded by an educational institution or to learn a trade or occupation.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 3111(c)(1) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''section 2302(g) (relating to prohibited personnel practices),'' before ''chapter 81''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUSSELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 653, the Federal Intern Protection Act of 2017, sponsored by my colleague from the Oversight Committee, Ranking Member ELIJAH CUMMINGS of Maryland.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government is well served by interns who provide invaluable assistance to agencies across the Federal Government. Our interns work alongside us and other Federal employees helping conduct agency business on behalf of the American people.

Internship programs also help to identify and develop the next generation of Federal employees. In exchange, interns gain invaluable work experience in a field that they might hope to enter upon graduation and credit they can apply at their institution of learning.

Unfortunately, there are no existing provisions in Federal law that protect interns working at Federal agencies against harassment or discrimination.

In the case of O'Connor v. Davis, the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit upheld a decision finding an intern could not bring sexual harassment claims under Federal law.

□ 1530

The court reasoned that since the intern was not a Federal employee, that person was not covered by existing law. It concluded that: ''It is for Congress, if it should choose to do so . . . to provide a remedy. . . .''

Mr. Speaker, the Oversight and Government Reform Committee heard testimony showing the damage this loophole can have at Federal agencies. In a 2015 hearing on Environmental Protection Agency mismanagement, witnesses described allegations of sexual harassment against interns. According to testimony, ''one former intern stated that because of this harassment, she changed her mind about not only about working for EPA but also for working in the Federal sector at all.''

This is simply unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Intern Protection Act of 2017 ensures that interns working for the Federal Government receive anti-discriminatory and anti-harassment protections. Specifically, the bill prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicapping condition for interns working at Federal agencies. These protections are already in place for Federal employees.

I thank my friend and colleague, the ranking member, Mr. ELIJAH CUMMINGS, for his leadership and commitment in protecting interns who work for the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 653, the Federal Intern Protection Act. In fact, it is hard to believe we need this legislation at this point in the 21st century, but we do.

Under current law, Federal employees are protected from discrimination on the basis of race, religion, age, and sex. Unfortunately, interns don't qualify. They have no such protections.

I appreciate the wonderful work of our distinguished ranking member, Representative ELIJAH CUMMINGS of Maryland, on this important measure. I am not surprised, and neither are my colleagues, that he would pick up on this and see the need for this protection to be extended to young men and women who want maybe to pursue a career or part of their career in the Federal Government. They need these protections like the employees they are working with side by side.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS).

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his kind words. I thank Mr. RUSSELL also for his very kind words.

The bill before us, the Federal Intern Protection Act, would close a loophole in Federal employment law that currently leaves unpaid interns open to discrimination and sexual harassment with no legal recourse. It is interesting. As I listened to Mr. CONNOLLY, he is absolutely right: it is surprising that they don't already have this protection.

Last year, the Oversight and Government Reform Committee held a hearing at which we heard testimony about sexual harassment and retaliation in an EPA regional office. During the hearing, both Chairman CHAFFETZ and I expressed our disgust at the exploitation of these young women and demanded action to prevent this abuse in the future.

Unfortunately, the act of harassing unpaid interns on the basis of race, religion, age, or, in this case, sex is not prohibited by Federal law. Under current law, victims rely on the discretion of managers to prevent this behavior, which is something that doesn't always occur.

As one witness testified before our committee: ''Even after finding out about the numerous harassment victims, the direct reporting manager continued to feed the harasser a steady diet of young women.''

That is a very sad commentary. As I have often said, we are better than that.

We saw at our hearing that allowing this kind of behavior to go unchecked can have serious consequences on the lives and careers of those who are interested in government service. What we want to do is encourage young people to come into government service. We want them to come in and do what will feed their souls by making life better for the general population. The last thing we want to do is anything that would cause them to say this is something they don't want to do.

Many interns are willing to work for the Federal Government without receiving any pay. That is the other piece: so many of these young people come looking for experience, looking for opportunity. They simply want a chance to get their foot in the door. We must protect them from this kind of despicable behavior. Our bill will afford Federal interns protections in the same manner and to the same extent as Federal employees.

I want to take this moment to thank the chairman for moving this bill expeditiously through our committee, where it was adopted unanimously, and for bringing it to the floor today.

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

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to laud my friend from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) for his perspicacity in ferreting out this issue. It is a very important one.

The use of internships in the Federal Government is a very underutilized tool when compared to the private sector. Many private sector companies will use internships for recruiting the talent it needs for the future. In many cases, 70 to 80 percent of those who intern for private sector corporations end up being hired because they have a carefully monitored program from orientation and recruitment to the tasks at hand during the pendency of the internship. The Federal Government does no such thing systematically.

At the very beginning, if we are going to use internships as creatively as the private sector to recruit the next generation of Federal employees, since one-third of the current workforce is eligible for retirement over the next several years, we have to follow the lead my friends, Mr. CUMMINGS of Maryland and Mr. RUSSELL of Oklahoma, have just given us, and that is to make sure it is a safe workplace. Otherwise, who would be attracted to it?

This piece of legislation is critical to our making Federal internships a meaningful tool in their recruitment and retention, so long as that workforce is protected by the same norms and same regulations as any Federal employee.

I thank my friend, Mr. CUMMINGS, for bringing this to our attention, and I thank Mr. RUSSELL for his leadership.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill. I thank Mr. CUMMINGS for his hard work on this measure. I also thank the committee for their broad, bipartisan, unanimous support and hard work in bringing this practical measure. I urge adoption of it.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 653.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

IMPROVING FUSION CENTERS' ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2169) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to enhance information sharing in the Department of Homeland Security State, Local, and Regional Fusion Center Initiative, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2169

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Improving Fusion Centers' Access to Information Act''.

SEC. 2. ENHANCED INFORMATION SHARING IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY STATE, LOCAL, AND REGIONAL FUSION CENTER INITIATIVE.

Subsection (b) of section 210A of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 124h) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by inserting before the semicolon at the end the following: ''and conduct outreach to such fusion centers to identify any gaps in information sharing and consult with other Federal agencies to develop methods to address such gaps, as appropriate'';

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (3) through (12) as paragraphs (4) through (13), respectively; and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraph:

''(3) identify Federal databases and datasets, including databases and datasets used, operated, or managed by Department components, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of the Treasury, that are appropriate, in accordance with Federal laws and policies, to address any gaps identified pursuant to paragraph (2), for inclusion in the information sharing environment and coordinate with the appropriate Federal agency to deploy or access such databases and datasets;''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VELA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2169, the Improving Fusion Centers' Access to Information Act.

In the years since 9/11, Congress and the executive branch have taken many steps to address information shortfalls and information-sharing shortfalls. However, we know that silos remain.

The purpose of H.R. 2169 is to ensure that the Department of Homeland Security is truly serving as a State and local information-sharing advocate, as originally intended by the Homeland Security Act.

This bill requires the DHS to regularly review information-sharing efforts with the National Network of Fusion Centers and then work with other Federal agencies to close any identified gaps.

State and local fusion centers have grown in maturity and number during the last 16 years since 9/11. There are now 78 fusion centers within the national network. As the network has matured, fusion centers have established themselves as a critical conduit

for sharing terrorism, homeland security, and criminal information with Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial partners. As the threat environment continues to evolve, it is vital they have access to the tools and information systems to stay ahead of threats to the homeland.

Despite existing requirements for DHS to share intelligence and information with State and local entities, I have found that the Department does not regularly assess if fusion centers have access to necessary information or databases held by other Federal agencies. H.R. 2169 addresses this deficiency by requiring the Secretary to conduct outreach to the fusion centers to identify information-sharing gaps and work with the appropriate Federal agencies to address these gaps.

Additionally, the Secretary is required to identify Federal databases and datasets that should be included in the information-sharing environment and coordinate with the appropriate Federal agency to deploy such systems.

H.R. 2169 includes input from the fusion centers, Department of Homeland Security, and other Federal agencies.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the National Fusion Center Association, and I am pleased they have endorsed the bill.

NATIONAL FUSION
CENTER ASSOCIATION,
April 28, 2017.

Re Support for H.R. 2169—Improving Fusion Centers' Access to Information Act.

Hon. JOHN KATKO,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KATKO: On behalf of the National Fusion Center Association (NFCA), I write in support of your legislation—H.R. 2169—to enhance information sharing and analysis among fusion centers and federal agencies by encouraging appropriate fusion center access to federally managed information systems. As you know, the National Network of Fusion Centers (NNFC) is a focal point for analytical collaboration and information sharing on threats to public safety among federal, local, state, territorial, and tribal public safety agencies.

The NFCA has worked closely with DHS, the FBI, and other partners to develop strong information sharing pathways. We have made significant strides to improve daily working relationships with our federal partners. The flow of information from state and local public safety agencies to appropriate federal agencies continues to improve, and the same is true with information coming from federal agencies to local and state jurisdictions. We are also seeing enhanced analytical collaboration.

Still, challenges remain that should be addressed. Your legislation will provide important support in this effort by encouraging improved access to data from federally managed information systems that our analysts need to do their jobs in the most effective manner possible. It is crucial for Congress to consistently support a strong information sharing environment, and this legislation would assist in that effort.

We appreciate your dedication to effective information sharing and analysis and look forward to working with you to move your legislation forward and accomplish our shared mission of protecting America.

Sincerely,

MIKE SENA,
President.

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to report that H.R. 2169 is a very bipartisan bill that passed the Committee on Homeland Security unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2169, the Improving Fusion Centers' Access to Information Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, today we consider H.R. 2169, a bill that seeks to authorize DHS' State, Local, and Regional Fusion Center Initiative. The bill requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to carry out outreach to identify gaps in information sharing.

This measure highlights the importance of equipping fusion centers so that they can quickly adapt to the ever-evolving terrorist threat landscape. Congress has given particular attention to fusion centers and, in the 114th Congress, enacted measures to support fusion centers.

Fusion centers operate as State and major urban area focal points for the receipt, analysis, gathering, and sharing of threat-related information between Federal, local, and private sector partners.

I want to particularly highlight a provision of this bill focused on improving the interagency collaboration by requiring the DHS Secretary to consult with other Federal partners in order to develop new methods to address such gaps.

DHS must continue to address and improve the Nation's fusion centers' capabilities in gathering, analyzing, and sharing threat-related information between partners on every level.

□ 1545

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to again express my support for this bill and thank Mr. KATKO for his efforts in bringing this bill forward.

We live in a time when the threats we face as a nation remain complex, and this bill is an important tool to ensure our law enforcement professionals have the resources and methods to prevent and deter terror threats.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2169.

Before I close, I want to note that I routinely engage in bipartisan efforts on behalf of Homeland Security with Congressman VELA and others. The committee works in a very bipartisan manner to do what is best for this country to keep it safe, and this bill is one of those bills that helps keep our country safe.

It is critical that we ensure the proper flow of information to all law enforcement agencies, that they properly use that information, and that they have access to it on a regular basis no matter whether they are a local police officer who is working at a fusion center or whether it is an FBI agent. Everyone should have access to that information because we are all on the same team to keep this country safe.

I think our bipartisan efforts that we engage in with Homeland Security on a regular basis are a good example of the good things that happen in Congress. I am proud to be a part it, and I am proud to have Mr. VELA as my colleague on that as well.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, I rise in support of H.R. 2169. the "Improving Fusion Centers Access to Information Act of 2017," which would enhance information sharing in the Department of Homeland Security State, Local and Regional Fusion Center Initiative.

This bill requires outreach to be conducted to fusion centers in order to identify gaps in information sharing and consultation with other Federal agencies to develop methods to address such gaps.

Additionally, it requires the DHS Secretary to coordinate with the heads of other federal departments and agencies to provide operational and intelligence advice to fusion centers and support their efforts to operate efficiently and effectively.

H.R. 2169 requires the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) to ensure fusion centers have access to Homeland Security information sharing centers and that DHS personnel are deployed to support fusion centers in a manner consistent with the department's mission and statutory limits.

Fusion centers provide the means to local, state, and tribal law enforcement to bring together information from distributed federal and private sector sources for the purpose of collection, retention, analysis, and dissemination. The term fusion centers first coined by the Department of Defense (DOD) refer to the fusing of information for analysis purposes.

The Houston Regional Intelligence Service Center is a Fusion Center.

The mission of the Houston Regional Intelligence Service Center is to provide security to the Houston area by gathering, developing and sharing intelligence regarding the capabilities, intentions, and actions of terrorist groups and individuals which pose threats.

Houston hosted the 51st Super Bowl earlier this year and the Houston Regional Intelligence Service Center was on duty for this major national event.

This year's Super Bowl had:

10,000—volunteers;

140,000—visitors; and

1 million—people who participated in at least one Super Bowl event.

The Super Bowl took place free of incidents, which is a testament to the collaborative work of federal, state, and local law enforcement through the Houston Fusion Center.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is not only good for our country, but it also will greatly benefit the citizens of Houston, Texas.

If local law enforcement is given the proper resources, information, and intelligence, they will know how to properly handle terrorism threats.

H.R. 2169 will strengthen our economy while keeping our fellow citizens safe.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in supporting H.R. 2169 because the safety of citizens from potential threats is critical to the security of the homeland and strength of our economy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2169, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BORDER ENFORCEMENT SECURITY TASK FORCE REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2281) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to reauthorize the Border Enforcement Security Task Force program within the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2281

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Border Enforcement Security Task Force Reauthorization Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. MODIFIED INSTRUCTIONS.

(a) UPDATED CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UNITS.—Paragraph (2) of section 432(c) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 240(c)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''the Secretary shall consider'' and inserting ''the Secretary shall apply risk-based criteria that takes into consideration''; and

(2) in subparagraph (A), by inserting before the semicolon the following: '', including threats posed by transnational criminal organizations'';

(3) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(4) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(5) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

''(E) the extent to which the BEST unit would advance the Department's homeland and border security strategic priorities and related objectives; and

''(F) whether departmental Joint Task Force operations as established pursuant to section 708 and other joint cross-border initiatives would be enhanced, improved, or otherwise assisted by the BEST unit to be established.''.

(b) PORT SECURITY.—Subsection (c) of section 432 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 240) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) PORT SECURITY BEST UNITS.—A BEST unit established pursuant to paragraph (2) with a port security nexus shall be composed of at least one member of each of the following:

''(A) The Coast Guard Investigative Service.

''(B) The geographically-responsible Coast Guard Sector Intelligence Office.''.

(c) UPDATED REPORT ELEMENTS.—Subsection (e) of section 432 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 240) is amended to read as follows:

''(e) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section and annually thereafter for the following five years, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that includes the following:

''(1) A description of the effectiveness of BEST in enhancing border security, disrupting and dismantling transnational criminal organizations, and reducing drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal alien trafficking and smuggling, violence, and kidnapping along and across the international borders of the United States, as measured by crime statistics, including violent deaths, incidents of violence, and drug-related arrests.

''(2) An assessment of how BEST enhances information-sharing, including the dissemination of homeland security information, among Federal, State, local, tribal, and foreign law enforcement agencies.

''(3) A description of how BEST advances the Department's homeland and border security strategic priorities and effectiveness of BEST in achieving related objectives.

''(4) An assessment of BEST's joint operational efforts with departmental Joint Task Force operations established pursuant to section 708 and other joint cross-border initiatives.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VELA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 2281, the Border Enforcement Security Task Force Reauthorization Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, we are living in unprecedented times. A quick glance of recent headlines shows that our Nation is suffering from the largest heroin epidemic in the history of the United States. In fact, just last week, Bloomberg Businessweek reported that heroin has become so pervasive in our cities and so profitable for the cartels that supply it that even our local law enforcement officers are disheartened and admit that sporadic street-level arrests seem to have little to no effect.

Recently, in my district and because of the hard work of our men and women in law enforcement, we witnessed the dismantling of a large-scale organization. News reports indicate 52 individuals are facing charges for about 370 crimes, including operating as drug dealers and traffickers.

Mr. Speaker, if these individuals had not been stopped, their nefarious activities would have broken the dreams of children across America, and their criminal enterprise would have caused millions in economic loss through increased incarceration, rehab, and medical expenses. If they had not been stopped, their actions would have continued to introduce poison into our communities and shattered lives.

Even worse, a recent trend shows that the heroin hitting our streets is becoming more lethal as drug cartels have now begun lacing heroin with fentanyl, a synthetic opioid making doses more addictive and cheaper to produce.

I might add parenthetically that, for 20 years as a Federal prosecutor, I prosecuted every possible drug organization known to man. I have never seen anything with the lethality that is heroin.

This epidemic is, in large part, due to the stream of illegal narcotics that is flowing across our Nation's borders. However, there are steps that can be taken to shut down these illicit pathways. Thankfully, there is a Federal task force dedicated to this singular purpose.

In 2005, in response to the increase in violence along the southwest border of Mexico, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, in partnership with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, as well as other Federal, State, local, and international law enforcement officials, created what is known as BEST, the Border Enforcement Security Task Force.

To date, a total of 44 BEST units have been deployed across 16 States and in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. My home State of New York is well served by three BEST teams, two of which are situated on the northern border and one of which I helped stand up in Massena, New York.

Nationwide, BEST teams comprise over 1,000 members who represent over 100 law enforcement agencies that have committed to jointly investigate transnational criminal activity along the southwest and northern borders and at our Nation's major seaports.

Since inception, their collective efforts have initiated more than 10,654 investigations which have resulted in almost 13,000 criminal arrests, the seizure of 1.2 million pounds of narcotics, and more than $130 million. The street value of 1.2 million pounds of narcotics is astronomical.

This is an impressive feat by any measure; however, as we are considering reauthorizing this important task force, it is important to highlight where there is some room for improvement. Every Congress looks at existing programs and makes adjustments when needed. That is exactly what we are proposing to do here today.

Of the 44, total, BEST units, 20 of them are designated by Homeland Security Investigations as having a maritime security focus. While the Coast Guard provides critical support to Federal, State, and local partners through a majority of the maritime BESTs, not every maritime BEST is currently benefiting from Coast Guard participation.

This bill mandates the participation of both a Coast Guard Investigative Service special agent and a uniformed Coast Guard intelligence officer on every maritime BEST. By utilizing both plainclothes investigators and uniformed intelligence officers, BEST will be able to partner with the Coast Guard in ongoing criminal investigations and the generation of actionable maritime intelligence.

The Coast Guard is the only agency within DHS that is also an independent member of the intelligence community. This unique position, coupled with the fact that the Coast Guard has unparalleled maritime domain awareness through daily interaction with mariners and facility operators, makes it imperative that they are included in all maritime BESTS in a mandatory fashion.

As we find ourselves halfway through Police Week this week, I want to take a second to pause and thank the men and women of law enforcement throughout this great Nation—many of whom I have stood side by side with for over 20 years—for all they do in keeping our country safe.

I would also like to thank the ranking member, Mr. VELA, for introducing this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support the law enforcement community and vote in favor of reauthorizing this important task force.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2017.

Hon. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL: I write concerning H.R. 2281, the Border Enforcement Security Task Force Reauthorization Act of 2017. This legislation includes matters that I believe fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

In order to expedite floor consideration of H.R. 2281, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure agrees to forgo action on this bill. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding that forgoing consideration of the bill would not prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the Committee's Rule X jurisdiction. I request you urge the Speaker to name members of the Committee to any conference committee named to consider such provisions.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2017.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SHUSTER: Thank you for your letter regarding H R 2281, the ''Border Enforcement Security Task Force Reauthorization Act of 2017''. I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives. I understand that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, will not seek a sequential referral on the bill. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

The Committee on Homeland Security concurs with the mutual understanding that the decision not to seek a sequential referral on this bill at this time does not prejudice any claim the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure may have on this legislation or similar legislation in the future.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill on the House floor. I thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2281, the Border Enforcement Security Task Force Reauthorization Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, this bill, H.R. 2281, seeks to reauthorize the Border Enforcement Security Task Force, or BEST, program within the Department of Homeland Security.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement leads 42 BEST units across 16 States within the United States and Puerto Rico. Each unit is comprised of members from ICE's Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, as well as other Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies who investigate criminal activity along the southwest and northern borders and at the Nation's major seaports.

These units play a critical role in advancing DHS' border security efforts by ensuring all levels of domestic law enforcement are sharing information and leveraging resources. BEST units have been instrumental in coordinating joint operations with our law enforcement partners in Mexico to thwart threats posed by transnational criminal organizations.

This legislation is in furtherance of my efforts as ranking member of the Subcommittee on Boder and Maritime Security to bolster law enforcement collaboration on cross-border threats and to ensure that resources are used in a strategic manner to effectively mitigate such threats, particularly in response to the drug cartels.

Those of us representing border districts are well aware that cartels adapt quickly to exploit real or perceived weaknesses in our security. As they shift their criminal operations to new locations along our land borders, smuggle their contraband into the United States through our ports of entry, or utilize maritime routes into this country, DHS must be at the ready to quickly intercept and disrupt their operations.

This legislation seeks to ensure that DHS continues to use BEST units to maximum effect. This bill instructs DHS, before standing up a BEST unit, to consider the cross-border threats posed by transnational criminal organizations, the Department's homeland and border security strategic priorities, as well as the operations of DHS' joint task forces and other multiagency efforts.

H.R. 2281 also updates existing reporting requirements so that Congress has better information on how effectively BEST units are reducing criminal activity, such as the traffic of drugs, weapons, and people along our borders; enhancing information sharing among law enforcement partners; coordinating with the Department's joint task forces; and generally advancing the DHS homeland security and border security strategic priorities.

I also want to thank my colleagues on the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee who have cosponsored this legislation, including Subcommittee Chairwoman MARTHA MCSALLY. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2281.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2281, the Border Enforcement Security Task Force Reauthorization Act of 2017, is a commonsense, bipartisan bill that seeks to maximize the effectiveness of the successful border security program and ensure that, going forward, the program continues to contribute to making our Nation more safe and secure.

H.R. 2281 was approved by voice vote by the full committee on May 3 and enjoys broad, bipartisan support.

Before I yield back, I would like to thank Chairman MCCAUL and Ranking Member THOMPSON, as well as Subcommittee Chairwoman MCSALLY, for their work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to adopt this legislation.

I want to note that, back in the mid-nineties when I was starting out my career as a Federal organized crime prosecutor, I was set on the border in El Paso, Texas, and I had a frontline view, as I was going after cartel-level drug traffickers back then, of just what a problem the border is.

Many people think of the border's primary problem being illegal aliens, but I can tell you firsthand—and I think my colleague from Texas will agree with me—that drug trafficking remains a gigantic issue, and the poison that is killing our kids is streaming across the southwest border in particular.

It is imperative that bills like this continue. It is imperative that Congressman VELA, Congresswoman MCSALLY, and the others on their subcommittee continue their great work identifying issues along the border, both north and south, and that the BEST concept continues and, indeed, hopefully, expands in the future. Targeted law enforcement that involves people on both sides of the border and law enforcement is the only way we are ever going to solve this problem. I commend them for their work on this.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2281 the "Border Enforcement Security Task Force Reauthorization Act of 2017."

As a Senior Member on the House Committee on Homeland Security; and former Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, I know well the importance of protecting our nation's borders.

I thank my colleague Congressman VELA for sponsoring this bipartisan legislation, which reauthorizes the Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) program.

An escalation in drug trafficking and transnational criminal activity along our nation's southern border has led to record levels of violence and drug trafficking-related homicides.

Despite significant efforts to combat the drug trade, many governments in the region suffer from overwhelmed criminal justice systems and law enforcement agencies.

There must be a multi-pronged approach to solving the drug crisis in the United States, it must include treatment upon demand; education; increase resources for border interdiction and seizure of illicit drugs and advanced technology to detect and track those who may be engaged in illegal activity along the border.

The Border Enforcement Security Task Force is accomplishing the important law enforcement component of border security.

The Border Enforcement Security Task Force achieves its goal of border security enhancement by facilitating collaboration among federal, state, local, tribal, and foreign law enforcement agencies to execute coordinated activities in furtherance of border security and homeland security; and enhancing information-sharing, including the dissemination of homeland security information among such agencies.

The BEST program is currently administered by DHS, and involves information sharing and law-enforcement operations between personnel from federal, state, local, tribal, and foreign law-enforcement agencies to combat criminal activity near the United States borders.

This program has established teams of law enforcement agents from over 100 law enforcement agencies that form units to investigate transnational criminal activity.

This approach supports better cooperation and collaboration among federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies when investigating criminal activity along the southwest and northern borders, as well as at the nation's major seaports.

Since their inception, BEST Units have collectively initiated more than 10,654 cases.

These actions have resulted in more than:

2,718 criminal arrests
7,245 administrative arrests
110,711 pounds of cocaine
5,517 pounds of ecstasy
1,764 pounds of heroin
1,036,749 pounds of marijuana
6,325 pounds of methamphetamine
2,988,561 rounds of ammunition
4,657 vehicles
$130.2 million in U.S. currency
15,062 weapons

This bill instructs the Secretary of Homeland Security to also consider:

The cross-border threats posed by transnational criminal organizations;

The Department's homeland and border security strategic priorities; and

The departmental Joint Task Forces and other multi-agency cross-border operations when establishing new BEST Units.

In addition, this bill would update the Secretary's existing reporting requirement to provide an assessment of how BEST Units enhance information-sharing among law enforcement partners, coordinate with Departmental Joint Task Forces, and advance the Department's homeland and border security strategic priorities.

This legislation will improve and update the information sharing practices between our law enforcement agencies so they will operate in a cohesive manner.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2281 the BEST program because it had proven throughout the years to improve our border security, along with improving how our law enforcement agencies operate and share vital information.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2281, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1600

REMOVING OUTDATED RESTRICTIONS TO ALLOW FOR JOB GROWTH ACT

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1177) to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to release on behalf of the United States the condition that certain lands conveyed to the City of Old Town, Maine, be used for a municipal airport, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1177

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Removing Outdated Restrictions to Allow for Job Growth Act".

SEC. 2. RELEASE OF REVERSIONARY INTEREST.

(a) RELEASE.—Notwithstanding section 32(c) of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act (7 U.S.C. 1011(c)), if the City of Old Town, Maine, makes a written request to the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary shall release, convey, and quitclaim, without monetary consideration, all rights, title, and interest of the United States in and to the lands specified in subsection (b).

(b) LANDS SPECIFIED.—The lands subject to subsection (a) include only the lands—

(1) conveyed by the United States to the City of Old Town, Maine, under section 32(c) of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act (7 U.S.C. 1011(c)) by the deed dated June 5, 1941;

(2) proposed for conveyance by the City of Old Town, Maine, for the purpose of economic development; and

(3) described in the written request submitted by the City of Old Town, Maine, to the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1177, Removing Outdated Restrictions to Allow for Job Growth Act.

In the early 1980s, the city of Old Town, Maine, purchased land from the Federal Government to be part of the Old Town airport. The deed included a use restriction, as required by a 1941 amendment to the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of 1937, limiting use of the land to a municipal airport or other public use.

Old Town has invested heavily in this land in order to attract businesses, but the outdated deed restriction needs to be lifted before further economic development can occur.

H.R. 1177 provides for the removal of the deed restriction on the parcel of land around the Old Town airport to allow for business development. The bill allows the City of Old Town to send a letter to the Secretary of Agriculture detailing which lands it would like released from the deed restriction and directs the Secretary to release that land to the city of Old Town.

Passage of this commonsense provision will allow economic development in Old Town to move forward, creating as many as 200 much-needed jobs. This legislation will provide certainty to private investors in the community and help the local economy thrive.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN) for addressing this issue, and our chairman on the

House Agriculture Committee, Chairman CONAWAY, for moving this bill forward.

This is a good government bill that eliminates red tape to unleash private investment. At a time when rural America is struggling—it is people like Representative POLIQUIN and all of us—we must do all we can to encourage growth and development in rural communities, many that we all serve, but also the one that Representative POLIQUIN serves in Old Town, Maine. I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1177 is a bill that will allow the city of Old Town, Maine, to move forward with economic development plans that have been hampered by Federal red tape. H.R. 1177 removes the current deed restriction on the land surrounding the Old Town airport. This will allow the city to implement economic development initiatives that will create jobs and spur economic activity in the area.

As a pilot, I am glad to see that the airport will not be impacted by this change and will continue to meet the region's air transportation needs. Again, H.R. 1177 is common sense, reasonable legislation. I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) for supporting this legislation.

I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN), who actually was the one who brought this bill to the attention of the House Agriculture Committee and to the floor here today. It is his hard work, and there are not many in this institution who work harder than Representative POLIQUIN in addressing the needs of rural America.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for those kind remarks.

I am so proud to represent the most honest and hardworking Americans you can find anywhere. Maine's Second Congressional District is, if not the largest, the second largest congressional district east of the Mississippi River. It is about an 8-hour drive from Fryeburg to Madawaska, and you are going to spend about half your time dodging moose and other critters on the road. We are tough, we are rugged, but we need jobs. We need jobs.

We have had a situation in our State for the past 30 years where many of our paper mills and sawmills and textile mills and leather tanneries have closed. We have a handful left. And right smack in the middle of our State is the great city of Old Town, Maine, just a little bit north of Bangor. Old Town has also suffered the closure of a significant mill—or two, actually.

Ron Harriman, who is the economic development director of Old Town, reached out to our office and said: Bruce, we have a problem here. We have a terrific piece of property surrounding our airport. We have gone through extensive work and cost to the town to extend utilities to this piece of land. But lo and behold, there is a Federal deed restriction on that land that dates back decades that doesn't allow us to sell the land and develop it for more jobs.

I don't doubt at the time, Mr. Speaker, that the Federal Government that was buying up local property across the country, reclaiming it and turning it into agricultural land, I don't question the purpose of that and the good intentions of that; but that was a long time ago.

We now have a situation where the city of Old Town needs to be able to sell this property in order to attract other investment and other jobs to help our families in central Maine. Removing this deed restriction will allow that to happen.

I am asking everybody in this Chamber, Republicans and Democrats—and I thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON)—please support H.R. 1177. There are many times, Mr. Speaker, when all the government needs to do is get out of the way. This is one example. Let the Federal Government get out of the way. We know how to create jobs in the State of Maine. Let's remove this red tape. Let's let this land be sold for folks who want to create jobs. I would be very grateful for everybody in this Chamber to support H.R. 1177 and let the people of central Maine live better lives with more jobs and more freedom.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support passage of this commonsense legislation, H.R. 1177.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1177.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

EDWARD T. SCHAFER AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2154) to rename the Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in Fargo, North Dakota, as the Edward T. Schafer Agricultural Research Center, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2154

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

SECTION 1. RENAMING OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER IN FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA AS THE EDWARD T. SCHAFER AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER.

(a) RENAMING.—The Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in Fargo, North Dakota, shall hereafter be known and designated as the ''Edward T. Schafer Agricultural Research Center''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be considered to be a reference to the Edward T. Schafer Agricultural Research Center.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 2154, to rename the Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in Fargo, North Dakota, as the Edward T. Schafer Agricultural Research Center. And this, Mr. Speaker, is in spite of the fact that it is located at North Dakota State University, which, in January of 2015, beat my Illinois State Red Birds for the FCS football championship and caused me to have to bring cupcakes from Normal, Illinois, to pay a bet with my colleague who is the author of this bill, Congressman KEVIN CRAMER. So I still support this bill in spite of those actions because it is a good bill, Mr. Speaker.

Ed Schafer served as North Dakota's Governor from 1992 to 2000, and as our Nation's Secretary of Agriculture from 2008 to 2009. Renaming the Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in Fargo, North Dakota, to honor Secretary Schafer is a fitting tribute to his distinguished career in public service.

Located in Secretary Schafer's home State and at one of the Nation's premier land grant universities, this research center continues to advance its vital work on improving crops to strengthen our Nation's food security. I greatly appreciate the work—in spite

of the cupcakes—that Congressman KEVIN CRAMER has put forth on this bill, his leadership, and I urge my colleagues to join me today in supporting this legislation.

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

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

H.R. 2154 recognizes former U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary and former North Dakota Governor Ed Schafer by renaming the Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in his honor.

The research center serves the region, including my district in Minnesota, by coordinating five research units in two Fargo laboratories. The center does a wide range of work with a focus on animal metabolism-agricultural chemicals, cereal crops, insect genetics and biochemistry, sugar beet and potato, and sunflower and plant biology research.

I worked closely with Ed Schafer when he was at USDA and also during the time he was North Dakota's Governor. We worked on many things together. Some of them were pleasant and some of them not so pleasant, such as floods and so forth.

I think it is a fitting recognition for an outstanding career in government, and I am happy to be here to support this bill.

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, again, I thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) for supporting this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the author of this bill.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. DAVIS and my colleague, Mr. PETERSON, from across the Red River in Minnesota for their support for this renaming of the Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center. For all of the reasons that Representative PETERSON talked about, it is a world-class facility in a world-class town, and I think it should be named after a world-class guy, and I think Ed Schafer is that.

I had the opportunity to serve under Ed when he was Governor for 8 years. I served in his cabinet. His intellect and his common sense are matched only by his boundless energy and his eternal optimism, qualities he brings to every job he does, including his work at the Department of Agriculture.

When he was recognized by his former Governor colleague, President George W. Bush, and asked to join the administration in that department, it was a remarkable thing not just for agriculture, not just for Ed, but for our State. North Dakota is number one in the production of many crops. Agriculture is the number one industry in our State. It is what makes North Dakota what North Dakota is: the ability to feed hungry people in a growing world. Ed brought that common sense to USDA and that work ethic that works the land so effectively.

I feel like this is a fitting tribute to him. It is a celebration not only of his accomplishments, but a celebration of agriculture in North Dakota and the entire Red River Valley, including Congressman PETERSON's district, and really for our world.

I would note that our two Senators, while it is easy for me to get unanimity in the House for the North Dakota House caucus since I am the only one, North Dakota's two Senators have a companion bill in the Senate introduced by Senator HOEVEN and cosponsored by Senator HEITKAMP, and they support this effort as well.

I appreciate the work of the committee and the work of Ed Schafer, and I look forward, hopefully, to a celebration of the renaming.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers on this side. Again, I thank the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) for bringing this forward. Mr. Schafer is a great member of our community. He spends some time in my hometown every year and I have gotten to know him very well. He very much deserves this honor. I am happy to support this bill, and I ask my colleagues to support it.

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

□ 1615

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleagues from Minnesota and North Dakota. I urge all Members to support this bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2154, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMBATING EUROPEAN ANTI-SEMITISM ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 672) to require continued and enhanced annual reporting to Congress in the Annual Report on International Religious Freedom on anti-Semitic incidents in Europe, the safety and security of European Jewish communities, and the efforts of the United States to partner with European governments, the European Union, and civil society groups, to combat anti-Semitism, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 672

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Combating European Anti-Semitism Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) During the past decade, there has been a steady increase in anti-Semitic incidents in Europe, resulting in European Jews being the targets of physical and verbal harassment and even lethal terrorist attacks, all of which has eroded personal and communal security and the quality of daily Jewish life.

(2) According to reporting by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), between 2005 and 2014, anti-Semitic incidents increased in France from 508 to 851; in Germany from 60 to 173; in Belgium from 58 to 130; in Italy from 49 to 86; and in the United Kingdom from 459 to 1,168.

(3) Anti-Zionism has at times devolved into anti-Semitic attacks, prompting condemnation from many European leaders, including French Prime Minister Manuel Valls, British Prime Minister David Cameron, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

(4) Since 2010, the Department of State has adhered to the working definition of Anti-Semitism by the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). Some contemporary examples of anti-Semitism include the following:

(A) Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews (often in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion).

(B) Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such, or the power of Jews as a collective, especially, but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government, or other societal institutions.

(C) Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, the State of Israel, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.

(D) Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.

(E) Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interest of their own countries.

(5) On October 16, 2004, the President signed into law the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act of 2004. This law provides the legal foundation for a reporting requirement provided by the Department of State annually on anti-Semitism around the world.

(6) In November 2015, the House of Representatives passed H. Res. 354 by a vote of 418–0, urging the Secretary of State to continue robust United States reporting on anti-Semitism by the Department of State and the Special Envoy to Combat and Monitor Anti-Semitism.

(7) In 2016, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), comprised of 31 member countries, adopted a working definition of anti-Semitism which stated: ''Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.''.

(8) The IHRA further clarified that manifestations of anti-Semitism might also target the State of Israel, conceived of as a Jewish collectivity. Anti-Semitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for ''why things go wrong''. It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms, and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) it is in the national interest of the United States to combat anti-Semitism at home and abroad;

(2) anti-Semitism is a challenge to the basic principles of tolerance, pluralism, and democracy, and the shared values that bind Americans and Europeans together;

(3) there is an urgent need to ensure the safety and security of European Jewish communities, including synagogues, schools, cemeteries, and other institutions;

(4) the United States should continue to emphasize the importance of combating anti-Semitism in multilateral bodies, including the United Nations, European Union institutions, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe;

(5) the Department of State should continue to thoroughly document acts of anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic incitement that occur around the world, and should continue to encourage other countries to do the same, and share their findings; and

(6) the Department of State should continue to work to encourage adoption by national government institutions and multilateral institutions of a working definition of anti-Semitism similar to the one adopted in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance context.

SEC. 4. ANNUAL REPORTING ON THE STATE OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN EUROPE.

Paragraph (1) of section 102(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6412) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(G) ANTI-SEMITISM IN EUROPE.—In addition to the information required under clause (vii) of subparagraph (A), with respect to each European country in which verbal or physical threats or attacks are particularly significant against Jewish persons, places of worship, schools, cemeteries, and other religious institutions, a description of—

''(i) the security challenges and needs of European Jewish communities and European law enforcement agencies in such countries to better protect such communities;

''(ii) to the extent practicable, the efforts of the United States Government over the reporting period to partner with European law enforcement agencies and civil society groups regarding the sharing of information and best practices to combat anti-Semitic incidents in Europe;

''(iii) European educational programming and public awareness initiatives that aim to collaborate on educational curricula and campaigns that impart shared values of pluralism and tolerance, and showcase the positive contributions of Jews in culture, scholarship, science, and art, with special attention to those segments of the population that exhibit a high degree of anti-Semitic animus; and

''(iv) efforts by European governments to adopt and apply a working definition of anti-Semitism.''.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my colleagues NITA LOWEY and Chairman Emeritus ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for their leadership on the Bipartisan Task Force for Combating Anti-Semitism and for their good work on this timely and important bill.

Mr. Speaker, I will lay out this case, but it is one we are familiar with. Hostility towards the Jewish people in some European cities is very deep, making Jews in certain areas look over their shoulders, afraid to walk the streets at night. In recent years, this surge in anti-Semitism has led to an outbreak of violent attacks.

Those violent attacks are targeting certain Jewish neighbors. They are targeting places of worship. I think back to 2015, the deadly attacks on the kosher supermarket in Paris and, later on, the synagogue in Copenhagen.

European governments have since passed laws designed to better protect their Jewish citizens, designed to punish those who perpetrate anti-Semitic incidents, but much more work remains to be done because there needs to be a better coordination on these efforts between Jewish communities and law enforcement and more comprehensive reporting on the incidents to identify trends, to identify problematic regions.

In addition, in order to consistently apply anti-Semitism laws throughout Europe, there needs to be a uniform legal understanding of what constitutes anti-Semitism.

Let me explain. We must be clear on this. The fire bombing of synagogues is not a political protest. The defacing of cemeteries, the yelling slurs at rabbis, the threatening of Jewish school children, this is not political protest. This is anti-Semitism, and it must be stopped.

Absent a clear-eyed definition of anti-Semitism, perpetrators of violent acts have, at times, been given a pass for their actions due to the flimsy defense of political protest.

Adoption across Europe of a single definition of anti-Semitism would provide an important foundation for law enforcement officials, enabling them to better enforce laws and develop strategies for improved security for the Jewish community.

This bill, H.R. 672, the Combating European Anti-Semitism Act of 2017, calls for these fundamental improvements, and it reaffirms the U.S. commitment to combating anti-Semitism. It urges European nations to adopt a working definition of anti-Semitism. It calls for increased reporting on it.

Anti-Semitic incidents in Europe have to be reported in a way in which people can be held accountable. Collaborative efforts between U.S. and European law enforcement and the efforts to improve security for Jewish communities is another important aspect of this legislation.

Now is the time to act and pass this important measure.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure. Let me start by thanking the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), my good friend and neighbor, the ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations.

I also want to thank Chairman ROYCE for his steadfast support in bringing this bill to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, it is so shocking and so heartbreaking to me that, in the year 2017, we wake up day after day to read about anti-Semitic vandalism and violence, anti-Semitic slurs on Munich buses, Russian so-called law makers pedaling anti-Semite conspiracy theories, horrific murders in a kosher market in Paris 2 years ago. Of course, Mr. Speaker, here in our own country, bomb threats to Jewish community centers, desecration of cemeteries. Actually, I can hardly believe it.

We know this ancient hatred has never been extinguished. It has always found some dark corner in which to fester until some new group on the fringe tries to pull it back into the mainstream. I fear we are seeing that sort of resurgence right now.

When we hear these toxic ideas emanating from major political parties and governing bodies in Europe, we know it is time for action. It needs to be stopped, and this bill will help.

This legislation builds on the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act, which established annual reporting on religious freedom worldwide, as well as the 2004 Global Anti-Semitism Review Act, which required the State Department to report every year on anti-Semitism around the world.

This measure calls for continued and enhanced reporting on anti-Semitic incidents in Europe. We want to focus on what has been a hotbed of anti-Semitism in recent years so that no active anti-Semitic hatred goes unnoticed.

This bill also expresses our view in Congress that it is in our country's interest to combat anti-Semitism here and abroad; that it is critical to ensure the safety of European Jewish communities; that multilateral organizations like the U.N. and OSCE have an important role to play in combating anti-Semitism; that we should continue to report anti-Semitic acts worldwide; and that our allies should follow our lead and document anti-Semitic acts when they take place so we can share our findings amongst ourselves.

We also call on the State Department to adopt the working definition of anti-Semitism used by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, because words do matter when it comes to the way we talk about this challenge.

It is absolutely amazing that 70-some-odd years after World War II ended—and that decade culminated in

the murder of 6 million Jews in Europe in the Holocaust, men, women, and children—it is absolutely unbelievable that 70 years later you would see anti-Semitism in the same places in Europe rear its ugly head by stupid people who don't know what they are saying or doing. It is just amazing. You think there would be some kind of sensitivity about the Holocaust and about all the innocent people who were murdered for just the one reason that they were Jewish, and yet you see no-nothings, as far as I am concerned, popping up again with their anti-Semitic hatred. It is bad wherever it goes, but it is especially repugnant to have it in Europe, the site of the murder of 6 million Jewish people.

I am very grateful to Representative LOWEY for her hard work on this bill. I am pleased to support it.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), chairman of the Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time, and I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their comments on this legislation. The bill promotes religious freedom throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, as has been mentioned, it has been 60 to 70 years since the Jewish community in Europe was decimated by the Holocaust. Now, more than ever, the Jewish community is under assault yet again.

In Europe, anti-Semitic individuals are back like never before. A study commissioned by the German parliament this year found that there were 644 anti-Semitic offenses in the country in 2016 alone.

In countries like Holland, Jewish schools and synagogues need to be protected by special forces because of fear of attack on those schools.

And, unfortunately, our country has not been immune. Jewish community centers across the country have been targets of bomb threats, even recently in Houston, Texas, my hometown, such bomb threats.

This past Sunday, a historic synagogue in New York City was attacked and burned down by arsonists. That is why this bill, the Combating European Anti-Semitism Act, is so important. We must continue to partner with our European friends to ensure that we stamp out the cancer of anti-Semitism.

As a representative of a country founded on religious freedom, we, as Members of Congress, must send a clear message to Jews and non-Jews, from Houston to Amsterdam, that we will not allow the horrors of the Holocaust to repeat themselves in this generation.

Mr. Speaker, we must reiterate the commitment the free world made over 60 years ago: Never again. Never again.

And that is just the way it is.

□ 1630

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), my good friend, my fellow New Yorker, the author of this bill, and the ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friends, Chairman ED ROYCE and Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL, and all those involved in advancing this important legislation.

I rise in support of H.R. 672, the Combating European Anti-Semitism Act, which was introduced by the co-chairs of the Bipartisan Taskforce for Combating Anti-Semitism.

With the rising threat of anti-Semitism in Europe, this bill would require enhanced reporting to Congress on anti-Semitic incidents in Europe, the safety and security of European Jewish communities, and the efforts of the United States to partner with European entities to combat anti-Semitism. This bill also urges the Department of State to continue encouraging European governments and multilateral institutions to adopt a clear and comprehensive working definition of anti-Semitism.

I find it hard to believe that in the 21st century European Jews worry about whether or not there is a future for their communities in Europe. But with increased anti-Semitic sentiments throughout Europe and many Jews becoming the targets of verbal, physical, and even deadly terrorist attacks, the security and quality of life for European Jewish communities has deteriorated. This is simply unacceptable.

Anti-Semitism is not simply a Jewish problem. Xenophobia and other forms of racism are never far behind when this pernicious threat rears its ugly head. The United States must remain a leader in the fight against anti-Semitism wherever it occurs to ensure that our commitment to ''never again'' remains a reality.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation to my fellow co-chairs of the Bipartisan Taskforce for Combating Anti-Semitism, Representatives SMITH, ENGEL, GRANGER, DEUTCH, ROS-LEHTINEN, VEASEY, and ROSKAM. The task force remains committed to working across regions, religions, and party lines to condemn all anti-Semitism and fight for the right of Jews to live freely without fear at home and abroad.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), who chairs the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa and is our chairman emeritus.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member for working to help bring this important bill to the floor in a timely manner and, more importantly, for conducting the affairs of our full committee in an even-tempered, professional manner that is an example to the rest of the House. It is an honor to serve under their leadership.

I also want to thank my good friend NITA LOWEY because she is the author of this bill, but I want to thank her for her leadership in fighting anti-Semitism across the world. She has been at this fight for many a year. We have worked closely together on defeating this hatred, one of the world's oldest forms of discrimination. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of her bill, and I thank the gentlewoman from New York.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is an important initiative for our Bipartisan Taskforce for Combating Anti-Semitism, a task force of which I am proud to be a co-founder and a co-chair along with Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. ENGEL, of course CHRIS SMITH, TED DEUTCH, KAY GRANGER, PETER ROSKAM, MARC VEASEY, so many good Members. But more than that, Mr. Speaker, it is an important initiative for the Jewish communities across Europe who have been facing a troubling increase in anti-Semitic incidents and attacks over the past years that have put their safety and their security at risk.

Mr. Speaker, all across Europe, Jews have been targeted. Their places of worship have been targeted, their homes, targeted; their businesses, targeted. Why? Because of their faith.

They have been the target of deadly attacks in European cities, democratic societies that we call allies: France, Belgium, Denmark, elsewhere—horrific. This is simply unconscionable, Mr. Speaker.

There is no time to delay in taking action. We cannot allow for an atmosphere of intolerance and hatred to once again rear its ugly head in Europe. That is why this bill is an important first step.

We have identified growing anti-Semitism as a problem before, but this bill will enhance reporting requirements so that we can more acutely identify the problems and, equally important, Mr. Speaker, we can identify the security challenges facing these Jewish communities. Then we can learn how to best tackle this, and we can learn how we can partner with our European allies and our friends and local law enforcement, along with civil society, to protect against anti-Semitic acts. We can get a better understanding of how our partners in Europe can better educate their children. We can get a handle on how to better promote awareness in their societies to the dangers of such blind hatred.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the first step in fighting anti-Semitism is identifying the problem areas and then developing a plan to address it. This bill will help us identify the problem. It is an important first step in taking the necessary action to protect the Jewish communities of Europe. I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

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

Let me first say, I agree with all the eloquent statements made by my colleagues on both sides of the aisle pertaining to this bill.

I want to thank Mrs. LOWEY, again, because it is a really important bill. It is really important that we don't sweep this under the rug. It is really important that we don't try to hide it or sugarcoat it. Whether it happens here, whether it happens in Europe, no matter where it happens, any form of anti-Semitism, any form of hatred of one group toward another needs to be roundly condemned and stopped. That is what we are trying to do here.

It hasn't even been a century since we heard this canary in the coal mine: political parties scapegoating Jews; insidious campaigns that question the humanity of Jewish populations or their legitimacy as members of certain societies; governments, popularly elected governments, saying that it was okay to hate.

We don't think it is okay to hate. That is why we are doing this. What we hear today is unnerving in light of that history.

Mr. Speaker, we know what happened when too few good people stood up and spoke out. We cannot allow that history to repeat. We must do whatever it takes to ensure that it doesn't.

This bill will help us address a part of this growing concern. It will shine a bright light on the resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe. It is just a piece of the puzzle, but it is a good start.

I am proud to stand with my colleagues today to support this measure. I urge all Members to do the same.

I thank the others on this side of the aisle and the other side of the aisle who have spoken on this, especially Chairman ROYCE.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

First, let me say that the words just spoken by Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL are precisely the sentiment that I think we all wish to convey. We must do all we can to combat anti-Semitism in all of its insidious forms, and we do it because the consequences, the horrifying consequences of doing nothing in the face of such evil, are unconscionable. We must not repeat the mistakes of the past by remaining silent, as this same poison affects our communities today.

Passage of this bill sends a clear signal that anti-Semitism has no place in free societies and urges our European partners to provide practical guidance that will empower law enforcement and better equip them to tackle this rising problem, and it sends the message that our own law enforcement is willing to work hand in hand with theirs in order to tackle this problem.

I appreciate the work of Congresswoman LOWEY and Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN and, of course, Mr. ENGEL, the ranking member. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill.

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 672, the Combating Anti-Semitism Act of 2017, sponsored by my friend NITA LOWEY. I and all of our fellow Co-Chairs of the Bi-Partisan Task Force for Combating Anti-Semitism are original cosponsors.

Among its provisions, the bill would require the State Department to include in existing annual reports information about the security challenges and needs of European Jewish communities and European law enforcement. This report would also document related U.S. government efforts to partner with European law enforcement agencies and civil society groups.

H.R. 672 is important and timely. As witnesses testified at a hearing I chaired in March on "Anti-Semitism Across Borders," physical attacks on European Jewish communities, and other forms of anti-Semitic hatred, remain rampant on the continent. Rabbi Andy Baker, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism and Director of International Jewish Affairs at the American Jewish Committee noted that even after the deadly anti-Semitic attacks in Paris, Brussels and Copenhagen, "problems still remain. Governments have taken different approaches, and some only in stop-gap measures." Rabbi Baker also emphasized that "We need to be clear-eyed in confronting and combating anti-Semitism, which manifests itself on both the right and the left."

At the same hearing, Paul Goldenberg, Director of the Security Community Network and Senior Advisor to the Rutgers University Faith-Based Communities Security Program, warned that "Ever-more connected, extremist groups in the United States are borrowing, adapting and enhancing the tactics and strategies adopted in Europe." This is an especially sobering warning, given the man recent anti-Semitic incidents here in the United States.

Mark Weitzman, Director of Government Affairs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center, emphasized that "Fighting antisemitism has always been a bipartisan commitment and in today's fractured political world it is more necessary than ever that the U.S. maintain its diplomatic and moral leadership in this issue. . . . we would strongly suggest that the position [of Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism] even be upgraded, to that of Ambassador, thus demonstrating the importance attached by our government to this issue."

H.R. 672 is an example of such bi-partisanship. It would ensure that the Special Envoy, other U.S. officials, the Congress, and civil society—especially European Jewish communities that their security groups—have key information to act fully and effectively. With the right information, and robust action, the United States can help ensure the safety and security of Jewish communities in Europe and elsewhere.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 672, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE REGARDING THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 145) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the fight against corruption in Central America, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 145

Whereas according to Transparency International's 2016 Corruption Perception Index, the citizens of Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua perceive high levels of government corruption;

Whereas widespread corruption in Central America weakens citizens' faith in public institutions, limits government capacity to advance development goals, and allows drug traffickers and other criminals to thrive;

Whereas the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) was created at the request of the Guatemalan Government in 2007, and has strengthened the capacity of Guatemalan institutions, especially the Office of the Attorney General, to combat corruption;

Whereas the Office of the Attorney General of Guatemala and CICIG have recently collaborated to investigate and prosecute a series of corruption cases involving high-level government officials, demonstrating that it is possible for governments in Central America to confront entrenched corruption, and that no one is above the law;

Whereas the Attorney General of El Salvador has made significant progress in tackling corruption at the highest levels;

Whereas after thousands of Hondurans joined street protests against corruption and in favor of an International Commission against Impunity in Honduras, the Honduran Government reached an agreement with the Organization of American States to create the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH);

Whereas MACCIH has begun to assist the Office of the Attorney General of Honduras with the investigation into the more than $300,000,000 that was embezzled from the Institute of Social Security; and

Whereas the leadership of CICIG and MACCIH and the attorneys general of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador have faced significant challenges, including credible threats against their lives, attempts to publicly discredit their work, or efforts to remove them from their posts: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) reaffirms that combating corruption in the Northern Triangle is an important policy interest for the United States;

(2) acknowledges that the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) and the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH) are currently making important contributions to this effort;

(3) urges the Government of Guatemala to continue to cooperate with CICIG and the Government of Honduras to continue to cooperate with MACCIH; and

(4) encourages the Governments of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador to—

(A) publicly support efforts to fight corruption;

(B) respect the independence of the judicial branch and the Office of the Attorney General; and

(C) ensure that the Office of the Attorney General in each Northern Triangle country receives sufficient domestic budget allocations to carry out its core responsibilities and that budgeted funds are delivered in a timely manner.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous materials in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 145, which affirms this body's support for the independent anticorruption commissions in Central America that seek to combat corruption and combat impunity in the countries of the Northern Triangle region.

I would like to commend the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES), a new member of the committee, for her work on this important resolution. Of course, I appreciate Mr. ENGEL, the ranking member and the former chairman of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, for his long-time focus on this critical region.

Mr. Speaker, in recent years, the U.S. has seen a surge in illegal migration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Now, that is the Northern Triangle of Central America.

Many of these migrants are fleeing violence. They are fleeing criminality and institutionalized corruption. More than anything, the citizens of these countries want governments that will work for them.

As a result of these governments, the international community has responded. Governments in the region, including the United States, have helped to establish the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala—that is called CICIG—and the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras, known as MACCIH.

Both of these organizations are making important contributions to tackling the culture of corruption and impunity in their respective countries and are working to give the citizens of these countries confidence in their own judiciary. These organizations have put politicians and public servants on notice that nobody should be above the law and that their citizenry demands transparency.

For example, this special body in Honduras has begun to assist the Office of the Attorney General with the investigation into the more than $300 million that was embezzled from the Institute of Social Security and, in Guatemala, has trained the prosecutors that successfully built high-profile corruption cases against multiple government officials, including the former Guatemalan President, President Molina.

□ 1645

Once again, I want to thank Representative TORRES for bringing this measure forward and for her efforts in working with the Northern Triangle countries to urge greater respect for an independent judiciary and to bring greater security and prosperity to the people of the Northern Triangle countries.

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

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

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

Let me start by thanking the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, ED ROYCE, from California. I am also especially grateful to another colleague from California, NORMA TORRES, a valuable member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, for authoring this bipartisan resolution, and also for her leadership as the founding co-chair of the Central America Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, when a child from El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras arrives at our southern border, he or she didn't get there because it was an easy journey. It was because poverty, crime, or lack of opportunity at home left that child no option but to face that long, dangerous trek. No child anywhere should be forced to make that heartbreaking choice.

The best way to ensure that this doesn't happen is not to build a wall or isolate ourselves from our neighbors. It is to stop children from having to make that journey in the first place. It is by making long-term, strategic investments in a more secure and prosperous Central America.

Over the last 2 years, Democrats and Republicans in Congress have come together to do just that. We made a bold, new foreign assistance commitment to Central America that helps address the root causes of child migration from the region.

A big part of this effort is supporting those individuals who are working day in and day out to root out corruption in Central America: the attorneys general in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras; the heads of the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala; and the Mission to Support the Fight Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras.

These brave individuals put their lives on the line on a daily basis. This resolution that we are voting on signals that the United States agrees with them and has their backs.

To Guatemala's Attorney General Thelma Aldana, Honduran Attorney General Oscar Chinchilla, Salvadoran Attorney General Douglas Melendez, CICIG Commissioner Ivan Velasquez, and MACCIH Chief of Mission Juan Jimenez: Today we come to the floor of the House of Representatives to say thank you and to proclaim that we stand with you and your institutions in the fight against corruption.

This measure sends a strong message that our Congress, which has the ultimate say over funding for Central America, stands with those who are committed to putting an end to corruption in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

We may have a new President in the White House and a new Secretary of State at Foggy Bottom, but Congress continues to have the power of the purse; and Democrats and Republicans, alike, believe that continued international support for the attorneys general and CICIG and MACCIH is key to the continued success of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle.

In December, I led a letter to the attorneys general from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, along with Representative ROS-LEHTINEN and several other members of the Foreign Affairs Committee, commending their efforts, pledging our ongoing support, and, most importantly, noting how crucial it is that they be able to carry out their work free from any interference from political leaders in their countries. With passage of H. Res. 145, the entire House of Representatives can and will send that same message.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), who chairs the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for the time.

I applaud the work that both Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL have done in helping to focus more of our foreign policy priority here in our own Western Hemisphere.

I also applaud Congresswoman NORMA TORRES for authoring the measure that we have before us today, H. Res. 145, reaffirming our dedication to the fight against corruption in Central America. It is an important measure, Mr. Speaker, and it is an important fight.

For years, I have been a strong advocate for this fight because, where corruption is allowed to spread, drug trafficking and crime inevitably thrive;

and this is negative for our neighbors, it is bad for us, and it is bad for our interests. That is why it is vital that we make battling corruption in the region more of a priority of our foreign policy.

In fact, earlier this year, I traveled to Honduras and Guatemala with my good friend ALBIO SIRES, and we saw firsthand how these governments are attempting to tackle corruption in their countries. It is not easy, Mr. Speaker. They are making progress and taking some of the tough decisions necessary, but there is so much more to be done and so much more that they need to do, but they need help from the United States.

That is what we heard when we hosted the attorneys general from the Northern Triangle countries here in Washington, D.C., just last month to discuss what they are doing to fight corruption and what assistance they might need from us. That is why this resolution before us is so important and so timely.

We must urge the governments of Central America to do more to battle corruption, but we also must pledge to do more ourselves because they cannot do it alone. Central American governments must take a stand and voice their support for anticorruption programs. They must respect and defend the authority of the judicial branch, and they must make it a priority. That is not easy for them to do.

Some of these governments have shown a willingness to take these steps, but, sadly, Mr. Speaker, not all of them have. While we urge willing partners to take the steps necessary to fight corruption, we must be willing to do more for those unwilling.

That is why I have reintroduced my NICA Act, which aims at tightening the economic screws on the Ortega regime until we see some drastic reforms, including efforts to end corruption. It is our duty to support our neighbors so that our partners to the south can live in far more open, free, and democratic societies.

It is also in the benefit of our security and it is in the benefit of our national interests to do so. That is why I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 145. I also urge my colleagues to support my NICA Act and to take a more engaged role in our foreign policy interests in our own Western Hemisphere.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES), the author of this resolution, a leader on Central American issues, and a valued member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 145, expressing the support of the House of Representatives for the fight against corruption in Central America.

In too many Central American countries, it has become common practice for government officials to use public office to enrich themselves instead of serving the public good. For too long, corruption has allowed violence and poverty to hold these countries back.

But recently, the people of Central America have made it clear that they are ready for a change. In the last 2 years, young people from across the region have taken to the streets and demonstrated, and some real progress has been made.

In Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, the attorneys general have demonstrated independence and real courage.

In Guatemala, Attorney General Thelma Aldana has worked closely with CICIG, the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala. Under the leadership of Ivan Velasquez, CICIG has been instrumental in improving the capacity of Guatemala's prosecutors and has assisted with effective investigations into corruption and human rights violations.

In Honduras, Attorney General Oscar Chinchilla has worked with the Mission to Support the Fight Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras, MACCIH, since 2016. Led by Juan Jimenez, MACCIH has promoted important legal reforms and is assisting with the investigations of high-profile corruption cases.

In El Salvador, Attorney General Douglas Melendez has made significant progress in tackling high-level corruption cases. I hope that the Government of El Salvador will recognize the value of CICIG and MACCIH and accept the international assistance that the attorney general and his prosecutors so clearly need.

Mr. Speaker, the countries of the Northern Triangle are at a crucial point in this fight against corruption, and we cannot turn back the progress that has been made. This resolution will send a very clear message that the United States will be a steadfast partner in its support for the fight against corruption in Central America.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bipartisan resolution.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their support and hard work in advancing this resolution.

Additionally, I thank Congressman MOOLENAAR, who worked with me to draft and introduce this resolution and who has been a strong supporter and advocate of the fight against corruption in Central America.

I also thank all of the cosponsors of this resolution.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman NORMA TORRES for authoring this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MOOLENAAR), a member of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. MOOLENAAR. Mr. Speaker, I also thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for supporting this bipartisan resolution and moving it through the Foreign Affairs Committee.

I especially want to thank Congresswoman TORRES for her leadership as a true champion on this issue and helping us all understand the importance of this.

This resolution makes it clear that the United States strongly supports the anticorruption efforts in the Northern Triangle of Central America. Already, officials across the region are making headway. The attorney general of Guatemala, in particular, has made progress in taking on corruption at the highest levels of government.

This resolution will reinforce support for these efforts in the region and will send a clear message to the millions of people who live in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras that the United States wants them to have a safe country, free of corrupt officials who steal from them.

By supporting the efforts of our allies to fight corruption, it is my hope that these governments will continue to promote respect for the rule of law, thereby making it better for residents to live, work, and raise a family in their homelands.

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

Let me say that, as a father, I cannot imagine being faced with the choice of letting my children risk violence or death from criminal gangs or malnutrition, or taking a dangerous journey hundreds of miles on their own. No parent or child should ever be forced to make this choice. Unfortunately, far too many families in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras must do so on a daily basis.

The good news is that our Congress has decided to make a much-needed, long-term investment in Central America. At the core of these efforts is our commitment to support institutions and individuals that are rooting out corruption.

H. Res. 145 makes it clear that our continued investment in Central America will depend on support for anticorruption efforts from the Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran Governments.

Let me finally note that I am heartened that the fight against corruption in the hemisphere is not just limited to Central America. From Brazil to Chile to the Caribbean, the citizens of the Americas have finally had enough and have vowed to put an end to corruption once and for all. The least that our Congress can do is support these valiant efforts.

I again thank Chairman ROYCE for working so well with me, putting our heads together over time, and passing good resolutions and legislation like this.

I again thank Congresswoman TORRES for introducing this crucial resolution and for her hard work on it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support its passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1700

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

Mr. Speaker, this important measure by Congresswoman NORMA TORRES affirms this body's support for all efforts to combat corruption in Central America. The people of this region have been living in societies that, because of corruption, and that corruption has become endemic, has led to gang violence, to criminality, to high levels of impunity. And these conditions directly affect the ability of these governments to bring peace and prosperity to all of its citizens, and that, in turn, fuels the flows of those who leave illegally, migrants, to the Northern Hemisphere—well, to the United States.

So the citizens of Northern Triangle countries, those in this region, want to live in safety in their own countries, and we can help by supporting efforts by the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala and its counterpart in Honduras, and those others in the region that are fighting for these efforts that enable an independent judiciary and a judiciary that combats corruption.

NORMA TORRES' work on Central America has helped to build capacity in these countries to begin providing security for its citizens, and I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 145, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CAESAR SYRIA CIVILIAN PROTECTION ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1677) to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, encourage a negotiated political settlement, and hold Syrian human rights abusers accountable for their crimes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1677

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2017''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.
Sec. 2. Sense of Congress.
Sec. 3. Statement of policy.
TITLE I—ADDITIONAL ACTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO SYRIA
Sec. 101. Sanctions with respect to Central Bank of Syria and foreign persons that engage in certain transactions.
Sec. 102. Prohibitions with respect to the transfer of arms and related materials to Syria.
Sec. 103. Rule of construction.
Sec. 104. Definitions.
TITLE II—AMENDMENTS TO SYRIA HUMAN RIGHTS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2012
Sec. 201. Imposition of sanctions with respect to certain persons who are responsible for or complicit in human rights abuses committed against citizens of Syria or their family members.
Sec. 202. Imposition of sanctions with respect to the transfer of goods or technologies to Syria that are likely to be used to commit human rights abuses.
Sec. 203. Imposition of sanctions with respect to persons who hinder humanitarian access.
Sec. 204. Report on certain persons who are responsible for or complicit in certain human rights abuses in Syria.
TITLE III—REPORTS AND WAIVER FOR HUMANITARIAN-RELATED ACTIVITIES WITH RESPECT TO SYRIA
Sec. 301. Briefing on monitoring and evaluating of ongoing assistance programs in Syria and to the Syrian people.
Sec. 302. Assessment of potential methods to enhance the protection of civilians.
Sec. 303. Assistance to support entities taking actions relating to gathering evidence for investigations into war crimes or crimes against humanity in Syria since March 2011.
TITLE IV—SUSPENSION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO SYRIA
Sec. 401. Suspension of sanctions with respect to Syria.
Sec. 402. Waivers and exemptions.
TITLE V—REGULATORY AUTHORITY, COST LIMITATION, AND SUNSET
Sec. 501. Implementation and regulatory authorities.
Sec. 502. Cost limitation.
Sec. 503. Authority to consolidate reports.
Sec. 504. Sunset.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) Bashar al-Assad's murderous actions against the people of Syria have directly contributed to the deaths of more than 480,000 civilians, led to the destruction of more than 50 percent of Syria's critical infrastructure, and forced the displacement of more than 14,000,000 people, precipitating one of the worst humanitarian crises in more than 60 years;

(2) international actions to protect vulnerable populations from attack by uniformed and irregular forces associated with the Assad regime, including Hezbollah, on land and by air, including through the use of barrel bombs, chemical weapons, mass starvation, industrial-scale torture and execution of political dissidents, sniper attacks against pregnant women, and the deliberate targeting of medical facilities, schools, residential areas, and community gathering places, including markets, have been insufficient to date;

(3) Assad's use of chemical weapons, including chlorine, against the Syrian people violates the Chemical Weapons Convention, to which Syria is a party;

(4) Assad's abhorrent use of chemical weapons, most recently on April 4, 2017, in an attack on the town of Khan Shakhyn in which more than 90 people died, including women and children, and more than 600 hundred people were injured, is condemned in the strongest terms;

(5) violent attacks resulting in death, injury, imprisonment or threat of prosecution against humanitarian aid workers and diplomatic personnel, as well as attacks on humanitarian supplies, facilities, transports, and assets, and acts to impede the access and secure movement of all humanitarian personnel are in violation of international humanitarian law and impede the lifesaving work of humanitarian organizations and diplomatic institutions; and

(6) Assad's continued claim of leadership and war crimes in Syria have served as a rallying point for the extremist ideology of the Islamic State, Jabhat al-Nusra, and other terrorist organizations.

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States that all diplomatic and coercive economic means should be utilized to compel the government of Bashar al-Assad to immediately halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people and to support an immediate transition to a democratic government in Syria that respects the rule of law, human rights, and peaceful co-existence with its neighbors.

TITLE I—ADDITIONAL ACTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO SYRIA

SEC. 101. SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO CENTRAL BANK OF SYRIA AND FOREIGN PERSONS THAT ENGAGE IN CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS.

(a) APPLICATION OF CERTAIN MEASURES TO CENTRAL BANK OF SYRIA.—Except as provided in subsections (a) and (b) of section 402, the President shall apply the measures described in section 5318A(b)(5) of title 31, United States Code, to the Central Bank of Syria.

(b) BLOCKING PROPERTY OF FOREIGN PERSONS THAT ENGAGE IN CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on and after the date that is 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall impose on a foreign person the sanctions described in subsection (c) if the President determines that such foreign person, on or after such date of enactment, knowingly engages in an activity described in paragraph (2).

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

(A) knowingly provides significant financial, material or technological support to (including engaging in or facilitating a significant transaction or transactions with) or provides significant financial services for—

(i) the Government of Syria (including government entities operating as a business enterprise) and the Central Bank of Syria, or any of its agencies or instrumentalities; or

(ii) a foreign person subject to sanctions pursuant to—

(I) the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) with respect to Syria or any other provision of law that imposes sanctions with respect to Syria; or

(II) a resolution that is agreed to by the United Nations Security Council that imposes sanctions with respect to Syria;

(B) knowingly—

(i) sells or provides significant goods, services, technology, information, or other support that directly and significantly facilitates the maintenance or expansion of the Government of Syria's domestic production of natural gas or petroleum or petroleum products of Syrian origin in areas controlled by the Government of Syria or associated forces;

(ii) sells or provides to the Government of Syria crude oil or condensate, refined petroleum products, liquefied natural gas, or petrochemical products that have a fair market value of $500,000 or more or that during a 12-month period have an aggregate fair market value of $2,000,000 or more in areas controlled by the Government of Syria or associated forces;

(iii) sells or provides aircraft or spare parts, or provides significant goods, services, or technologies associated with the operation of such aircraft or air carriers to any foreign person operating in areas controlled by the Government of Syria or associated forces that are used, in whole or in part, for military purposes; or

(iv) sells or provides significant goods, services, or technology to a foreign person operating in the shipping (including ports and free trade zones), transportation, or telecommunications sectors in areas controlled by the Government of Syria or associated forces;

(C) knowingly facilitates efforts by a foreign person to carry out an activity described in subparagraph (A) or (B); or

(D) knowingly provides significant loans, credits, including export credits, or financing to carry out an activity described in subparagraph (A) or (B).

(c) SANCTIONS AGAINST A FOREIGN PERSON.—The sanctions to be imposed on a foreign person described in subsection (b) are the following:

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall exercise all of the powers granted to the President under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in property and interests in property of the foreign person if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(2) ALIENS INELIGIBLE FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

(A) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—An alien who the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) knows, or has reason to believe, meets any of the criteria described in subsection (a) is—

(i) inadmissible to the United States;

(ii) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

(iii) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(B) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The issuing consular officer, the Secretary of State, or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) shall revoke any visa or other entry documentation issued to an alien who meets any of the criteria described in subsection (a) regardless of when issued.

(ii) EFFECT OF REVOCATION.—A revocation under clause (i)—

(I) shall take effect immediately; and

(II) shall automatically cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the alien's possession.

(3) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT.—Sanctions under paragraph (2) shall not apply to an alien if admitting the alien into the United States is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations.

(4) PENALTIES.—The penalties provided for in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) shall apply to a person that knowingly violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of regulations promulgated under section 501(a) to carry out paragraph (1) of this subsection to the same extent that such penalties apply to a person that knowingly commits an unlawful act described in section 206(a) of that Act.

SEC. 102. PROHIBITIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE TRANSFER OF ARMS AND RELATED MATERIALS TO SYRIA.

(a) SANCTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on and after the date that is 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall impose on a foreign person the sanctions described in subsection (b) if the President determines that such foreign person, on or after such date of enactment, knowingly exports, transfers, or provides significant financial, material, or technological support to the Government of Syria to—

(A) acquire or develop chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons or related technologies;

(B) acquire or develop ballistic or cruise missile capabilities;

(C) acquire or develop destabilizing numbers and types of advanced conventional weapons; or

(D) acquire defense articles, defense services, or defense information (as such terms are defined under the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2751 et seq.)), if the President determines that a significant type or amount of such articles, services, or information has been so acquired.

(2) APPLICABILITY TO OTHER FOREIGN PERSONS.—The sanctions described in subsection (b) shall also be imposed on any foreign person that is a successor entity to a foreign person described in paragraph (1).

(b) SANCTIONS AGAINST A FOREIGN PERSON.—The sanctions to be imposed on a foreign person described in subsection (a) are the following:

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall exercise all powers granted by the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the extent necessary to freeze and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of the foreign person if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(2) ALIENS INELIGIBLE FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

(A) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—An alien who the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) knows, or has reason to believe, meets any of the criteria described in subsection (a) is—

(i) inadmissible to the United States;

(ii) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

(iii) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(B) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The issuing consular officer, the Secretary of State, or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) shall revoke any visa or other entry documentation issued to an alien who meets any of the criteria described in subsection (a) regardless of when issued.

(ii) EFFECT OF REVOCATION.—A revocation under clause (i)—

(I) shall take effect immediately; and

(II) shall automatically cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the alien's possession.

(3) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT.—Sanctions under paragraph (2) shall not apply to an alien if admitting the alien into the United States is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations.

(4) PENALTIES.—A person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of any regulation, license, or order issued to carry out this section shall be subject to the penalties set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of that section.

SEC. 103. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this title shall be construed to limit the authority of the President pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.).

SEC. 104. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) ADMITTED; ALIEN.—The terms ''admitted'' and ''alien'' have the meanings given such terms in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101).

(2) FINANCIAL, MATERIAL, OR TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT.—The term ''financial, material, or technological support'' has the meaning given such term in section 542.304 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as such section was in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term ''foreign person'' means any citizen or national of a foreign country, or any entity not organized solely under the laws of the United States or existing solely in the United States.

(4) GOVERNMENT OF SYRIA.—The term ''Government of Syria'' has the meaning given such term in section 542.305 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as such section was in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(5) KNOWINGLY.—The term ''knowingly'' has the meaning given such term in section 566.312 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as such section was in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(6) PERSON.—The term ''person'' means an individual or entity.

(7) PETROLEUM OR PETROLEUM PRODUCTS OF SYRIAN ORIGIN.—The term ''petroleum or petroleum products of Syrian origin'' has the meaning given such term in section 542.314 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as such section was in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(8) SIGNIFICANT TRANSACTION OR TRANSACTIONS; SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL SERVICES.—A transaction or transactions or financial services shall be determined to be a significant for purposes of this section in accordance with section 566.404 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as such section was in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(9) SYRIA.—The term ''Syria'' has the meaning given such term in section 542.316 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as such section was in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(10) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term ''United States person'' means any United States citizen, permanent resident alien, entity organized under the laws of the United States (including foreign branches), or any person in the United States.

TITLE II—AMENDMENTS TO SYRIA HUMAN RIGHTS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2012

SEC. 201. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN PERSONS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OR COMPLICIT IN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES COMMITTED AGAINST CITIZENS OF SYRIA OR THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 702(c) of the Syria Human Rights Accountability Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8791(c)) is amended to read as follows:

''(c) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall exercise all powers granted by the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the extent necessary to freeze and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of a person on the list required by subsection (b) if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

''(2) ALIENS INELIGIBLE FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

''(A) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—An alien who the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) knows, or has reason to believe, meets any of the criteria described in subsection (b) is—

''(i) inadmissible to the United States;

''(ii) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

''(iii) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

''(B) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The issuing consular officer, the Secretary of State, or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) shall revoke any visa or other entry documentation issued to an alien who meets any of the criteria described in subsection (b) regardless of when issued.

''(ii) EFFECT OF REVOCATION.—A revocation under clause (i)—

''(I) shall take effect immediately; and

''(II) shall automatically cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the alien's possession.

''(3) PENALTIES.—A person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of this section or any regulation, license, or order issued to carry out this section shall be subject to the penalties set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of that section.

''(4) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—The President shall, not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, promulgate regulations as necessary for the implementation of this section.

''(5) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT.—Sanctions under paragraph (2) shall not apply to an alien if admitting the alien into the United States is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations.

''(6) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the authority of the President pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.), relevant Executive orders, regulations, or other provisions of law.''.

(b) SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES DESCRIBED.—Section 702 of the Syria Human Rights Accountability Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8791) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES DESCRIBED.—In subsection (b), the term 'serious human rights abuses' includes—

''(1) the deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure to include schools, hospitals, markets, and other infrastructure that is essential to human life, such as power and water systems; and

''(2) the deliberate diversion, hindering, or blocking of access for humanitarian purposes, including access across conflict lines and borders.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply with respect to the imposition of sanctions under section 702(a) of the Syria Human Rights Accountability Act of 2012 on after such date of enactment.

SEC. 202. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE TRANSFER OF GOODS OR TECHNOLOGIES TO SYRIA THAT ARE LIKELY TO BE USED TO COMMIT HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES.

Section 703(b)(2)(C) of the Syria Human Rights Accountability Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8792(b)(2)(C)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(2) in clause (ii), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(iii) any article—

''(I) designated by the President for purposes of the United States Munitions List under section 38(a)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2778(a)(1)); and

''(II) with respect to which the President determines is significant for purposes of the imposition of sanctions under subsection (a); or

''(iv) other goods or technologies that the President determines may be used by the Government of Syria to commit human rights abuses against the people of Syria.''.

SEC. 203. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO PERSONS WHO HINDER HUMANITARIAN ACCESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Syria Human Rights Accountability Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8791 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating sections 705 and 706 as sections 706 and 707, respectively;

(2) by inserting after section 704 the following:

''SEC. 705. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO PERSONS WHO HINDER HUMANITARIAN ACCESS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall impose sanctions described in section 702(c) with respect to each person on the list required by subsection (b).

''(b) LIST OF PERSONS WHO HINDER HUMANITARIAN ACCESS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2017, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a list of persons that the President determines have engaged in deliberate diversion, hindering, or blocking of access for humanitarian purposes for the United Nations, its specialized agencies and implementing partners, national and international nongovernmental organizations, and all other actors engaged in humanitarian relief activities in Syria, including through the deliberate targeting of such humanitarian actors and activities in Syria and across conflict lines and borders.

''(2) UPDATES OF LIST.—The President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees an updated list under paragraph (1)—

''(A) not later than 300 days after the date of the enactment of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2017 and every 180 days thereafter; and

''(B) as new information becomes available.

''(3) FORM.—The list required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.''; and

(3) in section 706 (as so redesignated), by striking ''or 704'' and inserting ''704, or 705''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for the Syria Human Rights Accountability Act of 2012 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 704 the following new item:

''Sec. 705. Imposition of sanctions with respect to persons who hinder humanitarian access.''.

SEC. 204. REPORT ON CERTAIN PERSONS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OR COMPLICIT IN CERTAIN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SYRIA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a detailed report with respect to whether each person described in subsection (c) meets the requirements described in section 702(b) of the Syria Human Rights Accountability Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8791(b)) for purposes of inclusion on the list of persons who are responsible for or complicit in certain human rights abuses under such section.

(b) JUSTIFICATION.—The President shall include in the report required by subsection (a) a description of the reasons why any of the persons described in subsection (c) do not meet the requirements described in section 702(b) of the Syria Human Rights Accountability Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8791(b)), including information on whether sufficient credible evidence of responsibility for such abuses was found or whether any of the persons described in subsection (c) have been designated pursuant to—

(1) Executive Order 13572 of April 29, 2011 (76 Fed. Reg. 24787; relating to blocking property of certain persons with respect to human rights abuses in Syria);

(2) Executive Order 13573 of May 18, 2011 (76 Fed. Reg. 29143; relating to blocking property of senior officials of the Government of Syria);

(3) Executive Order 13582 of August 17, 2011 (76 Fed. Reg. 52209; relating to blocking property of the Government of Syria and prohibiting certain transactions with respect to Syria); or

(4) Executive Order 13606 of April 22, 2012 (77 Fed. Reg. 24571; relating to blocking the property and suspending entry into the United States of certain persons with respect to grave human rights abuses by the Governments of Iran and Syria via information technology).

(c) PERSONS DESCRIBED.—The persons described in this subsection are the following:

(1) Bashar Al-Assad.

(2) Asma Al-Assad.

(3) Rami Makhlouf.

(4) Bouthayna Shaaban.

(5) Walid Moallem.

(6) Ali Al-Salim.

(7) Wael Nader Al-Halqi.

(8) Jamil Hassan.

(9) Suhail Hassan.

(10) Ali Mamluk.

(11) Muhammed Khadour, Deir Ez Zor Military and Security.

(12) Jamal Razzouq, Security Branch 243.

(13) Munzer Ghanam, Air Force Intelligence.

(14) Daas Hasan Ali, Branch 327.

(15) Jassem Ali Jassem Hamad, Political Security.

(16) Samir Muhammad Youssef, Military Intelligence.
(17) Ali Ahmad Dayoub, Air Force Intelligence.
(18) Khaled Muhsen Al-Halabi, Security Branch 335.
(19) Mahmoud Kahila, Political Security.
(20) Zuhair Ahmad Hamad, Provincial Security.
(21) Wafiq Nasser, Security Branch 245.
(22) Qussay Mayoub, Air Force Intelligence.
(23) Muhammad Ammar Sardini, Political Security.
(24) Fouad Hammouda, Military Security.
(25) Hasan Daaboul, Branch 261.
(26) Yahia Wahbi, Air Force Intelligence.
(27) Okab Saqer, Security Branch 318.
(28) Husam Luqa, Political Security.
(29) Sami Al-Hasan, Security Branch 219.
(30) Yassir Deeb, Political Security.
(31) Ibrahim Darwish, Security Branch 220.
(32) Nasser Deeb, Political Security.
(33) Abdullatif Al-Fahed, Security Branch 290.
(34) Adeeb Namer Salamah, Air Force Intelligence.
(35) Akram Muhammed, State Security.
(36) Reyad Abbas, Political Security.
(37) Ali Abdullah Ayoub, Syrian Armed Forces.
(38) Fahd Jassem Al-Freij, Defense Ministry.
(39) Issam Halaq, Air Force.
(40) Ghassan Al-Abdullah, General Intelligence Directorate.
(41) Maher Al-Assad, Republican Guard.
(42) Fahad Al-Farouch.
(43) Rafiq Shahada, Military Intelligence.
(44) Loay Al-Ali, Military Intelligence.
(45) Nawfal Al-Husayn, Military Intelligence.
(46) Muhammad Zamrini, Military Intelligence.
(47) Muhammad Mahallah, Military Intelligence.

(d) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may contain a classified annex if necessary.

(e) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Ways and Means, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives; and

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

TITLE III—REPORTS AND WAIVER FOR HUMANITARIAN-RELATED ACTIVITIES WITH RESPECT TO SYRIA

SEC. 301. BRIEFING ON MONITORING AND EVALUATING OF ONGOING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN SYRIA AND TO THE SYRIAN PEOPLE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall brief the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate on the monitoring and evaluation of ongoing assistance programs in Syria and for the Syrian people, including assistance provided through multilateral organizations.

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The briefing required by subsection (a) shall include—

(1) the specific project monitoring and evaluation efforts, including measurable goals and performance metrics for assistance in Syria;

(2) a description of the memoranda of understanding entered into by the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, and their respective Inspectors General and the multilateral organizations through which United States assistance will be delivered that formalize requirements for the sharing of information between such entities for the conduct of audits, investigations, and evaluations; and

(3) the major challenges to monitoring and evaluating such programs.

SEC. 302. ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL METHODS TO ENHANCE THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS.

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

(1) assesses the potential effectiveness, risks, and operational requirements of the establishment and maintenance of a no-fly zone over part or all of Syria, including—

(A) the operational and legal requirements for United States and coalition air power to establish a no-fly zone in Syria;

(B) the impact a no-fly zone in Syria would have on humanitarian and counterterrorism efforts in Syria and the surrounding region; and

(C) the potential for force contributions from other countries to establish a no-fly zone in Syria;

(2) assesses the potential effectiveness, risks, and operational requirements for the establishment of one or more safe zones in Syria for internally displaced persons or for the facilitation of humanitarian assistance, including—

(A) the operational and legal requirements for United States and coalition forces to establish one or more safe zones in Syria;

(B) the impact one or more safe zones in Syria would have on humanitarian and counterterrorism efforts in Syria and the surrounding region; and

(C) the potential for contributions from other countries and vetted non-state actor partners to establish and maintain one or more safe zones in Syria;

(3) assesses the potential effectiveness, risks, and operational requirements of other non-military means to enhance the protection of civilians, especially civilians who are in besieged areas, trapped at borders, or internally displaced; and

(4) describes the Administration's plan for recruitment, training, and retention of partner forces, including—

(A) identification of the United States partner forces operating on the ground;

(B) the primary source of strength for each armed actor engaged in hostilities;

(C) the capabilities, requirements, and vulnerabilities of each armed actor;

(D) the United States role in mitigating vulnerabilities of partner forces; and

(E) the Administration's measures of success for partner forces, including—

(i) increasing Syrian civilian security; and

(ii) working toward an end to the conflict in Syria.

(b) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may contain a classified annex if necessary.

(c) CONSULTATION.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be informed by consultations with the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Defense, and international and local organizations operating in Syria or in neighboring countries to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people.

(d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

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

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate.

SEC. 303. ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT ENTITIES TAKING ACTIONS RELATING TO GATHERING EVIDENCE FOR INVESTIGATIONS INTO WAR CRIMES OR CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY IN SYRIA SINCE MARCH 2011.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of State, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and the Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, is authorized to provide assistance to support entities that are conducting criminal investigations, building Syrian investigative capacity, supporting prosecutions in national courts, collecting evidence and preserving the chain of evidence for eventual prosecution against those who have committed war crimes or crimes against humanity in Syria, including the aiding and abetting of such crimes by foreign governments and organizations supporting the Government of Syria, since March 2011.

(b) BRIEFING.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall brief the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate on assistance provided under subsection (a).

TITLE IV—SUSPENSION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO SYRIA

SEC. 401. SUSPENSION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO SYRIA.

(a) SUSPENSION OF SANCTIONS.—

(1) NEGOTIATIONS NOT CONCLUDING IN AGREEMENT.—If the President determines that internationally recognized negotiations to resolve the violence in Syria have not concluded in an agreement or are likely not to conclude in an agreement, the President may suspend, as appropriate, in whole or in part, the imposition of sanctions otherwise required under this Act or any amendment made by this Act for a period not to exceed 120 days, and renewable for additional periods not to exceed 120 days, if the President submits to the appropriate congressional committees in writing a determination and certification that the Government of Syria has ended military attacks against and gross violations of the human rights of the Syrian people, specifically—

(A) the air space over Syria is no longer being utilized by the Government of Syria and associated forces to target civilian populations through the use of incendiary devices, including barrel bombs, chemical weapons, and conventional arms, including air-delivered missiles and explosives;

(B) areas besieged by the Assad regime and associated forces, including Hezbollah and irregular Iranian forces, are no longer cut off from international aid and have regular access to humanitarian assistance, freedom of travel, and medical care;

(C) the Government of Syria is releasing all political prisoners forcibly held within the Assad regime prison system, including the facilities maintained by various security, intelligence, and military elements associated with the Government of Syria and allowed full access to the same facilities for investigations by appropriate international human rights organizations; and

(D) the forces of the Government of Syria and associated forces, including Hezbollah, irregular Iranian forces, and Russian government air assets, are no longer engaged in deliberate targeting of medical facilities, schools, residential areas, and community

gathering places, including markets, in flagrant violation of international norms.

(2) NEGOTIATIONS CONCLUDING IN AGREEMENT.—

(A) INITIAL SUSPENSION OF SANCTIONS.—If the President determines that internationally recognized negotiations to resolve the violence in Syria have concluded in an agreement or are likely to conclude in an agreement, the President may suspend, as appropriate, in whole or in part, the imposition of sanctions otherwise required under this Act or any amendment made by this Act for a period not to exceed 120 days if the President submits to the appropriate congressional committees in writing a determination and certification that—

(i) in the case in which the negotiations are likely to conclude in an agreement—

(I) the Government of Syria, the Syrian High Negotiations Committee or its internationally-recognized successor, and appropriate international parties are participating in direct, face-to-face negotiations; and

(II) the suspension of sanctions under this Act or any amendment made by this Act is essential to the advancement of such negotiations; and

(ii) the Government of Syria has demonstrated a commitment to a significant and substantial reduction in attacks on and violence against the Syrian people by the Government of Syria and associated forces.

(B) RENEWAL OF SUSPENSION OF SANCTIONS.—The President may renew a suspension of sanctions under subparagraph (A) for additional periods not to exceed 120 days if, for each such additional period, the President submits to the appropriate congressional committees in writing a determination and certification that—

(i) the conditions described in clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (A) are continuing to be met;

(ii) the renewal of the suspension of sanctions is essential to implementing an agreement described in subparagraph (A) or making progress toward concluding an agreement described in subparagraph (A);

(iii) the Government of Syria and associated forces have ceased attacks against Syrian civilians; and

(iv) the Government of Syria has publicly committed to negotiations for a transitional government in Syria and continues to demonstrate that commitment through sustained engagement in talks and substantive and verifiable progress towards the implementation of such an agreement.

(3) BRIEFING AND REIMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—

(A) BRIEFING.—Not later than 30 days after the President submits to the appropriate congressional committees a determination and certification in the case of a renewal of suspension of sanctions under paragraph (2)(B), and every 30 days thereafter, the President shall provide a briefing to the appropriate congressional committees on the status and frequency of negotiations described in paragraph (2).

(B) RE-IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—If the President provides a briefing to the appropriate congressional committees under subparagraph (A) with respect to which the President indicates a lapse in negotiations described in paragraph (2) for a period that equals or exceeds 90 days, the sanctions that were suspended under paragraph (2)(B) shall be re-imposed and any further suspension of such sanctions is prohibited.

(4) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Ways and Means, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives; and

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

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR DETERMINING A TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT IN SYRIA.—It is the sense of Congress that a transitional government in Syria is a government that—

(1) is taking verifiable steps to release all political prisoners and is providing full access to Syrian prisons for investigations by appropriate international human rights organizations;

(2) is taking verifiable steps to remove former senior Syrian Government officials who are complicit in the conception, implementation, or cover up of war crimes, crimes against humanity, or human rights abuses and any person subject to sanctions under any provision of law from government positions;

(3) is in the process of organizing free and fair elections for a new government—

(A) to be held in a timely manner and scheduled while the suspension of sanctions or the renewal of the suspension of sanctions under this section is in effect; and

(B) to be conducted under the supervision of internationally recognized observers;

(4) is making tangible progress toward establishing an independent judiciary;

(5) is demonstrating respect for and compliance with internationally recognized human rights and basic freedoms as specified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

(6) is taking steps to verifiably fulfill its commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and is making tangible progress toward becoming a signatory to Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, entered into force March 26, 1975, and adhering to the Missile Technology Control Regime and other control lists, as necessary;

(7) has halted the development and deployment of ballistic and cruise missiles; and

(8) is taking verifiable steps to remove from positions of authority within the intelligence and security services as well as the military those who were in a position of authority or responsibility during the conflict and who under the authority of their position were implicated in or implicit in the torture, extrajudicial killing, or execution of civilians, to include those who were involved in decisionmaking or execution of plans to use chemical weapons.

SEC. 402. WAIVERS AND EXEMPTIONS.

(a) EXEMPTIONS.—The following activities and transactions shall be exempt from sanctions authorized under this Act or any amendment made by this Act:

(1) Any activity subject to the reporting requirements under title V of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.), or to any authorized intelligence activities of the United States.

(2) Any transaction necessary to comply with United States obligations under—

(A) the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947;

(B) the Convention on Consular Relations, done at Vienna April 24, 1963, and entered into force March 19, 1967; or

(C) any other international agreement to which the United States is a party.

(b) HUMANITARIAN, STABILIZATION, AND DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE WAIVER.—

(1) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the United States to fully utilize the waiver authority under this subsection to ensure that adequate humanitarian relief or support for stabilization and democracy promotion is provided to the Syrian people.

(2) WAIVER.—Except as provided in paragraph (5) and subsection (d), the President may waive, on a case-by-case basis, for a period not to exceed one year, and renewable for additional periods not to exceed one year, the application of sanctions authorized under this Act with respect to a person if the President submits to the appropriate congressional committees a written determination that the waiver is necessary for purposes of providing humanitarian or stabilization assistance or support for democracy promotion to the people of Syria.

(3) CONTENT OF WRITTEN DETERMINATION.—A written determination submitted under paragraph (2) with respect to a waiver shall include a description of all notification and accountability controls that have been employed in order to ensure that the activities covered by the waiver are humanitarian or stabilization assistance or support for democracy promotion and do not entail any activities in Syria or dealings with the Government of Syria not reasonably related to humanitarian or stabilization assistance or support for democracy promotion.

(4) CLARIFICATION OF PERMITTED ACTIVITIES UNDER WAIVER.—The President may not impose sanctions authorized under this Act against a humanitarian organization for—

(A) engaging in a financial transaction relating to humanitarian assistance or for humanitarian purposes pursuant to a waiver issued under paragraph (2);

(B) transporting goods or services that are necessary to carry out operations relating to humanitarian assistance or humanitarian purposes pursuant to such a waiver; or

(C) having incidental contact, in the course of providing humanitarian assistance or aid for humanitarian purposes pursuant to such a waiver, with individuals who are under the control of a foreign person subject to sanctions under this Act or any amendment made by this Act unless the organization or its officers, members, representatives or employees have engaged in (or the President knows or has reasonable ground to believe is engaged in or is likely to engage in) conduct described in section 212(a)(3)(B)(iv)(VI) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(3)(B)(iv)(VI)).

(5) EXCEPTION TO WAIVER AUTHORITY.—The President may not exercise the waiver authority under paragraph (2) with respect to a foreign person who has (or whose officers, members, representatives or employees have) engaged in (or the President knows or has reasonable ground to believe is engaged in or is likely to engage in) conduct described in section 212(a)(3)(B)(iv)(VI) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(3)(B)(iv)(VI)).

(c) WAIVER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may, for periods not to exceed 120 days, waive the application of sanctions under this Act with respect to a foreign person if the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that such waiver is vital to the national security interests of the United States.

(2) CONSULTATION.—

(A) BEFORE WAIVER ISSUED.—Not later than 5 days before the issuance of a waiver under paragraph (1) is to take effect, the President shall notify and brief the appropriate congressional committees on the status of the foreign person's involvement in activities described in this Act.

(B) AFTER WAIVER ISSUED.—Not later than 90 days after the issuance of a waiver under paragraph (1), and every 120 days thereafter if the waiver remains in effect, the President shall brief the appropriate congressional committees on the status of the foreign person's involvement in activities described in this Act.

(3) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Ways and Means, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives; and

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

(d) CODIFICATION OF CERTAIN SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS' ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), section 542.516 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations (relating to certain services in support of nongovernmental organizations' activities authorized), as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, shall—

(A) remain in effect on and after such date of enactment; and

(B) in the case of a nongovernmental organization that is authorized to export or reexport services to Syria under such section on the day before such date of enactment, shall apply to such organization on and after such date of enactment to the same extent and in the same manner as such section applied to such organization on the day before such date of enactment.

(2) EXCEPTION.—Section 542.516 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as codified under paragraph (1), shall not apply with respect to a foreign person who has (or whose officers, members, representatives or employees have) engaged in (or the President knows or has reasonable ground to believe is engaged in or is likely to engage in) conduct described in section 212(a)(3)(B)(iv)(VI) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(3)(B)(iv)(VI)).

(e) STRATEGY REQUIRED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report containing a strategy to ensure that humanitarian organizations can access financial services to ensure the safe and timely delivery of assistance to communities in need in Syria.

(2) CONSIDERATION OF DATA FROM OTHER COUNTRIES AND NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS.—In preparing the strategy required by paragraph (1), the President shall consider credible data already obtained by other countries and nongovernmental organizations, including organizations operating in Syria.

(3) FORM.—The strategy required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

TITLE V—REGULATORY AUTHORITY, COST LIMITATION, AND SUNSET

SEC. 501. IMPLEMENTATION AND REGULATORY AUTHORITIES.

(a) IMPLEMENTATION AUTHORITY.—The President may exercise all authorities provided to the President under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) for purposes of carrying out this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

(b) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—The President shall, not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, promulgate regulations as necessary for the implementation of this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

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

(d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

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

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

SEC. 502. COST LIMITATION.

No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act and the amendments made by this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized.

SEC. 503. AUTHORITY TO CONSOLIDATE REPORTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Any reports required to be submitted to the appropriate congressional committees under this Act or any amendment made by this Act that are subject to a deadline for submission consisting of the same unit of time may be consolidated into a single report that is submitted to appropriate congressional committees pursuant to such deadline. The consolidated reports shall contain all information required under this Act or any amendment made by this Act, in addition to all other elements mandated by previous law.

(b) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

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

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

SEC. 504. SUNSET.

This Act shall cease to be effective beginning on December 31, 2021.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by commending the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), the ranking member, for his leadership in authoring this critical legislation. Mr. ENGEL has long been the voice on Syria, and I must mention that the outline that he has given in terms of the initial problems when we saw those citizens on the streets of Damascus, walking, saying, ''Peaceful, peaceful,'' and then, as we saw on CNN, the automatic weapons open up and saw the Assad regime mow those civilians down—he was the first to begin to ring the alarm. I wish this body, and previous administrations as well, had done more to heed his calls.

For 6 years, we have watched the Syrian regime launch wave after wave of unrelenting destruction on the people of Syria. Airstrikes, chemical weapons attacks, forced starvation, industrial-scale torture, the deliberate targeting of hospitals, schools, marketplaces, and this done with precision bombs and with crude barrel bombs, and, as a consequence, Syrians suffering every day.

Now, just last month, we saw footage of entire families killed, suffocated by sarin gas, a chemical weapon that Assad supposedly gave up under a deal brokered by Russia and the previous administration. The number of dead is estimated now to be close to 500,000, and another 14 million have been driven from their homes.

And while ISIS plays a role in the violence in Syria, it is Bashar al-Assad and his backers—among them, Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah—who are the main drivers of this death and destruction. ISIS has no airplanes. It is Russian and Syrian fighter planes and helicopters that drop those bombs on those hospitals and schools.

It is Hezbollah and Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps fighters who attack cities, who burn crops, who prevent food and water and medical supplies from reaching vulnerable civilians.

It is Assad's secret police and intelligence groups who kidnap and torture and murder civilians from every ethnic group and political party, Sunni, Shia, Christians, Alawite; none are safe.

One of the worst facilities is just 20 miles from Damascus, Sednaya, a prison, a place so terrible that it is called a human slaughterhouse. Thousands and thousands of people have been tortured and hung and shot and left to starve to death within the prison. And the numbers are so high that, in 2013, Assad began constructing a crematorium to dispose of the bodies.

Over the past 4 years, our committee heard agonizing testimony from Syrians caught up in this horror, including the brave Syrian defector known to the world as Caesar and for whom this bill is named. Caesar testified about the shocking scale of torture being carried out within the prisons of Syria.

We saw his photographs and the tens of thousands of photographs he took with those bodies numbered numerically. I don't know what it is about totalitarian regimes that leads them to want to number their dead and catalog it, but, because of his bravery, we have those photographs.

We have also heard from doctors who treat victims of chemical attacks, volunteers who dig through rubble with their bare hands to rescue those trapped within, and we have heard

from the survivors of torture in Assad's prisons.

As Syria drags on and on, vital U.S. national security interests are at stake. Assad's brutality is both a magnet for terrorist recruitment and a destabilizing force driving tens of millions of refugees out of that country. We have 14 million Syrians, as I said, who are displaced right now, many of them still in the country, and millions outside of the country, yet we have taken no steps to apply the economic tools that are available to us with respect to Assad and his backers.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is designed to increase the cost to Assad and to those outside backers by targeting the sectors of the economy that allow Assad to murder with impunity. Under the bill, foreign companies and banks will have to choose between doing business with the regime or with the United States. It would also sanction anyone who flies weapons or sends fighters into Syria to support the Assad regime.

This bill is also about creating economic leverage to push the parties to negotiate, creating the conditions for a negotiated peace. It is about finding a way forward to be determined by the Syrian people that does not allow Assad to exterminate his own community; it does not allow him to do it with impunity; does not guarantee ISIS a safe space from which to operate; and does not drive another 10 million people from their homes.

For there to be peace in Syria, the parties must come together, and so long as Assad and his backers can slaughter the people of Syria with no consequences, there is no hope for peace.

As we speak, Russia and Iran have proclaimed themselves the guarantors of peace and have promised to create de-escalation zones where military operations can be curtailed and civilians can seek safety. But these zones would be policed by the Syrian Army, supported by Russian military police, by Hezbollah fighters, and IRGC, Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps commanders, backed by those Shia militias—the very same people who have murdered thousands of Syrian civilians with impunity throughout this conflict and who are actively engaged in fomenting sectarian-based violence throughout the region. With this scenario, peace does not have a chance.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is long overdue. And last year, ELIOT ENGEL and I brought this up, and we passed it unanimously, yet the other body did not take it up before we adjourned.

I urge all Members to support this legislation as we seek to ease the suffering of the Syrian people.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, April 20, 2017.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I write with respect to H.R. 1677, the ''Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act.'' As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions within H.R. 1677 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, I forego any further consideration of this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 1677 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation and that our committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. Our committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation and asks that you support any such request.

I would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 1677 and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 1677.

Sincerely,

BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, April 24, 2017.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOODLATTE: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee on agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1677, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this resolution or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 1677 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the resolution. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, May 11, 2017.

Hon. ED ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I am writing concerning H.R. 1677, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2017.

As a result of your having consulted with the Committee on Financial Services concerning provisions in the bill that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction, I agree to forgo action on the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor. The Committee on Financial Services takes this action with our mutual understanding that, by foregoing consideration of H.R. 1677 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that our Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction. Our Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and requests your support for any such request.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 1677 and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be placed in the Congressional Record during floor consideration thereof.

Sincerely,

JEB HENSARLING,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, May 11, 2017.

Hon. JEB HENSARLING,
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HENSARLING: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1677, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this resolution or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 1677 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, May 16, 2017.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I am writing with respect to H.R. 1677, the ''Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2017.'' As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions on which the Committee on Ways and Means has a jurisdictional interest, I will not request a sequential referral on this measure.

The Committee on Ways and Means takes this action with the mutual understanding that we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues that fall within our jurisdiction. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and requests your support for such request.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding,

and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 1677.

Sincerely,

KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, May 16, 2017.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BRADY: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee on H.R. 1677, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2017, and for agreeing to forgo a sequential referral request so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your declining to pursue a sequential referral in this case does not diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on this bill into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on Ways and Means as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation, and I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful that the House is considering my bill today, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act.

I want to thank my friend, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, ED ROYCE, for joining as the lead Republican cosponsor of this measure. I am proud that we are bringing it up to the floor with 108 cosponsors, Members from both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, every week, more and more bad news pours in about the civil war in Syria. I am grateful to Chairman ROYCE for making the comments he just made because my heart has been bleeding for Syria, or crying out for Syria, for 4 or 5 years now, ever since, as Mr. ROYCE said, there were peaceful demonstrations and they were mowed down by the Assad regime.

The United States didn't do much. We sort of watched and retreated and perhaps were afraid that we would be bogged down in another war. But we should have, at that point, in my estimation, helped the free Syria Army, which begged us for help, not people, not troops, but help, and we didn't do it. We didn't give it to them.

We thought that Assad would fall on his own, ultimately, but he didn't, and we are bearing the price today. We are paying the price today. The people of Syria, unfortunately, are the ones paying the price. Millions of people have died and have been misplaced and just the horrors of war and the horrors of civilians. So my heart really bleeds for the Syrian people.

This week, it was the revelation of a crematorium, a furnace where the criminals who do Assad's bidding can pile the bodies and try to burn away the evidence of their atrocities.

Also this week, Russia announced that they will work with Iran, Iraq, and Assad to open a secure road from Baghdad to Damascus. What that really means, Mr. Speaker, is a road from Beirut to Tehran in Iran, a permanent Iranian foothold right in the Middle East, a permanent Iranian foothold right on Israel's border, a permanent Iranian foothold to do mischief and the usual nefarious things that the Iranian Government does.

This crisis has been burning out of control for six long years. I was an early vocal supporter, as I mentioned before, of arming the moderate Syrian opposition. I thought we should have done much more to help push Assad out of power and help the Syrian people chart the course for their country's future. When we didn't, I spoke out.

Since then, Assad has plowed ahead with his campaign of carnage. The few times he appeared to be taking on water, he was given a lifeline by his devoted enablers, Russia and Iran, through its terrorist proxy, Hezbollah. Every time Assad seemed to be losing, he was given a lifeline and, as I just mentioned, by Hezbollah, also given a lifeline by the Russians who came in.

So while it was suspected in the highest annals of Washington that Assad wouldn't last more than a few months, no one would have imagined that 4 and 5 years later there would be Assad winning the war, again, with the help of Russia, Iran, and their terrorist proxy.

It is a disgrace, Mr. Speaker, and we need to act out. We need to help.

Today, we find ourselves no closer to a solution, and 4 months into the new administration, we have yet to hear a strategy for dealing with Syria. The Tomahawk missile strike last month was an appropriate response to the chemical weapons attack, although I believe the administration's policy shift, with respect to Assad, emboldened Assad to launch that attack, and a single missile strike is not a strategy.

We need a plan to stop the violence, push a political transition that sees the end of Assad's rule and helps the Syrian people recover and move forward. My bill, this bill, would be part of that strategy.

□ 1715

It is named, as Mr. ROYCE pointed out, for Caesar, a former Syrian Government photographer. Fed up with documenting the brutality of the Assad regime, he defected and escaped so he could show the world exactly what was happening to the regime's victims.

I will never forget the images he showed us when he came to the Foreign Affairs Committee. Those images are still seared in my brain and I will never forget them; the depth of brutality and indifference to human life.

We have named this bill after him because we want to send a message. If you are supporting this murder, if you are enabling the butcher in Damascus to continue waging that sort of violence against his own people, you are going to face consequences.

This bill would sanction anyone who provides material support for the Assad regime. We want to go after the actual hardware that keeps his war machine running, the planes and bombs that terrorize the Syrian people, and the spare parts and oil that keep everything running. If you do business with Assad, the blood of the Syrian people is on your hands and you are going to get caught up in these sanction. Yes, that means Iran and Russia.

If conditions on the ground change and negotiations were in sight, it might be useful to dial back these sanctions in order to help end the violence. So we have built in some degree of flexibility. The measures are tough, but we all want them to be a roadblock to peace.

This bill also seeks to provide some relief to the Syrian people who are now suffering terribly. It would improve oversight of assistance flowing into Syria and evaluate the feasibility of a no-fly zone.

We also need to think about what must happen after the violence has ended, about who must be held accountable. So this bill requires reporting on human rights violators, and would support efforts to gather evidence of crimes against humanity. This bill isn't a silver bullet. It isn't a strategy for resolving the crisis in Syria.

Congress can do a lot, though, when it comes to foreign policy. We can give an administration tools and resources, but it is up to the White House to lead on this issue. If the first step in a serious strategy is stopping the violence—and I think it is—this legislation can help dial up pressure on those driving the war.

So I continue to push ahead; Mr. ROYCE at my side, and I am grateful to my colleagues for their support. I am grateful to the Foreign Affairs Committee for moving this swiftly.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KINZINGER), a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and an Air Force pilot.

Mr. KINZINGER. Mr. Speaker, I thank you and the chairman. I want to commend the chairman. I want to commend Mr. ENGEL for his foresight in this bill and for bringing it to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I was just recently in Auschwitz. It was my first visit to Auschwitz and, obviously, seeing something like that is not something you are going to forget very quickly. Seeing something like that and an industrial machine put together to eliminate people is not something that people thought humanity was capable of

until they found out that it actually was possible.

So in preserving Auschwitz, the purpose was to say: Hey, this is possible. Never forget that this can happen again.

Mr. Speaker, it was just recently that we learned about the crematorium that was built in the Syrian prison.

Now, why was this built?

It was built to hide the massive amounts of bodies coming out, tortured to death; destroyed the lives cut short in this Syrian prison. It was used to disguise that. It was used to prevent mass graves from being dug.

I think that proves that Bashar al-Assad is actually a modern-day Hitler. In fact, if you look at when, as was mentioned prior, Caesar came to our committee and showed us the images of brutality—the government cataloging the victims of the Syrian regime with markers written on the body, a numbering system, and a catalog to say, in essence, document these massive amounts of death—it became very clear to us in a very visual sense what was going on in Syria.

Mr. Speaker, oftentimes it is easy in the United States of America, where we have a lot of comforts and we have a lot of things granted to us that we take for granted, to look at a situation happening overseas and think it doesn't apply to us or doesn't affect us; and it is really tempting sometimes to get into that because it is easy sometimes to pretend something doesn't affect us. But it does.

We see the massive amounts of migration from Syria, the young 7-, 8-, and 9-year-olds who are not going to school now because they have been disrupted and their lives have been disrupted, and in 5 or 6 years, if they don't get an education and don't get hope and opportunity, they will provide now the next recruiting ground for ISIS, or ISIS two, or al-Qaida three, because people without hope and without opportunity are easy to bring into a terrorist ideology like those.

Mr. Speaker, the President rightly decided to enforce the red line in Syria when it came to the use of chemical weapons—something that the Western world has held very dear, that chemical weapons on the battlefield have no place—and he destroyed a Syrian airfield. It was the right move. It began to shift the balance of power in Syria, but way more needs to be done.

I have called for action in Syria, as many on this committee have for a very long time, and this, the Caesar bill, is a fantastic first step to doing it. It would increase sanctions on the Assad regime and its supporters for continued atrocities committed against the Syrian people. It requires this administration and any future administration to stand up and impose costs on the Russians, on the Iranians, and on the Syrian backers for the barrel bombing and gassing of innocent civilians.

Think about that, a barrel filled with explosives dropped indiscriminately on a population center intended to commit the largest amounts of casualties possible; a GPS-guided bomb, or a laser-guided bomb intentionally dropped into a hospital, and then a delay of 20 minutes so they can hit it again, or hit areas where first responders have responded to.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't a legitimate way of fighting war, if there is a legitimate way of fighting war. This is brutality to the top level, and this is a great step for this Congress to take. We unanimously passed this the last time. I sure hope we can do that again.

Again, I thank the leadership for leading on this. I thank Mr. ENGEL and Chairman ROYCE for their leadership.

I ask my colleagues to join me and join us in supporting this very important bill.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the distinguished Democratic whip, someone who I know, through our meetings, feels so strongly about this and feels as we do.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from New York, the ranking member on the Foreign Affairs Committee for yielding. I thank Mr. KINZINGER for his leadership as well as his statement.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bipartisan legislation, which will impose tough sanctions on entities aiding the Assad regime in Syria.

Bashar al-Assad is brutal murderer. Very frankly, there are too many countries facilitating and complicit in the murders that he perpetrates. He has gassed his own people and waged a civil war that has displaced millions from their homes and their country.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, I had the honor of meeting some of the White Helmet civil defense workers who are risking their lives daily to rescue civilians caught in the crossfire and targeted by government forces; facilitated, I might say, by Mr. Putin's troops in Syria.

The Assad regime is being propped up by Iran and Russia in a dangerous and destabilizing geopolitical game. There are reports that the Assad government is now cremating victims of mass murder in an attempt to hide the evidence of its numerous crimes. While this is taking place, Americans watched in disbelief; frankly, as President Trump met in the Oval Office with those who are protecting, aiding and abetting Bashar al-Assad and those committing atrocities by his command and in his name.

Not only does that show how little this President understands about the conflict in Syria and its broader complexities, it also reminds us that he has articulated no clear strategy on how to end that conflict and to defeat ISIS.

Having said that, let me congratulate the President for taking the actions against the airfield after the chemical attack. But, frankly, that was a significant, but small, step.

The continuation of the war that the Assad government is waging against its own people only makes it harder to defeat the terrorists who threaten America, the region, and the world. Today's legislation will help address this problem.

I see on the floor, my friend, Chairman ROYCE, who is a great leader on issues relating to our foreign policy and to human rights. I congratulate him for his leadership. Working with his partner, Mr. ENGEL, we have taken significant steps to raise both the moral and the foreign policy issues that need to be raised. The efforts are bipartisan and reflect hard work on the part of the ranking member, the chairman, as well as members of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

I thank them for their efforts, and I urge my colleagues to join in strong and, hopefully, unanimous support of this important resolution.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), who chairs the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROYCE again for yielding the time.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL's Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, H.R. 1677, of which I am proud to be an original cosponsor, and I commend him and the chairman for all of their hard work in authoring the bill and bringing it before us today.

During our committee's hearing on Syria in April—and we have had so many hearings—one of our witnesses made a point that I think bears repeating, a point that highlights the importance of the ranking member's bill before us today. As long as Assad remains in power, there is very little chance that we will be able to defeat ISIS or its offshoots because Assad, in many ways, has facilitated the growth of the very jihadist groups for which he claims are protecting Syria. Hogwash.

As we talk about how to stop the slaughter in Syria, we must remember that no one bears more responsibility for that slaughter than Assad. He and his regime are the ones dropping barrel bombs. They are the ones unleashing chemical weapons on their own people. And if we want to have any chance of stopping the bloodbath, of defeating ISIS, or of putting an end to the immense humanitarian challenges spreading throughout the region and beyond, we must put a stop to Assad.

This bill ratchets up the pressure on Assad and his collaborators, especially his main allies—Russia and Iran—while expanding on the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act, a bill which I authored and which became law in 2012. It gives the administration new tools to go after individuals and entities working with Assad in the finance, aircraft, transportation, telecom, and energy sectors, as well as

it gives them the tools to target individuals complicit in human rights abuses.

I am glad to have worked with the ranking member and our esteemed chairman to include my amendments in this bill, amendments that would determine that denying or hindering access to humanitarian aid is a serious human rights violation, and, as such, it would allow the administration to sanction any individual responsible for doing so.

All of these tools, Mr. Speaker, are vital components of doing something that we still desperately need in Syria: a comprehensive, holistic strategy that looks beyond short-term tactical successes and, instead, targets the foundation of so many of the problems rippling through the region.

If we continue to narrowly focus on ISIS without getting at the root of the Syrian conflict—Assad, Russia, and Iran—then we will only be treating the symptoms instead of the disease.

□ 1730

If we are to have any hope of finding a solution in Syria, the kind of pressure that this bill would achieve is an essential piece of that puzzle.

I offer my full support for this bill, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) will control the time.

There was no objection.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I certainly add my voice to that of my colleagues in support of this important legislation. Syria is a mess. It does affect all of us, as Mr. KINZINGER said, whether we like it or not. It is destabilizing the entire region. I believe this bill can be a useful tool in our diplomatic efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. FRANKEL), my friend and colleague.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chair and ranking member for their great leadership.

Mr. Speaker, imagine a mother crying in despair while holding her child in her arms, a child who is gasping for his last breath, an innocent victim of a barrel bomb filled with sarin gas dropped on his school.

The situation in Syria is the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II. President Assad's brutal regime has killed half a million innocent victims and displaced 14 million more, with millions fleeing into Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and over Europe, straining their resources, threatening regional stability, weakening European institutions, and undermining United States economic and security interests.

We must hold Assad and his supporters responsible for their atrocities. American leadership is needed more now than ever. I urge my colleagues to support the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act.

Mr. Speaker, I fear that one day we will look back and we will ask: Why did we not do more?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) has reclaimed the time from the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY).

There was no objection.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2017.

Since 2011, the Assad regime's forces have killed an estimated 500,000 people, mostly civilians, by unconscionably targeting and attacking major population centers. According to Human Rights Watch, last month, the Syrian regime used a nerve agent in northwest Syria that killed at least 92 people, including 30 children.

Even more heartbreaking is the fact that this was not the first chemical weapons attack by the Syrian Government against its own people. To the contrary, reports suggest that the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons has become ''widespread and systematic,'' and it has dropped bombs with nerve agents on at least four other occasions since December 12.

Just yesterday, our own State Department revealed that the Syrian regime is actively using a large crematorium to dispose of the remains of thousands of Syrian men, women, and children, whom they continue to slaughter.

Not only has the Syrian Government become a source of such crimes against humanity, but Syria has also indisputably become a hotbed for terrorist activity, propped up by Iran, Russia, and Hezbollah. Both ISIS and al-Qaida are operating near the Syria-Israel border, putting the Jewish State of Israel and our regional security in grave danger.

As a mother and a Jew, I cannot turn my cheek to this unadulterated evil. As a Member of the United States Congress, I have a duty to keep the American people safe and hold the Assad regime accountable for its war crimes and brutality. That is why I strongly support this critical legislation, and I thank Ranking Member ENGEL for all of his hard work in sponsoring it.

This bipartisan legislation would expand sanctions on those individuals who commit such monstrous acts of violence and inflict such extreme suffering upon innocent Syrians. It would ensure that the United States has the tools it needs to reach its ultimate goal of ending the Assad regime's campaign of carnage once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on this important legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, we have heard both sides simply agree. This is as bipartisan as you can get. It is as unanimous, hopefully, as you can get.

Six years into the Syrian civil war, with hundreds of thousands dead and millions more driven from their homes, we cannot waste time looking backward or just simply placing blame. We need to face the reality of this crisis today and do all we can to forge a new strategy to deal with it.

Three, four, five years ago, no one would have imagined that Assad would still be clinging to power over more and more deaths of his own people. We need to find a way to push for an end to the violence and bring about a political resolution that gets Assad out of power. By the way, that is going to be harder to do because the Russians and Ukrainians are really backing him.

Let's allow the Syrian people to start their long journey forward. This legislation will help us meet that challenge. It will impose a new cost on those who so far have aided the Assad regime with impunity. It will apply new pressure to the regime, which relies on the patronage of its enablers in Moscow. It will signal to the Syrian people that we share a vision of a future in which they make the decisions and Assad has no role.

The bill passed the House unanimously a year ago. I am hopeful we will soon pass it in a little while again overwhelmingly. I urge the other body to act on it without delay so we can get it to the President's desk.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to once again recognize the work of Ranking Member ENGEL and the other committee members who have contributed to this bill.

Our committee has heard the firsthand accounts of the suffering. We heard the testimony from Raed Saleh of the Syrian White Helmets as he spoke of their efforts to rescue and treat those who were killed and injured in Assad's brutal air assaults. When the bombs come in, as they often do, his organization, which was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, runs toward those shelters being destroyed to provide relief for the victims and to pull them out.

We have heard of the terror. More than a year ago, Dr. Mohamed Tennari of the Syrian American Medical Society described for the committee the sound of helicopters overhead, the thump of exploding bombs, and the overpowering smell of bleach in the air. This brave doctor described the horrendous effects this toxic gas has on the human body and the slow, agonizing deaths as the chlorine gas turned to hydrochloric acid in the lungs of victims.

Many of those victims he spoke of were children. They were targeted by the regime. People were targeted as they slept in their beds in their neighborhoods. Just a few weeks ago, one family lost 20 relatives in a single sarin

gas attack. Of the 92 victims of that attack on that day, 23 were children.

Mr. Speaker, in 2016, efforts to establish a lasting cease-fire failed, resulting in an aggressive campaign by Syrian and Russian air assets against eastern Aleppo. U.N. officials described that assault as ''crimes of historic proportions.''

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1677 "Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2017."

This bill, introduced by my colleague, Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL, uses sanctions to put pressure on the Syrian government and anyone supporting it to stop committing war crimes against humanity.

I support this legislation for its important and necessary purpose to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, encourage a negotiated political settlement, and hold Syrian human rights abusers accountable for their crimes.

The Syrian government, empowered with support from Iran and Russia, has pursued a strategy of targeting civilians to eliminate any opposition to its rule, including arresting anyone who opposes it.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights has reported the deaths of 60,000 people in prisons since the start of the conflict.

The Syrian government is the main aggressor in a conflict that has resulted in at least 400,000 dead and 14 million Syrians displaced; between 2011 and 2015, the Syrian Network for Human Rights attributed 96 percent of civilian deaths to the Syrian regime.

Additionally, President Bashar al-Assad has blocked United Nations humanitarian aid from reaching the intended recipients.

Who is Caesar? Caesar, who uses the pseudonym to remain anonymous as a way to protect his family, defected from the Syrian military in 2013.

He worked as a crime scene photographer for the Assad government after joining the military, years before the current conflict began.

As the conflict escalated, so did the number of bodies he would photograph each day.

Photographing the torture and rising death began to change his attitude towards the regime and in 2013, with help from the opposition, he faked his own death and defected from the Syrian military.

When he fled in August 2013, Caesar had collected over 53,000 photographs of detainees who had been tortured and killed.

He handed these photographs over to an anti-government political group, the Syrian National Movement, who then distributed the photographs to other groups, including Human Rights Watch (HRW).

With these photographs, HRW "found evidence of widespread torture, starvation, beatings, and disease in Syrian government detention facilities."

With the conflict in Syria in its fifth year, the U.S. House of Representatives introduced a bill intended to punish the Assad regime and its supporters and based it on both Caesar's photographs and his testimony in front of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs this past July.

The photographs and testimony show a clear connection between the reported human rights violations and the Assad government, legitimizing the bill and giving clear evidence to the international courts if President Assad stands trial for international war crimes.

H.R. 1677 is intended to sanction both the Syrian regime and any actors, what the bill refers to as a "foreign person," who support its human rights violations by imposing sanctions on them.

This support can be in any capacity, such as economic or military support.

H.R. 1677 is important and necessary as the United States cannot sit in silence while tens of thousands innocent civilians are slaughtered by Assad's authoritative regime.

Assad's crimes are not only against humanity but also against democracy, and I fully support legislation aiming to stop these atrocities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1677, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of the privileges of the House and offer the resolution previously noticed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the President shall immediately disclose his tax return information to Congress and the American people.

Whereas, in the United States' system of checks and balances, Congress has a responsibility to hold the Executive Branch of government to the highest standard of transparency to ensure the public interest is placed first;

Whereas, according to the Tax History Project, every President since Gerald Ford has disclosed their tax return information to the public;

Whereas, tax returns provide an important baseline disclosure because they contain highly instructive information including whether the candidate paid taxes, what they own, what they have borrowed and from whom, whether they have made any charitable donations, and whether they have taken advantage of tax loopholes;

Whereas, disclosure of the President's tax returns could help those investigating Russian influence in the 2016 election understand the President's financial ties to the Russian Federation and Russian citizens, including debts owed and whether he shares any partnership interests, equity interests, joint ventures or licensing agreements with Russia or Russians;

Whereas, the President fired FBI Director James Comey last week, whose FBI was investigating whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 election;

Whereas, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who made the recommendation to fire Director Comey, during sworn testimony neglected to mention his contacts with the Russian ambassador and recused himself from anything involving the Russian investigation;

Whereas, Senate Russia investigators have requested information from the Treasury Department's criminal investigation division, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, or FinCEN, which handles cases of money laundering, for information related to President Trump, his top officials and campaign aides. FinCEN has been investigating allegations of foreign money-laundering through purchases of U.S. real estate;

Whereas, the President's tax returns would show us whether he has foreign bank accounts and how much profit he receives from his ownership in myriad partnerships;

Whereas, the President hired a law firm to send a letter to Senator Lindsey Graham to fight suggestions he has Russian business ties; this letter left open the question whether Mr. Trump or his firms received Russian income or loans or derived income from Russian-linked partnerships.

Whereas, Donald Trump Jr. said the Trump Organization saw money ''pouring in from Russia'' and that ''Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets.''

Whereas, the White House will not confirm whether the President has filed a 2016 tax return;

Whereas, Congress gave itself the authority to review an individual's tax returns to investigate and reveal possible conflicts of interest of executive branch officials involved in the Teapot Dome scandal.

Whereas, President Donald Trump's executive order on the Review of designations under the Antiquities Act has directed the U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke to review national monuments that presidents have designated or expanded since 1996.

Whereas, this review was praised by industry groups who could benefit financially from oil, gas and mining and condemned by environmental organizations concerned this review will scrap or scale back critical federal designation to protect tribal and historic lands.

Whereas, the American people are in the dark to knowing if this review was started to justify selling or leasing public lands to private corporations that could enrich the President or his business partners without reviewing the President's tax returns.

Whereas, it has been reported that federal prosecutors have issued grand jury subpoenas to associates of former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn seeking business records as part of the ongoing probe into Russian involvement in the 2016 election;

Whereas, according to his 2016 candidate filing with the Federal Election Commission, the President has 564 financial positions in companies located in the United States and around the world;

Whereas, against the advice of ethics attorneys and the Office of Government Ethics, the President has refused to divest his ownership stake in his businesses; and can still withdraw funds at any time from the trust of which he is the sole beneficiary;

Whereas, the Emoluments Clause was included in the U.S. Constitution for the express purpose of preventing federal officials from accepting any ''present, Emolument, Office, or Title . . . from any King, Prince, or foreign state'';

Whereas, the most signed petition on the White House website calls for the release of the President's tax return information to verify compliance with the Emoluments Clause, with 1 million, 94 thousand signatures as of date of this resolution;

Whereas, the Chairmen of the Ways and Means Committee, Joint Committee on Taxation, and Senate Finance Committee have

the authority to request the President's tax returns under Section 6103 of the tax code;

Whereas, the Joint Committee on Taxation reviewed the tax returns of President Richard Nixon in 1974 and made the information public;

Whereas, the Ways and Means Committee used IRC 6103 authority in 2014 to make public the confidential tax information of 51 taxpayers;

Whereas, the American people have the right to know whether or not their President is operating under conflicts of interest related to international affairs, tax reform, government contracts, or otherwise: Now, therefore, be it:

Resolved, That the House of Representatives shall—

1. Immediately request the tax return information of Donald J. Trump for tax years 2006 through 2015 for review in closed executive session by the Committee on Ways and Means, as provided under Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code, and vote to report the information therein to the full House of Representatives.

2. Support transparency in government and the longstanding tradition of Presidents and Presidential candidates disclosing their tax returns.

□ 1745

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from New Jersey wish to present argument on the parliamentary question whether the resolution presents a question of the privileges of the House?

Mr. PASCRELL. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, the stunning conflicts of interest are piling up as the President, his family, and his friends profit in their personal business endeavors while serving in public office.

Under rule IX, clause 1, questions of the privileges of the House are ''those affecting the rights of the House collectively, its safety, dignity, and the integrity of its proceedings.'' There is nothing more of a threat to the integrity of this House than ignoring our duty to provide a check and balance to the executive branch. To restore the dignity of the House, we must use our authority to request President Trump's tax returns and begin to give the American people the transparency they deserve. That is what we should be giving them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is evidence time. Today there is in The Wall Street Journal an article entitled, ''Russian State-Run Bank Financed Deal Involving Trump Hotel Partner.'' It is a very interesting article, I advise, and I want to put it into the RECORD with your permission.

Mr. Speaker, a letter was sent just recently from Mr. Trump's lawyers to Mr. Trump and then on to Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM. That letter was supposed to be an explanation of the President of the United States' involvement in the finances and vice versa of Russia and President Trump. It does not in any manner, shape, or form, Mr. Speaker, go into any partnership which may exist. There is nothing about that. There is nothing about the Russian state-run bank financing a deal involving Mr. Trump's hotel partner in Toronto.

Number three, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, FinCEN as it is called, which is part of the Treasury Department but independent—independent—has independent investigative powers. They are looking into the money laundering in that situation. They are already investigating that with these Russian oligarchs—very interesting.

Also we know of what happened——

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's remarks must be confined to the question of order. The gentleman may proceed.

Mr. PASCRELL. Well, I would like to know, Mr. Speaker—I am sure you would, Mr. Speaker—how foreign investments have enriched the President of the United States. That is the only way we are going to find out the conflicts of interest—the only way.

So I have heard some House leaders argue that the House should not concern itself with things outside of its control. But section 6103 of the IRS Code is very much within the control of the House, if you have read it, giving specific responsibility to the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and the American people are demanding the Congress request the President's tax returns be exercised for several reasons.

Mr. Trump has not divested himself from his businesses as was recommended by the Office of Government Ethics.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is relevant if we look at what was produced—remember, it is evidence time—what was produced on January 21, 2009, the ethics commitments by executive branch personnel and what has been committed and produced under this administration. They have laughed at Mr. Shaub, who is the ethics commission chairman. They have laughed at him because it is almost like Cornelius Vanderbilt: You have the law; I have the power.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will suspend.

The Chair will hear argument only on whether this resolution qualifies under the rule——

Mr. PASCRELL. On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker——

The SPEAKER pro tempore. On the question of order.

Mr. PASCRELL. I'm sorry to interrupt.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will only hear——

Mr. PASCRELL. On a question of privilege—I am talking about the privilege of this House. I am talking about the privilege of Republicans and Democrats. We are all alike. We are all equal. Nobody is better than anybody else.

What I am saying to you tonight, Mr. Speaker, is that this goes to the very heart of the issue and why this is a privileged resolution because we have a right to know, we have a right to uphold the integrity of this institution—everybody—not just some.

Mr. Trump has not divested himself from his businesses as was recommended by the Office of Government Ethics. We need to see how our President—our President—would personally benefit from changes to our Tax Code. Tax Code changes proposed by his administration could lower his own personal tax bill by tens of millions of dollars. The American people have a right to know that.

We have learned that earlier this year the President apparently asked Mr. Comey to cease his investigation of Trump National Security Advisor Flynn. In a surprise move last week, Mr. Trump fired the Director of the FBI.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is reminded that remarks must be confined to the question of order.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I am saying here and very specifically, we have no way of knowing whether Mr. Trump or his firms have received Russian income. It is an insult to the integrity of this House—Republicans and Democrats alike. We need to know this. We need to know that the President of the United States is beyond question in his objectivity with any nation, and particularly those who are pretty shaky in relationship with, like Russia.

A certified letter from paid attorneys that actually confirms the President, in fact, does have financial ties to Russia does nothing to assuage these concerns.

The legislative branch has the responsibility—it has the authority—to check the executive branch, and section 6103(f)(1) is very clear, very distinct, the privilege of the House—the privilege of the Tax Code—which allows for an examination of the tax returns, the authority put in place specifically so Congress could examine conflicts of interest in the executive following the Teapot Dome scandal. As I mentioned before, the possible sale of public lands under this administration is not very different than the biggest scandal of the 20th century at Teapot Rock, Wyoming.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be more of a threat to the integrity of this distinguished——

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has heard the gentleman's argument and is prepared to rule.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I have only 2 more minutes. May I finish?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. If the gentleman confines his remarks to the question of order, the gentleman may conclude his argument.

Mr. PASCRELL. I am confining my remarks to the question of privileges which I said last night. Mr. Speaker, I will not yield on that issue. That is all I am doing—no more, no less. This is not a court. All I am saying is putting forth the rationale behind the resolution which I have put forth today—put forth yesterday and was read today.

We have nothing but evidence to justify an examination, Mr. Speaker. This is not hot air. If and when such conflicts are revealed, I do not want to say to our constituents that we had the power to review these conflicts, but we did nothing. I for one do not want the integrity—my integrity, the integrity of my colleagues, and the integrity of this House—to be demeaned by such a shameful failure. That goes to the very heart in their own words of what of a privileged resolution is.

To restore the dignity of the House, we must use our authority to request President Trump's tax returns and give the American people the transparency they deserve.

My concluding statement is this, Mr. Speaker: I mentioned Vanderbilt before because that is a very powerful statement he made—a very rich guy. He felt he could do anything: The law? What law? I am all the power.

This is not the United States of America, this is not our democracy, and this is not what Republicans and Democrats have fought for since they have been in this House and before. I stand with us in only getting what we deserve, and then we decide whether we will communicate it to the American people through the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your courtesies.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The material referenced by the gentleman's earlier unanimous consent request will be inserted following disposition of the question of order.

The Chair is prepared to rule.

The gentleman from New Jersey seeks to offer a resolution as a question of the privileges of the House under rule IX.

As the Chair ruled most recently on April 5, 2017, the resolution directs the Committee on Ways and Means to meet and consider an item of business under the procedures set forth in 26 U.S.C. 6103 and, therefore, does not qualify as a question of the privileges of the House.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I appeal the ruling of the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is, Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the House?

MOTION TO TABLE

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Rothfus moves that the appeal be laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to table.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to table will be followed by a 5-minute vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1177.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 229, nays 188, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 261]

YEAS—229

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

NAYS—188

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

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Sanford

NOT VOTING—12

Chaffetz
Cole
DeSantis
Gutiérrez
Higgins (NY)
Johnson, Sam
Napolitano
Newhouse
Nunes
Payne
Pelosi
Schiff

□ 1821

Ms. SPEIER changed her vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

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

So the motion was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal]

RUSSIAN STATE-RUN BANK FINANCED DEAL INVOLVING TRUMP HOTEL PARTNER

(By Rob Barry, Christopher S. Stewart and Brett Forrest)

VEB, a Russian state-run bank under scrutiny by U.S. investigators, financed a deal involving Donald Trump's onetime partner in a Toronto hotel tower at a key moment for the project, according to people familiar with the transaction.

Alexander Shnaider, a Russian-Canadian developer who built the 65–story Trump International Hotel and Tower, put money

into the project after receiving hundreds of millions of dollars from a separate asset sale that involved the Russian bank, whose full name is Vnesheconombank.

Mr. Shnaider sold his company's share in a Ukrainian steelmaker for about $850 million in 2010, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence. According to two people with knowledge of the deal, the buyer, which hasn't been identified publicly, was an entity acting for the Russian government. VEB initiated the purchase and provided the money, these people say.

U.S. investigators are looking into any ties between Russian financial institutions, Mr. Trump and anyone in his orbit, according to a person familiar with the probe. As part of the investigation, they're examining interactions between Mr. Trump, his associates and VEB, which is now subject to U.S. sanctions, said another person familiar with the matter. The Toronto deal adds a new element to the list of known connections between Mr. Trump's associates and Russia.

After Mr. Shnaider and his partner sold their stake in the steelmaker, Mr. Shnaider injected more money into the Trump Toronto project, which was financially troubled. Mr. Shnaider's lawyer, Symon Zucker, said in an April interview that about $15 million from the asset sale went into the Trump Toronto project. A day later, he wrote in an email: ''I am not able to confirm that any funds'' from the deal ''went into the Toronto project.''

A spokesman for the Trump Organization, the family's real-estate firm, said Mr. Trump had no involvement in any financial dealings with VEB and that the Trump company ''merely licensed its brand and manages the hotel and residences.'' VEB didn't respond to requests for comment.

Mr. Trump has said he has no dealings with Russia. ''To the best of my knowledge, no person that I deal with does,'' he said in February. On Friday, Mr. Trump's lawyers released a two-month-old letter stating that 10 years of his tax returns show little income, investments or debt from Russian sources beyond items already known to the public.

VEB has long been viewed by Russian analysts as a vehicle for the Russian government to fund politically important projects, including the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. A VEB executive in New York was sentenced to prison last year after pleading guilty to conspiring to act in the U.S. as a Russian agent without notifying U.S. authorities.

In the wake of U.S. intelligence agency findings that Russian government-directed hackers interfered in the 2016 election, several agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, are conducting a counterintelligence probe into whether Mr. Trump's campaign staff had any contact with Russian officials. Committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate also are investigating the matter. Russian authorities have denied any interference.

At the time of Mr. Shnaider's steelmaker deal, Russian President Vladimir Putin was chairman of VEB's supervisory board, and major deals would have been approved by him, according to a former Russian government official and several Russian government and economic experts. The bank later was placed on the U.S. sanctions list after Russia's intrusion into Ukraine and its annexation of Crimea in 2014. American entities are barred from financial involvement with the bank.

VEB made headlines when it emerged that its chairman met with Mr. Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner in December. A bank spokesperson has said VEB's leaders met Mr. Kushner and numerous global financial executives as it developed a new strategy for the bank. Mr. Spicer has said Mr. Kushner's meeting was part of his role during the Trump transition as the ''primary point of contact with foreign government officials.''

The Toronto project was billed in 2007 as a joint venture between Mr. Trump and Mr. Shnaider and was projected to cost about 500 million Canadian dollars. Mr. Trump said at the time he would manage the hotel's operations and Mr. Shnaider planned to develop the tower, which also would include condominiums, through his company, Talon International Development Inc.

The project has been dogged by financial problems. In November, it entered insolvency proceedings, and a judge in March approved its sale.

Alan Garten, the Trump Organization's general counsel, said the company ''was not the owner, developer or seller'' of the project. While The Wall Street Journal and others reported in 2011 and 2012 that Mr. Trump had a minor ownership stake in it, Mr. Garten now says Mr. Trump ''did not hold'' equity and had no involvement with the financing.

The Trump Toronto Hotel Management Corp. has received at least $611,000 in fees from the project since 2015, federal financial-disclosure forms filed last May show. The forms don't disclose the company's total income from the deal.

Shortly after the project broke ground in 2007, about 85% of the units were presold. During the financial crisis, some buyers pulled out and others were unable to get financing, receivership documents show. Midland Resources Holding Ltd., then owned by Mr. Shnaider and a partner, was on the hook for cost overruns, the documents show.

Midland Resources had acquired its stake in the Ukrainian steelmaker, called Zaporizhstal, for about $70 million after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The 2010 transaction to sell it was opaque. Midland transferred ownership of its portion of the steelmaker to the unnamed buyer through five offshore companies, according to Mr. Shnaider's lawyer and court documents.

The idea for the deal was brought to a top VEB executive by a former Ukrainian government official, according to an investment banker familiar with what happened. Although the buyer wasn't named, a steel trader with knowledge of the deal said VEB itself ended up with control of Midland's share of the steelmaker. At the time, Russian entities saw gaining control of large industrial assets in Ukraine as having strategic value to Russian political interests in the future, said another investment banker with knowledge of the deal.

Mr. Zucker, Mr. Shnaider's lawyer, said Midland Resources ''has never had any relationship with VEB'' and ''does not dictate where their purchasers borrow funds.'' He declined to identify the buyer, citing confidentiality provisions, other than to say it was a ''Ukrainian industrial group.''

Mr. Shnaider's companies continued to pump money into the Toronto tower as it struggled to stay afloat, according to his lawyer and later court documents. Later, Mr. Shnaider became embroiled in a legal battle with Mr. Trump's companies over management issues. The Trump Organization declined to comment.

In November, a Canadian judge placed the tower into receivership. Mr. Trump's company was owed C$116,165.72, and Mr. Shnaider's company as much as C$105 million, court documents show.

Recently, a judge approved the sale of the building to a California-based investment firm for about $220 million.

REMOVING OUTDATED RESTRICTIONS TO ALLOW FOR JOB GROWTH ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1177) to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to release on behalf of the United States the condition that certain lands conveyed to the City of Old Town, Maine, be used for a municipal airport, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 418, nays 1, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 262]

YEAS—418

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guthrie
Hanabusa
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating

Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Neal
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—1

Amash

NOT VOTING—11

Chaffetz
Cole
Gutiérrez
Higgins (NY)
Johnson, Sam
Napolitano
Newhouse
Nunes
Payne
Pelosi
Schiff

□ 1829

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

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 261 and "yea" on rollcall No. 262.

AMERICAN LAW ENFORCEMENT HEROES ACT OF 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (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 for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 583

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''American Law Enforcement Heroes Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. PRIORITIZING HIRING AND TRAINING OF VETERANS.

Section 1701(b)(2) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd(b)(2)) is amended by inserting '', including by prioritizing the hiring and training of veterans (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code)'' after ''Nation''.

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

CONGRESS MUST FINISH REFORM OF THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

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

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, last week a Federal court temporarily overturned the termination of the fired Phoenix VA hospital director, Sharon Helman. Helman was relieved of her duties in 2015 after a whistleblower disclosed a string of scandals, including manipulation of wait times to collect performance bonuses. Even worse, in a separate court case, she pled guilty and was convicted of accepting over $50,000 in illegal gifts. For this, she is currently on probation.

Mr. Speaker, Congress must take swift action to ensure former and current VA employees like Ms. Helman are held accountable. Those who disregard their duty to our Nation's veterans should never be allowed to keep their jobs, salaries, or benefits after proven dereliction of duty. Our veterans do not deserve—and they cannot afford—VA leaders who put profit and expediency over the health of those who have worn our Nation's uniform.

Congress has taken steps to reform the Veterans Administration, but we must finish our job. That is why I was proud to vote ''yes'' on H.R. 1259, the VA Accountability First Act. American veterans are counting on us to keep our promises and protect them from self-serving bureaucrats. I intend to do just that.

REMEMBERING FALLEN POLICE OFFICERS

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

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, during National Police Week, it is important we continue to remember the brave men and women who were killed while protecting us.

Last year, 145 law enforcement officers were killed in the line of duty. One of these officers, Lesley Zerebny, 27 years old, was an officer with the Palm Springs Police Department. She was responding to a domestic disturbance call when she was gunned down. She was killed just days after returning from maternity leave and left behind a 4-month-old daughter.

Her fellow officer, Jose Gilbert Vega, was also murdered in the shooting. A devoted father, Vega was just days away from retiring.

Of the officers killed last year, 10 were State troopers. One of them was Trooper Timothy Pratt of the New York State Police. Trooper Pratt was struck by a car as he was on the side of the road assisting a stopped vehicle. Pratt had 30 years on the job.

Our law enforcement officers don't know what they will encounter when they respond to any call. We applaud them for the bravery and courage they display in the face of danger. Mr. Speaker, let us not forget their sacrifices.

VETERANS DESERVE THE BEST CARE POSSIBLE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Mental Health Awareness Month to talk about a growing group of individuals who need our help: our veterans.

More than 16 percent of veterans have been diagnosed with a depressive disorder. Up to 43 percent struggle with symptoms of mental health issues, such as drinking excessively, smoking, or sleeplessness. These struggles have resulted in an unacceptably high suicide rate for our veterans. Every day, 20 veterans take their own lives, which is almost double the rate of nonveterans.

Mr. Speaker, this is heartbreaking. It is unacceptable, and we must act. That is why I was proud today to join with

Congressman TIM RYAN in introducing the Veterans Wellness Act of 2017.

This bill brings mental healthcare to our veterans by establishing a 2-year grant program to provide wellness care and additional therapies at veteran service organizations like the American Legion, the VFW, and AMVETS. Many offer skilled assistance with VA enrollment that could help our veterans get the care that they so desperately need.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House to ensure our veterans receive the best care possible.

OUR NATION'S INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

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

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with hundreds of business, labor, and advocacy organizations to recognize National Infrastructure Week. The purpose of this week is to highlight the state of the Nation's infrastructure and its critical importance to our economy and well-being.

Building and strengthening our infrastructure is vital to all of us, but it oftentimes goes unnoticed. Our Nation's deteriorating infrastructure is hampering our ability to compete in the thriving global economy and create jobs that our Nation needs. As an example, in my home State of Ohio, we face significant challenges: 17 percent of the public roads are in poor condition, and almost 7 percent of all the bridges are structurally deficient.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to turn a blind eye to our Nation's infrastructure needs. Congress must work together to upgrade our Nation's highways, bridges, airports, water systems, energy grid, broadband network, and the like so that our economy can continue to lead the world in the 21st century and beyond.

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS DESERVE OUR GRATITUDE

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during National Police Week to pay tribute to the Nation's law enforcement men and women.

Established in 1962 by President Kennedy, National Police Week serves as a reminder of the incredible sacrifice our police officers make every day to serve and protect the people in our States and communities.

Just last week, Lieutenant Kevin Mainhart of the Yell County Sheriff's Department was killed in the line of duty during a traffic stop in Dardanelle, Arkansas. This tragedy reminds us of the danger that all of our men and women who police our streets have to face.

Every American should be proud of our neighbors and fellow citizens who get up every morning, put on their uniform and badge, leave their families, and serve us all, keeping our cities and towns safe and trying to build the trust and faith among our citizens.

I respect and appreciate the important work of our police and our law enforcement men and women in Arkansas and throughout the Nation. They deserve our gratitude.

PANDEMONIUM COMING OUT OF THE WHITE HOUSE

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

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, when I was sworn in to office, I made a commitment to support and defend the Constitution of these United States. Our President's latest actions have shown us that we cannot trust him to do the same.

Whether it is a lapse of judgment or just plain inexperience, the pandemonium coming out of the White House is worse than a scene from ''House of Cards''

The method in which Trump chose to reveal classified intelligence to Russian officials—impulsive;

The way Trump chose to fire FBI Director Comey—imprudent;

And, if the latest reports are true, the way Trump chose to interfere with the FBI investigation of National Security Adviser Michael Flynn—impeachable.

I don't use this last ''i'' word lightly, but for love of country and democracy, and as an American, I hope this is not true. If it is, this is a blatant obstruction of justice and a grave, grave offense.

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

THANK YOU TO LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSIONALS

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

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, during this National Police Week, I wish to, on behalf of myself and the fine citizens of the Fifth District of Virginia, extend our thank-you.

Since 1791, greater than 22,000 law enforcement professionals have given their lives in the line of duty—over 70 in a single day in 2001, including 37 from the NYPD and 23 from the Port Authority Police—an average of over 140 a year. And yet these men and women who look like us—every race, every color, every gender—are the best of us because every day they get up and go to work again.

Mr. Speaker, when I served in the military, I became familiar with Isaiah 6:8, and I cite that verse in thanking our law enforcement professionals:

And then the voice of the Lord spoke to us and said, ''Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?'' And I said, ''Here am I. Send me.''

Mr. Speaker, take that as a thank-you from myself and the citizens of the Fifth District of Virginia to those professional men and women who serve us every day.

HOKA HEY

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, it is time that all of America knows a phrase that the Manvel Mavericks in the 22nd District of Texas know well. The phrase is ''Hoka Hey. Hoka Hey.'' That means be unselfish; compete for team, school, and town. Hoka Hey carried the Mavericks to the men's track and field team title for Texas 5A. That happened last week.

The team started rough. After seven events, they had 8 points. They were in 10th place. But the spirit of Hoka Hey came back during the relays. Our guys burned up the track. When the relays were over, the Mavs had 50 points and Port Arthur Memorial, 41.

Hoka Hey had 85 points when the meet was over. They were the State champions. Congratulations, Hoka Hey Manvel Mavericks, State champions, Texas 5A.

□ 1845

GIVE BACK THE FUTURES OF HARDWORKING AMERICANS

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

Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because, after coming back from Indiana for the last 8 days, I wanted to report what I saw.

What I saw was too much hopelessness, too much despair, in the eyes of too many hardworking Hoosiers, who no longer feel that they have control of their financial future, who no longer feel that they can participate in the American Dream, and who no longer feel that they can start small businesses of their own. But I told them every single day when I was back home this past week what we are doing to change that to roll back the provisions of Dodd-Frank that have put undue burdens on lenders trying to help small businesses across Indiana's Ninth District, and across this country, grow and get started; to help hardworking Hoosiers be able to start small businesses so they have control over their families' future again; to help individuals be able to get jobs at growing enterprises because they have access to capital.

Over the past few years, loan growth has stagnated. In the past 100 years, coming out of recessions, we have typically seen a loan growth of 63 percent, but it has only been 18 percent. It is the difference between those two that

has curtailed the futures of many hard-working Americans. I want to make sure we give that back to them. That is why I am voting in support of the CHOICE Act, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

HONORING LAW ENFORCEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. REICHERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, on Monday this week, hundreds of families, friends, colleagues, and loved ones from every corner of the country gathered at the United States Capitol for the 36th annual National Peace Officers Memorial Day. They were here to honor all of those names at the memorial, 21,000 names, Mr. Speaker. And this year, 394 more were added. Now, some of those are over past years—not this past year, but prior years—but 394 additional names were added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. Their names will ever be etched in our hearts and on the walls of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, and, as I said, with 21,000 others who came before them.

People who walk by and view these names may not recognize the names or may not know all of the names. They may have a special loved one whose name appears on those hollowed walls. But the thing to remember here is that these are brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, and some even grandfathers. They are real people who sacrificed their lives. Some were ambushed and executed, and some lost their lives responding to a call to save a life or someone who called for help. These are the men and women who gave their lives so we could, in many cases, keep ours.

I have a lot more to say on this, and we have some time. I am going to yield to other Members, Mr. Speaker, who arrived here tonight to share their stories and remember the officers who served their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to Chairman GOODLATTE, chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to DAVE REICHERT for taking the lead on this very appropriate Special Order to recognize our Nation's law enforcement. No one better represents that law enforcement here in the United States Congress than former Sheriff REICHERT. And I thank him for not only his leadership in the House but also for his service as a sheriff for many years prior to his election to Congress.

Our Nation was founded on the rule of law. The Preamble to the United States Constitution stated that its purpose was, in part, to ''establish justice'' and ''insure domestic tranquility.'' Every day, law enforcement officers carry out this legacy. They fight crime, promote justice, and keep the peace. They patrol late at night and early in the morning, while we sleep in the comforts of our homes.

And over the past 16 years, our Nation's law enforcement officers have often been the first to respond to terrorist attacks. On that fateful day, nearly 16 years ago, first responders were running into the crumbling towers as everyone else was running out. Following the Boston Marathon bombings in April of 2013, Boston police responded immediately to aid the wounded and implement emergency plans. That legacy has carried on through the recent catastrophes in San Bernardino, Orlando, and too many others.

Sadly, many law enforcement officers have made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf. Just this year already, 50 law enforcement officers have died in the line of duty, including Deputy Sheriff Curtis Allen Bartlett of Carroll County, Virginia, who was killed in a vehicle crash while responding to assist another deputy and a Virginia State Police trooper who were involved in a pursuit. These are tragic reminders that our law enforcement professionals face danger every day as they carry out their duties.

Chillingly, in recent years, police officers have increasingly become targets for violence and ambush-style attacks. Tomorrow, this House will vote to ensure that State and local law enforcement officers receive the same protections as their Federal counterparts. In fact, this week, the House will pass more than half a dozen bills to help officers do their jobs and return home safely.

As chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I have the privilege to work with Federal law enforcement. All too often, we fail to recognize how the dedicated men and women of law enforcement make sacrifices to promote law and order and keep our neighborhoods safe. That is true at every level: our local police and sheriff's deputies, our State police, and Federal law enforcement officers in many different departments of the Department of Justice and other agencies.

As a father, grandfather, husband, and citizen, the men and women in blue have my profound respect and sincere thanks.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman. I thank him for all his hard work in his committee to support law enforcement across the country. I look forward to working with him on some of the law enforcement reforms that his committee is looking at. I appreciate it.

It is an honor for me, Mr. Speaker, to lead this Special Order. I am very humbled at the response that we have received tonight by the Members who want to be here and talk about their law enforcement officers in their communities.

Another one of our Members who wants to share his thoughts and feelings is the son of a State trooper from Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS).

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this is a special time as a trooper's kid. When I think about that and I think about this wall and I think about the heroes that I am looking at standing here, I am thinking about my own father who I just talked to a few moments ago—31 years as a Georgia State patrol. My mom is with him right now. They have been the example of what law enforcement goes through so many times.

I will share, in just a few more minutes, about that, but I did want to remind you why we are here, and thinking about this memorial, Georgia officers who have fallen in 2017 already: Deputy Sheriff Michael Butler, Lowndes County Sheriff's Office; and Sergeant Gregory Michael Meagher, Richmond County Sheriff's Office.

In 2016, we saw Jody Carl Smith, Georgia Southwestern State University Department of Public Safety; Officer Nicholas Ryan Smarr, Americus Police Department; Deputy Sheriff Justin Scott White, Newton County Sheriff's Office; Deputy Sheriff Daryl Wayne Smallwood, Peach County Sheriff's Office; Sergeant Patrick Michael Sondron, Peach County Sheriff's Office; Officer Timothy Kevin Smith, Eastman Police Department; Investigator Anthony Joseph Freeman, Bibb County Sheriff's Office; and Major Gregory Eugene Barney, Riverdale Police Department.

And then one, Mr. Speaker, that came at a time in which the Sheriff and I were on the Police Working Group. We were in Atlanta. We were going through discussing the issues that police are going through and how communities are coming together, and we got word of a shooting in south Georgia.

At the time, we just got a name, and we weren't really sure what had gone on, but we found out there was a shooting and there was a fatality involved. What I came to find out later was that the gentleman who was killed was Deputy Commander U.S. Marshal Patrick Carothers of the Southeast Regional Task Force. He was a leader who didn't even have to be there that day. He could have taken a step back. Instead, he led the charge. He went in first, as a leader does, and was killed.

As it became more and more clear, I began to realize I had another special connection to Marshal Carothers. Just

a few months earlier, I had the privilege of appointing his son to the United States Naval Academy.

It is a matter of family. It is a matter of heart. As someone growing up, who thought that it was sort of awkward having your dad come and pick you up at school in his State patrol car, and he thought it was pretty cute when he put you in the back seat, and the kids were laughing. They would talk about it, and they would say: A State trooper is coming to pick you up. I would look at them and say: It is my dad. But what they didn't also see were the times when he would come home, and I would wake up at night, and my dad would be coming home to change his shirt because it was ripped and torn and bloody from where he had been involved in a fight. What they didn't know was a young son, who had listened to all of the things people would say about police officers, and say: They are talking about my dad.

As one who has supported me all of my life, I cannot pass this time up without recognizing those who gave the ultimate sacrifice and those who continue to serve every day. It still amazes me the Georgia State patrol has gone on. And now folks, when I look in those blue and gray cars and the sheriff's deputy cars, and those that I grew up watching, they were my big brothers. Now I look in there and say: Who are those younger people riding in their cars? They are just carrying on that blue line tradition. They are just carrying on that public service that means so much.

So tonight, Sheriff, you have done a wonderful job of getting us here, because these folks have families, they have kids, they have a responsibility, and they never turn from it. I thank the families who have lost and gave their loved ones, and I thank the families who get up every day still with their loved ones in the fight, and I thank my father who gave so much.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia. As he shared his story about his father, it reminded me of my own story of coming home to my three young kids and my uniform being torn and bloodied, in some cases. I never really thought about what my kids or my spouse was thinking when I came home. I was still wrapped up in the shift that I had just come from and the struggles that I had been through on the streets.

□ 1900

I served for 33 years in the King County Sheriff's Office, and I would do that job all over again, Mr. Speaker. I loved it.

But I wanted to share another story, too, of Officer Jake Gutierrez from the Tacoma Police Department, which is a city just south of Seattle. Officer Gutierrez tragically died in the line of duty. He lost his life while protecting a woman from domestic violence. Jake was supposed to exchange wedding vows with his fiancee just a few weeks later. Instead, his fiancee, his three daughters, and his granddaughter attended his funeral. They struggled—and I am thinking they are still struggling today—to picture a life without him.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. GOWDY). Our U.S. Attorney, prosecutor, knows law enforcement well, and he has a story to tell about one of his officers.

Mr. GOWDY. Thank you, Sheriff. I want to start by thanking you for your service as a law enforcement officer and in Congress. And I call you sheriff when I pass by you because I always believe in calling people by their highest title. And as much as it is wonderful, and I am sure the people in your family are proud of your service in the United States Congress, I am proudest of your willingness to sacrifice for the people of Washington as their sheriff.

Kevin Carper was a uniform patrol officer with the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office. He was not a detective. He was not in management. He was just a regular police officer like the ones we see every day in our towns and cities.

Kevin responded to a domestic violence call. Those who are unfamiliar with law enforcement have a tendency sometimes to refer to those as routine calls. There is nothing routine about a domestic violence call, and everyone in law enforcement knows it.

Off of Airport Road in Spartanburg, South Carolina, Kevin and his partner arrived to find William Seich on the front porch of his small home pointing a large caliber gun at his wife, Judy.

Judy was crouched down in the front yard, trying to protect herself, trying to shield herself behind a tree, and William was pointing the gun at her and, alternatively, pointing the gun at law enforcement who had just arrived on the scene.

You know, Sheriff REICHERT and Mr. Speaker, it all seems so easy in hindsight. Do you shoot? Do you pull the trigger? Is the gun real? You have split seconds to make these decisions only to have them second-guessed for months, if not years afterward. Is the gun real? Is it loaded?

William Seich finally turned the gun toward his wife and he shot her. As he was turning the gun towards law enforcement, no doubt to shoot them, they returned fire. They struck William Seich. As one officer ran toward his fallen wife, Judy, Kevin Carper ran to the front porch to make sure that William Seich didn't shoot anybody else.

As he got on the front porch, Mr. Speaker, he heard the cries of children. Unbeknownst to Kevin and his partner, there were children inside that mobile home, and the bullets from one of the officer's guns had struck one of the children.

William Seich survived and was charged with murder. Both of the little girls ultimately survived, although one was badly injured.

I met Kevin when we were preparing for trial. He was an essential witness, so I needed to prepare him for what would come during this trial. He would be second-guessed. His every move would be scrutinized. In a very real sense, he would not only be blamed for Judy Seich's murder, he would be blamed for shooting one of the little girls inside that home, and then he would be blamed for not doing enough to protect Judy Seich, not making the right split-second decision.

I tried to prepare Kevin for what would be a grueling cross-examination, and it was clear to me his mind and heart were somewhere else. So, finally, I said: Kevin, you didn't do anything wrong. You didn't have a choice.

He said: I know, Solicitor GOWDY.

He had tears streaming down his face in my office.

He said: I know, Solicitor GOWDY, but I shot that little girl.

Objectively, Kevin Carper did everything right that night. He responded to an incredibly tense domestic call. He was confronted with a man holding a gun. Was it a real gun? Was it loaded? All of these thoughts going through his mind; and as soon as William Seich shot and murdered his wife, he returned fire.

Objectively, we know everything he did was right, but it didn't matter how many times I told Kevin: You did the right thing. Deputy Kevin Carper heard me. Father, husband, Kevin Carper had tears streaming down his face at the thought that he would have hurt a child.

Well, we went through the trial, and he was, as you might imagine, an indispensable witness.

Mr. Speaker, he could not have done a better job in that murder trial. Yeah, he was a tough police officer in a uniform, but when it came time to describe walking on the front porch and hearing the cries of children, he became a husband and a father again, and in front of a jury, Sheriff—and you know this is hard for police to do in front of a jury—this tough, brave man broke down in tears, and the jury had a chance to see the humanity of police officers. The jury had a chance to see that ''protect and serve and defend'' part of police officers.

William Seich was convicted, in no small part, because of Kevin Carper's help. In South Carolina, the sentencing takes place immediately after the trial, so there was family to talk to and to prepare them for the sentencing hearing so they could allocute on what Judy Seich's life meant to them and what the proper punishment should be.

Mr. Speaker and Sheriff REICHERT, I wanted to tell Kevin what a great job he had done. I wanted to tell Kevin how impressed I was with his humanity. I wanted to tell Kevin—I intended to tell Kevin that he took a cynical old prosecutor and he made him believe again that there are women and men who go into this line of work for all the right reasons. That is what I intended to tell

him. But in the hustle and bustle of sentencing, he slipped out the back of the courtroom and we went on with the sentencing hearing.

But I knew that I would see him again and I would have a chance to tell him. I would have a chance to tell his boss: You need to watch that guy, make him a homicide detective. He is really good.

I would have a chance to tell him he did great by those little girls. I knew I would see him again and I would have a chance to tell him again.

And I did see him again, laying beside a roadside, shot to death during a routine traffic stop. He was shot by a man who had been arrested more than 30 times.

If you have ever attended an officer's funeral, the finality of that death hits you the very hardest at the end where they do the radio call: Deputy Kevin Carper, do you read? Deputy Kevin Carper, can you hear us? And, of course, there is silence. And then at the end, it is: Deputy Kevin Carper, you are clear to go home.

I never told Kevin what I should have told him. Deputy Kevin Carper, you were a credit to law enforcement. Husband, father, Kevin Carper, you are a credit to humanity and your family. I wish I had told you when I should have told you.

I hope that all of my other friends in prosecution and in law enforcement now will not wait too long to tell the men and women of law enforcement how grateful they are for their service.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. GOWDY, I have a feeling that Kevin knew anyway when he left that courtroom how you felt. Thank you for sharing that powerful story. I think it really clearly points to a lot of things:

One, the job is tough and you have got to make those split decisions, and they are life and death decisions;

Two, that the human side of the police officer is not very often recognized; that the connection to their family—as I said in my opening statement, these are people that are fathers, they are sons, they are sisters, they are mothers, in some cases they are grandparents.

Sometimes we see a person just wearing a uniform, but there is a human being inside that uniform wearing that badge and carrying that gun to make sure that we can get home to our families and enjoy our families.

I lost a best friend and partner in 1982. It still hurts today. If I can get past the emotional part, I might share that story a little bit later.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE of Texas. Thank you, Sheriff.

I appreciate your comments, Lawyer GOWDY; as I call him, his comments.

I know that the outlaws in Washington State are glad you are in Congress and you are not back in Washington arresting them and putting them in the jailhouse where a lot of them belong. But thank you for the opportunity to speak at this very important Special Order.

As you know, while you were a sheriff in Washington, I was down at the courthouse in Texas, first as a prosecutor, like Lawyer GOWDY, and then, for 22 years, I tried criminal cases, felonies, everything from stealing to killing.

I met a lot of police, as I call them, during that time. Some of them, as Mr. GOWDY has pointed out, gave their lives in the line of duty. I met them in the middle of the night when they would come bringing a warrant to me to sign so they could go arrest somebody while the rest of us all slept. They are doing what they do best, and that is protecting and serving our communities.

A lot of police officers—and I don't think it has been said yet—their job is being a police officer, but most of them have other jobs just to make ends meet. They have an extra job, as we call it, because they don't make a lot being a police officer. None of them ever do it for the money—none of them anywhere in the world do it for the money. So to support their families, they have to have other jobs to do that.

I think we as a nation need to understand and appreciate that they do what they do because they feel, and it is, an important service to our community.

Last year, 135 police officers throughout the Nation were killed; 64 of them were shot and killed, and 21 of those were ambushed.

Among the States, my home State of Texas had the most police officers killed. Twenty-one were killed last year in the line of duty. We also had five canines that were killed that worked with police.

I have here a photograph—or a poster of the 21 officers killed in the line of duty in the State of Texas last year; all races, both sexes, all ages throughout the State of Texas. Last year, we saw probably more than I can remember, this phenomena of hate and ambush of police officers.

□ 1915

On July 7, 2016, five Dallas police officers were shot and killed as they were protecting a protest demonstration in downtown Dallas.

What occurred was a sniper who had been preparing, obviously for some time, was watching this procession go by and he opened fire on those police officers. Other than 9/11, this was the most deadliest day for police officers in the United States.

Shortly before 9 p.m., a domestic terrorist—and I am not going to give his name. His name is not important. The names of the officers are what is important—parked his black SUV on Lamar Street. He put on his body armor. He got his automatic weapon ready to fire, and he started stalking Dallas police officers.

As those Dallas police officers and a DART officer—DART is Dallas Area Rapid Transit officer—marched along with the protesters, he opened fire on them with the intent to kill as many as he could. So gunfire rang out and bullets struck and killed Senior Corporal Lorne Ahrens, Officer Michael Krol, Officer Patrick Zamarripa, and three Dallas police officers were wounded, along with a civilian.

But the sniper wasn't through yet. He headed back up Lamar Street—and that is in downtown Dallas—shooting out the windows of a nearby college campus, El Centro College campus. During that time, he injured two El Centro College police officers trying to get into the school.

He had continued on his quest to kill officers and he snuck up behind a DART officer—his name, Brent Thompson—and shot him in the back and killed him. He then turned his way on to Elm Street nearby and shot his way back into El Centro College.

All of this took about 20 minutes. Police officers were following this sniper, trying to capture him, but this individual went up to the library in the school and started firing down. His next victim was Officer Michael Smith, and he injured yet another DART officer.

He was cornered in the library. Chief of Police Brown said: During that 2-hour-long negotiation, the individual lied to us, played games, laughed at us, sang, and continually asked how many of those coppers did he kill?

Eventually, the Dallas SWAT team took care of the sniper, and he was killed.

In total, five officers were killed, seven others were wounded. And these officers were killed for the sole reason that they wore a uniform, that they wore a badge or a star over their heart, symbolizing protecting us from the dobads. That is why that badge is there over their heart. They were willing to give their life so that we might have peace, order, and safety; and on that day, five of them did.

In total, like I mentioned, 21 officers were killed in Texas last year, the most in any State. I include in the RECORD their full background and the departments that they worked with.

Their names are: Officer David Hofer, Patrolman David Ortiz, Trooper Jeffrey Nichols, Border Patrol Agent Jose Barraza, Officer Endy Ekpanya, Sergeant Stacey Baumgartner, Officer Calvin McCullers, Jr., Sergeant Michael Smith, Officer Michael Krol, Officer Patricio Zamarripa, Officer Brent Thompson, Senior Corporal Lorne Bradley Ahrens, Officer Marco Zarate, Correctional Officer Mari Johnson, Officer Justin Ryan Scherlen, Officer Amir Abdul-Khaliq, Deputy Sheriff Kenneth Maltby, Corporal Robert Ransom, Border Patrol Agent David Gomez, Commander Kenneth Starrs, and Detective Benjamin Marconi.

ROLL CALL OF HEROES

1. Officer David Stefan Hofer, Euless Police Department. End of Watch: March 1, 2016.
2. Patrolman David Ortiz, El Paso Police Department. End of Watch: March 14, 2016.

3. Trooper Jeffrey Don Nichols, Texas Department of Public Safety—Texas Highway Patrol. End of Watch: March 26, 2016.
4. Agent Jose Daniel Barraza, United States Department of Homeland Security—Customs and Border Protection—United States Border Patrol, US. End of Watch: April 18, 2016.
5. Officer Endy Nddiobong Ekpanya, Pearland Police Department. End of Watch: June 12, 2016.
6. Sergeant Stacey Allen Baumgartner, Patton Village Police Department. End of Watch: June 19, 2016.
7. Officer Calvin Marcus McCullers, Jr., Southern Methodist University Police Department. End of Watch: July 5, 2016.
8. Sergeant Michael Joseph Smith, Dallas Police Department. End of Watch: July 7, 2016.
9. Officer Michael Leslie Krol, Dallas Police Department. End of Watch: July 7, 2016.
10. Officer Patricio Enrique Zamarripa (Zamarreepa), Dallas Police Department. End of Watch: July 7, 2016.
11. Officer Brent Alan Thompson, Dallas Area Rapid Transit Police Department. End of Watch: July 7, 2016.
12. Senior Corporal Lorne Bradley Ahrens (Lorn Bradley Aarons), Dallas Police Department. End of Watch: July 8, 2016.
13. Officer Marco Antonio Zarate (Zah-rotee), Bellaire Police Department. End of Watch: July 12, 2016.
14. Corrections officer Mari Anne Johnson, Texas Department of Criminal Justice. End of Watch: July 16, 2016.
15. Officer Justin Ryan Scherlen, Amarillo Police Department. End of Watch: August 4, 2016.
16. Officer Amir Abdul-Khaliq (kah-leek), Austin Police Department. End of Watch: September 4, 2016.
17. Deputy Sheriff Kenneth Hubert Maltby, Eastland County Sheriff's Office. End of Watch: September 7, 2016.
18. Corporal Robert Eugene Ransom, Gregg County Sheriff's Office. End of Watch: September 30, 2016.
19. Agent David Gomez, United States Border Patrol, US. End of Watch: November 16, 2016.
20. Commander Kenneth Joseph Starrs, South Texas Specialized Crimes and Narcotics Task Force. End of Watch: November 16, 2016.
21. Detective Benjamin Edward Marconi, San Antonio Police Department. End of Watch: November 20, 2016.

K9

1. K9 Ogar, Smith County Sheriff's Office. End of Watch: January 19, 2016.
2. K9 Ledger, La Salle County Sheriff's Office. End of Watch: May 29, 2016.
3. K9 Rex, San Juan Police Department. End of Watch: June 2, 2016.
4. K9 Bruno, Amarillo Police Department. End of Watch: June 12, 2016.
5. K9 Mojo, Arlington Police Department. End of Watch: July 19, 2016.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, these were real people. And as Sheriff REICHERT said earlier, these people have families.

Lastly, I would like to mention one other officer whose name I read. His name was Sergeant Stacey Baumgartner. He worked at a little bitty police department called Patton Village in Texas, right outside of Houston, and he was killed when his patrol car collided with another vehicle while he was involved in a hot pursuit.

He is survived by his wife, his son, and his daughter, Chloe. This is a photograph of Chloe taken last week in Austin, Texas, at the Texas Peace Officers Memorial Service event. This is her. It was posted by the police chief of Patton Village, Texas. It expresses the families, the humanity of their fathers and their mothers, and how we as a people need to understand the consequences when people murder our finest.

God bless the thin blue line.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Judge POE for his words. When he mentioned police officers don't do this for the money, I always considered it a calling. And I think if you talked to any police officer or deputy out on the street today, I think they would tell you that they felt called to serve, and called to serve in the uniform, and called to put their life on the line and to risk their life for others.

I was going to share the story of my partner, Sam Hicks, who was killed in 1982. He left behind five sons. He was ambushed and shot in the chest and killed instantly.

The killer was a man who was already wanted for murder. One of the hardest things I ever did—I was the only homicide detective at the scene when they captured him—was to sit in the back seat with this killer, advise him of his rights, and get him a glass of water and something to eat because he had been on the run for 3 days. I spent an hour in the back seat of that cop car with this killer, knowing that Sam's five sons no longer had a father.

Thank you for your words tonight, Judge.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Jacksonville, Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD), the second sheriff in the House.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be here this evening with my friend, Sheriff DAVE REICHERT, and all of my colleagues who stand with our law enforcement officers, their families, and their communities for this National Police Week.

It is a time where we come together as a country to recognize the sacrifices our police officers make for us every time they put on that uniform.

Last week I had the privilege of attending the Nassau County Sheriff's Office Law Enforcement Memorial Service in Florida, where we recognized those who have lost their lives in the line of duty. And in a very special way, we honored the life of Officer Eric James Oliver, who was killed in the line of duty on November 22, 2016.

Officer Oliver died doing what he loved, protecting and serving his community. Before he joined the sheriff's office, Officer Oliver served our Nation in the United States Navy. But his most important job, Mr. Speaker, was being the loving father to his 6-year-old daughter, Shelby.

Tonight I commend the many sacrifices made by each and every law enforcement officer in Florida's Fourth District, but this year we give special recognition to Officer Eric Oliver and the great loss felt by his family, his Nassau County Sheriff's Office colleagues, and our entire northeast Florida community.

Tonight I also want to honor in a special way two Department of Homeland Security officers who lost their lives in service to their country.

First, I rise to honor Special Agent Jeremy Scott McGuire. Scott served with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, assigned to the National Security Investigations Division at the Homeland Security Investigations office in New Orleans, Louisiana.

On January 25, 2016, Special Agent Scott McGuire lost his life while on special assignment in Miami, Florida. In his final assignment, he was conducting investigations to identify, disrupt, and dismantle transnational criminal enterprises and terrorist organizations that threatened the security of the United States.

He is survived by his wife, Suzy, and son, Finn. Special Agent McGuire earned an extensive list of awards and accolades in recognition of his academic accomplishments, and his investigative successes. In fact, posthumously, Scott received the HIS national award for top illicit drug trade investigator of 2016.

Special Agent McGuire left behind the greatest legacy a man can live. He was truly a man of distinction and a man of devotion to not only his work, but also to his family and friends, and he lives on as a hero.

Second, I rise to honor fallen Officer Brian Beliso, a U.S. Immigration and Customs enforcement officer assigned to the Fugitive Operations Unit at the Enforcement and Removal Operations office in San Francisco. Officer Beliso began his work with ICE in 2007. Very early in his career, Brian distinguished himself as a charismatic leader and a dedicated employee who always went above and beyond in all of his duties.

In his final assignment, Officer Beliso conducted field operations to locate at-large criminal and fugitive aliens who are in violation of our Nation's immigration laws. He was directly responsible for prosecutions of numerous criminal aliens who illegally reentered the country following their deportation.

On June 8, 2016, Officer Beliso died in the line of duty. Not only was Brian greatly respected by his colleagues and superiors, he was also known for his selfless service to his family and community. He was a beloved husband and father. He is survived by his wife, Christina, and their three children, Noah, Sophia, and Bella.

Mr. Speaker, law enforcement is a noble profession, and it is a noble profession not only because these men and women serve, but because they serve with self-sacrifice. Officer Oliver, Officer Beliso, and Special Agent McGuire laid their lives on the altar of freedom, and we must never forget them and the many other men and women who have

lost their lives so that we may experience the safety and freedoms that we enjoy today.

On behalf of a very grateful nation, we thank them for their noble service and we honor them for their duty and sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't mention two other officers. I had the great honor for 12 years of being sheriff of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office in Jacksonville, Florida.

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During my tenure, I was deeply saddened to bury two of my officers who died in the line of duty. They were Officer Scott Bell, who gave his life in service in 2007, and Officer Christopher Kane in 2008.

I say again, on behalf of a very grateful nation, we thank them for their noble service, and we honor them for their duty and sacrifice.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the sheriff for being here tonight honoring those who fell in his community and under his command. I thank him for his 40 years with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. I am proud to serve with him in Congress. We need more sheriffs in Congress, by the way.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. FERGUSON).

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the gentleman from Washington for organizing this event for us to thank the brave men and women who keep our community safe day in and day out. Like him, I have the honor and privilege of serving with Sheriff RUTHERFORD and Chief DEMINGS. It is quite an honor to be with both of them in the 115th Congress.

The men and women of law enforcement are moms and dads, sons and daughters, siblings and friends to the very people who they serve. We ask these brave men and women to uphold the law, but so often this seemingly straightforward mandate sends them into the most difficult and tragic situations that our society faces: terrible accidents, domestic disputes, and the strife that threatens the hearts of our towns and communities. Their bravery and courage is unimaginable to someone like me. The complexity of their jobs and the tolls that it takes on their lives is often underestimated.

Having a safe community offers our citizens more than just peace of mind. It offers them a place to live, grow their businesses, provide a living for their family, and to be not only economically secure but socially secure. Law enforcement officers play a very critical role in community development.

Each generation of our law enforcement community evolves as society changes and their technology and training improve. This allows them to police our communities more responsibly, effectively, and sometimes even to right wrongs of the past generation.

I want to highlight one specific example in my district, Georgia's Third District.

Nearly eight decades ago, an African-American man named Austin Callaway was lynched in the town of LaGrange, Georgia. This terrible crime has been a dark part of the town's history for a long time. Recently, law enforcement officials have taken steps to begin the reconciliation process.

LaGrange Chief Louis Dekmar partnered with the president of the county NAACP chapter, Ernest Ward, to facilitate an official apology to the Callaway family from the police force for failing to investigate the lynching nearly 77 years prior.

I commend Chief Dekmar and Mr. Ward for their actions to begin to heal this old wound. I am proud to represent this community that has engaged in the hard work of reconciliation.

Police officers like Chief Dekmar do so much more than enforce the law. They work actively every single day to bring the communities they serve together. I am so proud that there are such great examples of law enforcement in the Third District of Georgia.

Law enforcement officers do more than just keep us safe. They help our communities, they show love and compassion, they bring us together. We owe them a debt of gratitude. I am proud that there are such brave men and women willing to serve in all of our communities and hometowns. I want to extend my deep gratitude for the hard work of these brave men and women and offer a special thanks and special prayer to their families.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DESJARLAIS).

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Police Week and the courageous law enforcement officers who protect the great State of Tennessee.

This week, we have thousands of police from across the country here in Washington, D.C., to honor the valiant men and women in blue.

Among the 145 heroes who lost their lives in the line of duty in 2016, six hail from the Volunteer State. I would like to recognize Special Agent Frazier with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, Sergeant Allred with the Livingston Police Department, Deputy Sheriff Larnerd with the Jackson County Sheriff's Office, Officer Moats with the Maryville Police Department, Sergeant Smith with the Memphis Police Department, and Deputy Sheriff Sturgill with the Humphrey County Police Department. I stand today to recognize their service and extreme sacrifice.

Tennessee law enforcement officers often risk their own lives to protect the safety of others. I honor and respect these brave men and women, and I pray for them and their families.

Mr. Speaker, during National Police Week, and throughout the year, let us all remember to ''Back the Badge.''

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. KUSTOFF).

Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I thank the sheriff so much for his leadership tonight and throughout the course as we honor law enforcement and police here and across the country.

I rise today to honor the brave men and women of our police forces in the Eighth Congressional District and across the Nation.

I have got to tell you that it is challenging to find the right words to thank those who literally lay their lives on the line for others each and every day—most of the time for people who they have never met.

This past Monday, I had the incredible privilege of joining the Jackson Police Department and the Madison County Sheriff's Office at a memorial service in Jackson, Tennessee. I was moved to see not just the active and retired officers there but also the family members of those who died in the line of duty.

During the ceremony, there was a wreath for all those who have lost their lives in the line of duty in the Jackson and Madison County area. The names of those officers, sheriff's deputies, and law enforcement officials who laid their lives on the line, going back to the 1800s, were read. For some of those who died many years ago, there were no family members there. There were family members for those who died going back 60 and 70 years ago in the line of duty.

Each of those family members were given a rose that they would place in a wreath—a memorial for all those who have died in the line of duty. It was very moving to see those family members and, obviously, to hear the names of those people who have given their lives in the line of duty.

The ceremony reminded me of the daily sacrifices that our law enforcement make in order to protect and serve their communities, their State, and their country. These men and women have families, hobbies, and places of worship. They are heroes living among us who deserve our praise each and every day.

During my time as the United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, I worked closely with our police departments and law enforcement agencies to tackle violent crime. Our men and women in law enforcement were on the front lines of some of the most incredibly dangerous and sensitive situations. I feel fortunate to have seen how their tireless work saves lives and changes communities for the better.

I also want to take time to thank those in the United States Capitol Police here in Washington, D.C. They are some of the finest, sharpest men and women in the country. We can rest easier knowing they are watching closely over our Nation's capital and protecting our democracy.

This is a pivotal time for our country. We must not forget the significance of maintaining law and order. At

a time when it seems so many in our society have grown distrustful and disrespectful of law enforcement, the overwhelming majority of the people in the country respect our law enforcement. They need to know that they have our support now more than ever. Too often, their courage and selfless deeds go unnoticed and unacknowledged. Whether it is bringing violent criminals to justice, rushing to the scene of a terrible incident, or keeping constant watch over our schools and neighborhoods, our police officers serve with such distinction. We must not take their service and steady presence for granted.

I have never been more appreciative of law enforcement for all that they do to keep us safe. National Police Week is a solemn time as we remember those we have lost. We must also celebrate our active police officers and law enforcement who will continue to serve our country for future generations.

I thank the sheriff for allowing me to speak this evening on behalf of all those in law enforcement. We truly appreciate their service.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS).

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Police Week. It is also Mental Health Awareness Month. I want to thank my colleague, whom we affectionately call sheriff, who served his great State for 33 years.

I want to express my profound gratitude to the men and women in uniform and their families who serve and sacrifice so much to protect our safety.

I think we also need to talk about a way that we can repay these men and women for their sacrifice by making mental health services more available to our law enforcement officers so that they have the resources to handle so many difficult on-the-job situations that they deal with every single day.

Police officers are under constant attack, often on the job, caught literally in the crossfire of violent domestic violence disputes; violent crime; finding and recovering bodies of murder victims, some of whom are young children; targets for lone wolf shootings and attacks; injecting Narcan, the overdose reversal drug, into people who have overdosed on heroin, trying to save them.

Think about all of the different things that the men and women in uniform have to do day in and day out. For most people, just one of these experiences would be enough to cause trauma. But our police officers face these and other unthinkable situations daily, sometimes leading to significant mental health challenges for officers like suicidal thoughts, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and depression.

Fortunately, we have many law enforcement groups, including the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department and the Indiana Fraternal Order of Police, who are working to offer our officers the support and treatment they need to continue to protect themselves and our communities.

Since 2010, officers in Indianapolis have been able to receive counseling and referrals to doctors and clinicians through unique, in-house programs staffed by fellow trained officers.

To help police departments develop and implement similar programs, I have introduced, along with my good friend, a new Member of Congress from Florida, VAL DEMINGS, the former police chief of Orlando, H.R. 2228, the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act.

This bill will improve the sharing of Federal best practices by the Department of Justice, the Department of Defense, and the VA with local police departments. It will make grants available to initiate peer-mentoring pilot programs and develop training for mental health providers specific to law enforcement, study the effectiveness of crisis hotlines, and get officers mental health checkups.

If our police officers are healthy, our communities will be even safer. We owe it to all of our heroes in law enforcement across the country to protect their mental health and well-being, and I urge passage of this legislation.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR). The gentleman from Washington has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS), the former police chief of Orlando.

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Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, one of my greatest honors was serving as a police officer in Orlando for 27 years. My husband is a sheriff in Orange County, and he has been serving for 35 years in law enforcement. But today I am here to talk about how we can better take care of our law enforcement officers as they continue to take care of us.

Our law enforcement officers are called to some of the most horrific situations and run into harm's way to protect us and our families every day. Almost a year ago, officers responded to the Pulse nightclub shooting, known now as the site of the deadliest mass shooting in our Nation's history: 49 persons lost their lives that night and more were severely injured.

Imagine the scene as the officers responded. One officer said one thing he will never forget is hearing the sound of the cellphones ringing as loved ones called the victims, but, of course, the victims could not answer.

During the most dangerous and most tragic of circumstances, our law enforcement officers may appear superhuman, but they are only human, and responding to scenes like this—or any other horrific scene—no one can really prepare for that. It is just one example of what our officers face.

I believe we have a responsibility to our first responders. That is why I am very proud to cosponsor H.R. 2228, the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act of 2017, with my good friend SUSAN BROOKS from Indiana. The bill would direct the Departments of Justice, Defense, and Veterans Affairs, as you have heard, to share best practices that can help law enforcement officers in tragic situations.

I am so proud to share this legislation with my good friend and urge other colleagues within Congress to join us to make this vision a reality. Mr. Speaker, we must do everything we can to protect the men and women who keep our cities, our towns, and our communities safe.

Again, I thank the sheriff so much for his service, and I thank the gentleman for helping us to honor the men and women who are so deserving of this honor.

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chief. It is an honor to serve with the gentlewoman. I know the gentlewoman has a special quality about her now that I heard her husband was a sheriff. The gentlewoman is all thumbs up on my team, and I thank her for her sincere, thoughtful comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN) who is a former Chicago police officer.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Washington and the sheriff.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice to protect our communities.

In 2016, two brave Arizona officers died as they responded to calls: David Van Glasser, Phoenix Police Department; and Darrin Reed, Show Low Police Department, which is in my district. Both of those men left behind family and loved ones.

As a former police officer and homicide investigator, National Police Week has a special meaning to me. I have lost friends, partners, brothers, and sisters in the line of duty. I have grieved with their families during the most difficult times, and I have experienced firsthand the real sacrifices they make.

Each of the 135 officers from across the country who died in the line of duty in 2016 worked to keep our neighborhoods safe. While we can never repay the debts we owe them and their families, we will forever remember their service.

As we look to the future, it is important to highlight the work being done in cities and towns across the country to not only better protect our families, but also the lives of our law enforcement officers. In Arizona, successful community policing programs in Flagstaff, Phoenix, and countless other cities and towns have improved relationships.

I am proud to join my colleagues from both sides of the aisle on the House Law Enforcement Caucus. I look

forward to continuing the bipartisan work we are doing to identify and solve the challenges facing our law enforcement community.

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

ALLEGED RUSSIAN COLLUSION

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I will continue to join my colleagues in honoring our law enforcement officers across America, particularly in my home State, and look forward to providing that tribute in days to come. I thank my colleague, the sheriff, for his work.

I have come to the floor today, however, to again comment on the appointment of a special counsel to investigate the Russian collusion, alleged Russian collusion of the President's campaign operatives and the President as relates to the 2016 election.

Director Mueller is a well respected law enforcement leader. I look forward to his quick response. But I believe it is important for this Congress, and I ask Speaker RYAN to ensure, that the committees of jurisdiction—Oversight and Government Reform, House Judiciary Committee, and House Intelligence Committee—do their work as well. That work would include hearings on the issues before us and an impeachment inquiry to determine the facts.

I believe that we can do this together, Mr. Speaker, not as Republicans and Democrats, but as Americans. The truth must be found, and America will be better for it.

INFRASTRUCTURE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous materials on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this is Infrastructure Week in the United States, and while Hallmark may not quite yet be making cards to observe Infrastructure Week, I hope those of us here in Congress can take a moment to recognize that this is a unique opportunity to talk about the importance of the state of our Nation's infrastructure.

This is a time, as I was mentioning, really to focus on all modes of transportation and our utility systems that most of us only tend to notice when they are broken.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of broken infrastructure in our country to notice lately. In fact, even President Donald Trump has recognized that the roads, bridges, and all the other underpinnings that make our modern world possible are crumbling and need urgent attention.

So the President has vowed repeatedly, both as a candidate and as President, to invest at least $1 trillion in our infrastructure system. That was a key promise of his campaign and critical to his appeal to working class Americans, including in my home State of Pennsylvania.

But that promise is, so far, as broken as our Nation's infrastructure. Instead, 4 months into his administration, this President is laying the groundwork to shortchange American workers and manufacturers. Mr. President, it is most disappointing.

I stood Monday morning at Philadelphia International Airport. I stood with the former Governor of our State, Ed Rendell, who is part of a bipartisan group called Building America's Future. I stood with both Democratic and Republican Members of this body who happen to represent the greater Philadelphia area. I also stood with Senator COONS of Delaware, who, himself, lives not too far from the Philadelphia International Airport. We used that setting to talk about the importance of Infrastructure Week and reinvesting in our Nation's infrastructure today and for tomorrow.

I mentioned in those remarks something that I am going to mention here tonight: 100 years ago, there was no doubt that the United States of America was the leader in the world when it comes to infrastructure. Our roads, our bridges, our waterway systems, our mass transit, and our gas lines were rated number one. Today, if you seek out the report of the American Society of Civil Engineers—these are not Democrats; they are not Republicans; they are really nonpartisan; they are civil engineers—we are rated a D-plus.

The International Civil Engineers do not rate the United States of America in the top 20 when it comes to infrastructure. That should bother all of us, whether you are Democrat or Republican or Independent or nonpolitical.

I have to say, as someone who believes in this country and believes that we should always strive to be number one, not even being in the top 20 bothers me, and it is simply not good enough. It is unwise economic policy.

Part of why the 20th century became known as the American Century is because we were the number one world leader when it came to our infrastructure. How are we supposed to compete today and in the future if we are not even in the top 10 or the top 20?

Mr. Speaker, for the needs of our infrastructure and for a myriad of other issues related to this, I have cofounded the Blue Collar Caucus. I have spoken on this House floor about the need for our country's leaders to pay attention again to our blue-collar workers and our blue-collar economy.

I am so happy that, while tonight might be specifically about infrastructure and that sliver of the overall blue-collar economy, I am joined in this effort with my cofounder, the co-chairman of this caucus, MARC VEASEY of Texas. He will be speaking in a moment, as well as a few other members of our caucus, about the importance of reinvesting in our Nation's infrastructure and why that is critical to our economy.

Mr. Speaker, if we really want to put Americans back to work and put them back to work not in low-paid jobs but in good-paying jobs—family-sustaining jobs—the way to do it is to reinvest in our Nation's infrastructure. I have many other things to say on this topic that I will be saying throughout the next hour or so.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY), the co-chairman of our Blue Collar Caucus. He is someone who has been a real leader on this issue and feels just as passionately about it as I do.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from the great State of Pennsylvania for helping cofound the Blue Collar Caucus and just doing a tremendous job. As you know, the hardworking men and women of Pennsylvania, and particularly the Philadelphia area, have been so responsible for many of the things that have really made our country what it is, many of the great public works, many of the amazing museums, and many of the amazing things, bridges, just things like that that people take for granted that there was someone that built those things, there was someone that toiled possibly in the heat and in the snow, but they were able to bring home a good wage doing it. They were able to take care of their families. They were able to send their kids to college.

I love when the gentleman talks about his family and the sacrifices that the gentleman's parents made working in a blue-collar job that ultimately helped him go to one of the most prestigious universities—Notre Dame. So I just really appreciate the fact that the gentleman appreciates the hardworking men and women that really make this country great.

We need to do more for them. One of the ways that we can do more for them is to pass an infrastructure bill. I don't think that there is any doubt about that.

We know that this is Infrastructure Week. With roughly $700 billion a year that is being invested at the local, State, and Federal level, infrastructure is vitally important to our economy. We have to have good infrastructure to meet the basic needs of the American people. That may sound like quite a bit of money, but we can't spend enough

money to repair and replace our crumbling roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructure.

I listened to ELIZABETH ESTY last night, one of our colleagues from Connecticut, talk about the dangers that are involved in not investing in infrastructure and some of the deaths that tragically have occurred on American roads because of collapsing bridges and things like that. That is not what we want.

We need for the American taxpayer to have confidence that the roads that they are driving on and that the airports that they are using are up to date, that we have the best ports, that we have the best transit systems in this country, and that we have the money to keep those things world-class systems and efficient systems in our country. They have to be safe.

□ 2000

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, one out of every five miles of highway pavement in our Nation is in poor condition. That is an estimated 56,000 of the Nation's bridges that are structurally deficient. Think about the truck driver who drives every day, think about the person who makes their living on the road. Think about how many families want their loved ones to travel on safe roads. Think about all of the families who depend on their loved ones to make a living on those roads. That is how they put food on the table at the end of the week, at the end of every 2 weeks, at the end of the month, however they get their check. They need to be safe. Those families need to know that those hardworking men and women who work on those roads every day and use them to help fuel American exceptionalism, they need to know that those roads are safe.

Some estimates say that modernizing our infrastructure to meet our needs is going to require an additional $5 trillion in Federal spending over the next decade. Federal investment in infrastructure is an economic boost that can also create good-paying jobs for blue-collar workers.

I have to tell you, many were encouraged, a lot of people that I know—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—they were very encouraged when the Trump administration floated the idea of a $1 trillion infrastructure plan. But instead of presenting a detailed infrastructure plan that puts Americans back to work, the Trump administration has basically offered a plan that lacks details. It doesn't really go into how we are going to get this done.

The reports that I have seen say that the Trump plan, if you want to call it a plan, like I said, contains very few details. It contains tax incentives for private industries that make up as much as 80 percent of the cost of the bill.

Let me tell you two reasons why that is bad. It would simply enrich companies that would have built their projects anyway, and the only private investment it would encourage is for projects that contain a funding stream such as toll roads.

I have to say, if toll roads are the only choice that people have, they will maybe take them. But I know that a bipartisan group of Texans, and I saw this especially when I was in the State legislature before I came to Congress, they are really upset with toll roads. They feel we have too many of them, and they want to see the infrastructure investment that we need in this country to get our roads back up to par and to help relieve congestion.

Encouraging private investment in infrastructure is not necessarily a bad idea, but it requires the proper oversight and the selection of the right kinds of projects. I have to tell you, there is a bipartisan group that believes in that. Both the Obama administration under Secretary Foxx and the Bush Transportation Secretary, Mary Peters, they both agree that public-private partnerships are only able to address a small segment of what is needed.

Without careful attention, we risk wasting taxpayer funds by giving big tax breaks to companies on the backs of hardworking American families.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to talk some more later about job creation and about Davis-Bacon and about some other things that need to be addressed, but I want to be sure that we hear from another one of our colleagues and friends from the Rust Belt, Ms. MARCY KAPTUR who is here. So I am going to turn it back over to you so you can introduce her. When she talks about what is going on in the heartland and in Ohio, she works directly with those men and women who work in manufacturing and who work in construction. I bet you she has some things that we need to hear about dealing with infrastructure and how it can help our States and help our country.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. As my colleague was just mentioning, someone who has really been a champion on these issues for decades, someone who intellectually gets it, but also speaks on these issues not just with her head but with her heart, and now as the climate in our country has, I think, evolved on some of these issues, some people are recognizing that what she was talking about for quite a while has been proven to be correct.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) who I am honored to serve with.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman BOYLE and Congressman VEASEY for their leadership and the new energy and the innovative ideas that they bring here from their constituency on behalf of our country. It is a privilege to join you tonight and talk about the infrastructure of our country, a major infrastructure bill, and it is certainly appropriate during this infrastructure week.

The whole vital topic of investing in a national infrastructure plan and investing in those who will help to modernize America translates into good jobs, as Congressman VEASEY has talked about, and progress for America that Congressman BOYLE has talked about.

When we think about infrastructure, some people only think about roads and bridges, and we certainly need attention to those across our country. So many places throughout our Nation are in desperate need of repair. Frankly, the street I live on, there is a big sinkhole at the end of the street.

Mr. Speaker, 17 percent of the roads in Ohio, my home State, are in poor condition, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers. They estimate that the average Ohio driver pays an extra $475 a year from driving on roads in need of repair. Look no further than me. I had to pay $500 for a whole front end because of hitting a big pothole driving at home at night. So we know how much it costs.

Let me urge President Trump and the administration not to limit their thinking on an infrastructure bill. Infrastructure should be about our roads and bridges for sure, but it should go far beyond that for modernizing the Nation.

As the ranking member on the Appropriations Subcommittee for Energy and Water Development, I take very seriously America's responsibility to modernize the country for this new century.

Our energy grid desperately needs an update, and power outages across this country attest to that. Our waterways need help, too. And our drinking water infrastructure, just in Ohio it is estimated will cost $12.2 billion over the next 20 years.

As hard as it is to fathom, and I am sure the President hasn't had a chance to read the fine print on this, but the President's budget office proposed to zero out the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative which is so vital to fresh drinking water in our vast region. The President has said he wants to help the people in Flint, Michigan. He campaigned there several times. But it is not an either/or. It is both/and. You have to have funding in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to take care of the water issues confronting the Great Lakes where algal blooms get larger and larger every year due to phosphorus and nitrogen runoff.

Our waterways, our drinking water, are vital components of our national infrastructure. Over 11 million people just on Lake Erie alone, the lake that I represent, need that fresh water. The systems are very old. Some estimate in the cities, cities are losing 30 percent or more of the water distribution underground because of aging pipelines. We truly need to look both above the ground and underneath it.

Through many of the counties that I represent, there are old septic systems in place, and 40 percent or more of

them are leaking. They contribute to some of the problems that we are having in our fresh water systems. These communities need a helping hand and extra financing to help put their wastewater systems into compliance.

I have also proposed a bill for a 21st century civilian conservation corps for needed investments in our States and national parks and forests. Ohio and Michigan alone need to plant 20 million trees to replace those that have been damaged by invasive species.

I wanted to also mention, I represent, and I know Congressman BOYLE and Congressman VEASEY, we represent urban communities, and many of those communities have housing that is 100 years old. Some a little more, some a little less. Imagine if infrastructure could include weatherization so we could place new roofs on millions of homes across this country. We could train people how to do this. We could help bring up the younger generation.

Also windows and insulation. If we look at the condition of America's housing stock, particularly following the collapse of 2008, if we look at saving Americans money that they currently spend on wasting energy because they can't afford to put on a new roof, windows, or insulate their homes, we could help millions of Americans. As we help to improve America's infrastructure, I really believe housing has an important role to play in this regard, especially with energy conservation.

Honestly, as I close my remarks tonight, and I thank Congressman BOYLE and Congressman VEASEY for their leadership, Mr. Speaker, it is not only rewarding to work with them, it is fun, too.

Mr. Speaker, Americans have been waiting for us and the Federal Government to really give them a helping hand up. I know working together on a bipartisan basis, we can produce an infrastructure bill that the country has been waiting for, as Congressman BOYLE says, for decades. I know that our mayors, our county commissioners, and our Governors across the country would work hand in hand with us, and I think Americans from coast to coast would applaud what we are able to do here in order to help our country rebuild itself in this new century.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman KAPTUR.

I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, at the very beginning of my remarks that we kicked off infrastructure week on Monday morning at an event at Philadelphia International Airport. One of those Members of Congress who joined me for that event is the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. NORCROSS), someone who practices what he preaches when it comes to the issues that most concern the Blue Collar Caucus, and someone who can really speak about infrastructure from many different perspectives.

I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. NORCROSS).

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that kind introduction. It was a remarkable time sitting at the airport right there on the Delaware River and understanding how much we depend on safe, secure travel in those airports around the country.

But to both MARC and BRENDAN, thank you for the Blue Collar Caucus and bringing to light many of the issues that at times we as a nation might have forgotten, quite frankly, those who work with their hands, those who are getting up each and every morning and going to work, having a job, taking care of their family, and I think focusing on that is so important.

I am myself involved with the Building Trades Caucus, and we are talking about something that is near and dear to everybody's heart, and it is called infrastructure.

In this day and age when people are wondering about what is going on in the country, I want to talk about the ''t'' word. No, it is not Donald Trump; it is a trillion dollars, and that is the number that people have been talking about that we need for infrastructure.

Infrastructure means many things to many different people. If you are in Flint, Michigan, it is about having clean water. The pipes need to be replaced. We have a growing infrastructure that is many years old.

When we think back about one of the major components of infrastructure in this country, during the Eisenhower administration, it was building the interstate system, from north to south, from east to west, connecting coasts, connecting cities, connecting States. And that is something that has been so important to us. But apparently not important enough to keep and maintain.

I am very familiar with the systems that we have. I went to the other 4-year school; it was called an apprenticeship program, an electrical apprenticeship that I spent 4 years in. After graduating, I worked up and down the Delaware River at refineries, on bridges, and on our infrastructure. We know how important it is.

But in Congress, because of the Blue Collar Caucus and many others, we need to remember that the dignity of a job is so important. We have 211 attorneys here in Congress, but there is only one electrician. There is only one carpenter. There is only one ironworker, and there is only one painter. Diversity comes in many shapes and sizes, and our Founding Fathers understood how important that was. They were farmers, printers, attorneys, doctors, all coming together and bringing those experiences into this very House, this very floor, to remember why we are here.

Anybody who drove on a road to get here today understands what infrastructure means.

□ 2015

But somehow we haven't paid attention. We had the American Society of Civil Engineers brief us a few weeks ago to the Building Trades Caucus on the report card that they give each and every year: aviation, a D; bridges, a C-plus; ports, a C-plus; energy, a D; transit, a D. The overall report card was a D.

If I had come home with a D on my report card, I know what my parents would have done to us. But somehow having the D on the report card for the very infrastructure here in the United States has been acceptable.

Well, it is not. We are deferring this problem to the next generation when we owe them a responsibility of turning over our world to them in a little bit better shape, not worse shape.

So when we look at that investment in roads, rails, ports, airports, it does something more than just to fix the very problems that we look at each and every day. It is about a job. What better way to put America back to work than fixing our own infrastructure. Nobody does it better than the building trades who have the training programs second to none and does not use one dime of public investment. All funded privately. Fifteen different trades coming together to fix our infrastructure.

In addition to that, they do something that is really special. We all know the figure when it comes to those who put the uniform on to help protect our country is less than 1 percent. We have so many of those men and women who are coming home today, and there is a program that the Building Trades Caucus have put together called Helmets to Hardhats. Taking those who want to come home and start a career, took their helmet off and go right into an apprenticeship program, put the hardhat on. What better way to say to those veterans they are welcome home than to give them a job? But not just a job, a career.

So as we continue to have the discussions day-to-day, the ''t'' word is about trillion dollars. It is about putting back into our country the investment that it is due.

Mr. Speaker, I again want to thank my colleagues for coming here today to make sure that we remember those men and women who don't necessarily put on a suit and tie but have the dignity of going to work each day as blue-collar workers, and we are damn proud of it.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. I should have mentioned when I was introducing Mr. NORCROSS that he is the founder and the chairman of the Building Trades Caucus. When he talked about that one electrician, he was talking about himself. I understand from some of his former electrician buddies that he was a top-rated electrician. He is someone who has literally walked the walk.

It now gives me a real pleasure to introduce someone who has represented Chicago and the Chicagoland area for a number of years, someone who also gets it when it comes to the issues that most concern the Blue Collar Caucus,

and then specifically what we are addressing tonight in the Special Order, the need to reinvest in our Nation's infrastructure and put people back to work.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI).

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I want to say, first of all, it is an honor to follow Mr. NORCROSS. As Mr. BOYLE said, one of the very few in this body who is an actual member of the building and construction trades. I didn't intend to talk about this originally, but I just want to say it is very important that all of us in this Nation give more respect to the building and construction trades, and all the men and women in the trades who have built this Nation. These are great jobs that provide a good living for families, and they are building our Nation. We need to encourage more young people to go into the building and construction trades.

I used to teach college. I was a college professor, but I know we need to make sure that young people today understand what a great life they can have, what great jobs these are in the trades.

I want to thank Mr. NORCROSS for the work that he has done helping to build this Nation and now working here in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. BOYLE and Mr. VEASEY for their work on the Blue Collar Caucus. There are a lot of people in this country who think Washington has forgotten them, many blue-collar men and women who turned out in the election and I think were motivated in many ways by that feeling that they have been forgotten. Many of these are the blue-collar men and women who work so hard every day.

We are here tonight to say we have not forgotten. We understand how important you are to our Nation and the work that you do, and especially tonight to talk about how important the work you do building and repairing our infrastructure is to all of us.

There is a lot of infrastructure we have in this Nation that needs to be fixed, to be built. Ms. KAPTUR talked about many of these different areas. One of them, of course, is in drinking water and sewers. So much of it was built right after either the early part of the 20th century or after World War II, and now it is deteriorating. I hear the stories all the time from some of my municipalities back home, saying that they are afraid that the pipes are completely gone, the water right now is just running through the hole that was left from the pipes. There is so much infrastructure we need to build.

I want to focus especially tonight on transportation. I sit on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. President Trump promised that he would have a $1 trillion bill to fund infrastructure. I think it is critical that, in these days where we have so many other things that we are focused on, we don't forget—and we have not forgotten—the fact that we need to do this infrastructure bill.

Focusing on transportation, we all know we need our transportation infrastructure to get anywhere we are going. You get up in the morning, you take your kids to school, you go to work, you are going to the store, you are going to church on Sunday, anywhere you go, you need the transportation infrastructure. If it wasn't there, you couldn't get there.

So we are talking not just about roads and bridges, we are talking about public transit. Public transit systems in many of our big cities are crumbling. We know that in Chicago. We know all the problems right now from that crumbling infrastructure. Something we oftentimes don't think about is that public transit, how critical it is, how important it is. So let's remember all of that. Let's remember the sidewalks, the bike and pedestrian paths, everything that gets people to where they need to go.

Everybody knows the problems that we face. Everyone knows in their daily lives what we need to do, how much transportation infrastructure needs work. Chicago is oftentimes labeled the most congested city in America. If it is not number one, it is in the top three. We know it, but people all across the country know it. We need to do this work. If we do this work, first of all, we are putting people to work immediately building the roads, bridges, repairing the infrastructure, the rails.

We also need to talk about the locks and dams on our inland waterways, things that many of us never see because we just pass over our waterways on the road, on bridges, and don't even see the vital waterways that also serve important roles in our country. And the ports. We need to invest in all of these.

We put people to work immediately. But also what is important, besides the fact it helps us get around, helps us get to wherever we are going every day, is it also makes our economy more efficient. It makes American business more efficient. If we have an efficient transportation system in our country, American business is more efficient. And that is why so many of them, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, have been on this for a number of years, that we need to improve our transportation system so American business can thrive. And if American business thrives, more Americans get hired by businesses. Not just building the transportation infrastructure, not just working on it, but all businesses in America are more efficient, can hire more people. It makes our economy run.

This is something critical. With everything else that is going on right now—and we know what that is, and we never know what is coming day-to-day—all these other things are important that we are talking about and that we are looking at. But we cannot forget—and the American people know this—that we need to do our work here and we need to pass an infrastructure bill, including a big transportation component to that.

We are going to continue to fight for that. No matter what else is going on here, no matter what else you hear people talking about, we are here to say we need to do this. The American people know we need to do this. It helps all Americans, but especially the blue-collar Americans, the ones who have been suffering for many years in our country.

One other thing. President Trump talks about buy American. I am happy that he came out last month and said the administration is going to look at how we can improve our buy American law so that when the Federal Government buys things, they are going to buy American-made products.

But I have to say, if we want to do something immediately, I have a bill that I introduced, the Buy American Improvement Act, which closes a lot of the loopholes that exist right now in our domestic content, buy American laws. It extends buy American laws, domestic content laws to Federal spending that it is not applied to right now. For example, Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for drinking water.

It is important that we use American tax dollars to put Americans to work. It is great that the administration is looking at what can be done; but I have to say, this bill, the Buy American Improvement Act, we can get this done, get this passed, get this into law. When we pass that infrastructure bill, we will make sure Americans are being put to work with American taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank the Blue Collar Caucus and Mr. BOYLE and Mr. VEASEY for all the work that they are doing, and the most important thing is for the American people. The American people need to know that we are here fighting for them, especially those blue-collar workers who think they have been forgotten.

You have not been forgotten.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. LIPINSKI for his words, and I appreciate his membership in the Blue Collar Caucus.

In going through this entire discussion on infrastructure, because there are so many things that we could talk about as part of this, certainly I would encourage those interested in this topic to read the report of the American Society of Civil Engineers. It is an overwhelming case for why we need at least a $1 trillion infrastructure plan really making up for decades upon decades of underinvestment in our Nation's infrastructure. We could certainly talk about that and talk about many different aspects of it.

In the few minutes that we have remaining, I want to talk about its overall effect on our country. I am not talking about dollars and cents. I am not talking about in a tangible way. I

mean something that is not tangible, that you can't exactly put your fingers on; and that is the spirit of America.

Mr. Speaker, something that Americans have always been known for is our eternal optimism. So much so that if you are friends with folks in Europe and in other places, they would always gently make fun of Americans for being so optimistic, for our undeniable, unending belief in the power of the future; that tomorrow will always be better than today.

□ 2030

Yet we know, Mr. Speaker, in recent times too few Americans are feeling optimistic about our country's future. All the polls are showing that. There has been a pretty dramatic turn in just the last 20, 30 years in how Americans feel about their own personal futures and the future of this country.

Part of what leads to that, part of it is stagnant economic wages. I have talked about that at length on the floor as part of a previous Blue Collar Caucus hour. Part of that also, though, is the sense that we are not building anymore; that 100 years ago we were building, that we were launching the first airplane; that 50 years ago we were going to the Moon.

In the Eisenhower era we were building the world's best highways. But in today's day and age, we don't build anymore. That growth is happening in Asia and in other parts of the world.

So just imagine what that would do not just for the economy, not just for our infrastructure, but imagine what it would do for the spirit of America if they saw a trillion-dollar infrastructure bill take hold, if they saw our roads being rebuilt and new roads being built, if they saw the investments that we can make in our mass transit and our intercity rail.

I happen to represent a district smack dab in the middle of the Northeast corridor. I met today in my office with the chairman of The Northeast Maglev project, a project to take a technology that exists today in Japan, build it here in the United States, and make it possible that you could get from New York City to my district in Philadelphia in a half hour, that you could get from New York City to Washington, D.C., in 1 hour instead of the 3 hours that it takes today. That would have a transformative effect. No other place in the world has the maglev. Even in Japan, which has invented the technology, it is only in a small snippet.

So making sure that we can move forward in a bipartisan way, actually achieving something with Democrats and Republicans working together with this administration, we would send such a signal beyond the substance of the issue itself. I believe that we would have a dramatic effect in improving the way that the American people feel about their future and the future of our country.

Mr. Speaker, literally, over a million jobs will be created by a $1 trillion infrastructure bill. I wanted to speak about the importance of making sure that those are high-paying jobs and why the Davis-Bacon Act is linked to that, but knowing that my co-chairman will speak about this issue, I am happy to turn that over to him now to speak about that issue and others that are affected by this.

As it may be my last time speaking on this, I thank my colleagues for their passion on this issue. I appeal to the White House, to President Trump specifically: Please work with us on this issue. It is, I believe, the single best way we could unite Democrats and Republicans in the House and the Senate. We can get this done. It is something that must get done. It would put millions of Americans—that is not an exaggeration, by the way. It would put over a million Americans back to work. It is critically needed for today and tomorrow, and I appeal to this White House, even in this hyperpartisan, fractured time, to work with us on this issue and finally, 4 months after taking office, unveil your infrastructure plan.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY), my colleague and co-chairman.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative BOYLE. I really appreciate the points he has made tonight, just so timely. It is so important that we talk about those things during Infrastructure Week and the Blue Collar Caucus and the role that the caucus is playing in pointing out a lot of these things that need to be talked about.

Again, when you talk about the infrastructure bill, if we had a legitimate trillion-dollar infrastructure program and it were enacted, we could put the United States back on a prerecession job growth path and, some people say, create close to 11 million jobs.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, infrastructure spending today—that is what we spend on infrastructure spending right now—is directly responsible for about 15.5 million direct and indirect U.S. jobs, and you are talking about average salaries of $68,000 per year. That is 28 percent above the U.S. median income. We know that infrastructure jobs pay well. There is absolutely no doubt about that.

Investment in infrastructure also adds more indirect jobs in manufacturing, logistics, transportation, and an increasing demand for steel, glass, concrete; and all those things get the job growth growing in America.

According to Georgetown University, more than half of the new infrastructure jobs will go to high school graduates and even high school dropouts. So many of our young men who find themselves dropping out end up in the incarceration system, but we know that, if we can find high school dropouts a job and they are not left behind due to economic changes and economic factors, we can help those young men.

According to that same analysis, jobs and occupations that are expected to grow with greater infrastructure investment pay more than typical wages for high school graduates. Engineering and management jobs, which usually require higher levels of education, also offer good opportunities. However, even construction and transportation jobs associated with infrastructure projects provide higher earnings than an average job for high school graduates. The Blue Collar Caucus advocates not only more jobs but, again, better quality jobs.

I used to hear people talk around the dinner table or the domino table or the card table when I was growing up. People wanted to know where the good jobs were, how can you get on at a good job. That is what I am talking about: how we are going to create more of those.

The Davis-Bacon Act, you heard Representative BOYLE talk a little bit about that earlier, about how important that is. We should be troubled. When you start talking about good jobs, good-paying jobs, we should be troubled that congressional Republicans have taken steps to repeal the Davis-Bacon Act.

I want to talk a little bit about the Davis-Bacon Act, but first I want to talk about why the Davis-Bacon Act is important. A lot of times in Washington, D.C., we start talking about these terms. People at the Chamber of Commerce, they know what Davis-Bacon is, but maybe the average person has no idea what Davis-Bacon is.

People don't come up to me at the Dollar Store in Fort Worth and say: Hey, Congressman VEASEY, hey, MARC, what are we going to do to protect Davis-Bacon? But people do stop me at the Dollar Store and say: Hey, MARC, what are we going to do about putting some more money in our pockets?

That is what Davis-Bacon is all about. That is where the Republicans fail the American worker.

The Davis-Bacon Act requires that certain contractors and subcontractors responsible for carrying out Federal contracts pay their laborers and mechanics the prevailing wages for the area. That is what I am talking about when I say putting more money in your pocket, putting more food on the table, being able to make that light bill, being able to make that car bill, being able to make that truck payment.

I want to sell more cars. We have a General Motors plant in Arlington, Texas, that makes some very good SUVs, good-paying union jobs, good union-made SUVs, American-made SUVs, and you don't get that with lower rates. You get that with the prevailing wage rates that Republicans are trying to do away with. That is what everybody needs to understand.

Ensuring workers are paid a fair wage is extremely important, especially for blue-collar workers. Prevailing wage laws provide protections for both construction workers and the taxpayers. They ensure that all contractors bidding on public construction

projects will pay family-supporting wages and that they also ensure projects will be built to the highest standards by skilled, safe, and well-trained construction workers.

Numerous studies have shown, contrary to the claims of corporate interests, that Davis-Bacon wage protections do not increase taxpayers' costs. That is the one thing that you are going to hear from Republicans and downtown business interest people when they want to keep income inequality growing in this country instead of trying to stop income inequality is that Davis-Bacon drives up wages because it allows families to put more food on their table. I think that is a doggone shame.

Fairly paid craftsmen added value to our investments in infrastructure, and Davis-Bacon must continue to be included in any infrastructure plan. Repeal of Davis-Bacon would decrease the quality of blue-collar jobs, and that is a loss that we cannot afford. A repeal of Davis-Bacon would decrease the amount of money that you take home every week or that you take home every 2 weeks, however often you get that check, however often you look for that direct deposit so you can make those bills. If we repeal Davis-Bacon, you will not be making those bills as easy as you were before.

You need to let your Republican Member of Congress know that you want to bring more money home, that you want these prevailing wages, that you do not want to lose these, that it would be absolutely devastating for your family.

Another area that Blue Collar Caucus has talked about, another area that we are going to continue to talk about and that Congress should press forward on in great speed is the Buy America provisions. They have to be in any infrastructure package that we pass.

Buy America generally requires that projects carried out by State and local governments use U.S.-made iron and steel and that they also require domestic production and assembly of other manufactured goods be made right here in the good old USA.

These projects—again, mainly highways, public transportation, aviation—are vitally important to our economy, and ensuring that these projects are made with quality American-made goods means that we get better value and that we put our own people to work. All of this means more and better jobs for hardworking Americans out there.

As we set about rebuilding America's infrastructure, we have to make sure that we are building an economy that works for everyone and not just the corporate interests in this country because, again, we have to do something about income inequality in this country. It is very real. Productivity is up. People's paychecks are stagnant. That is why people still feel the economic pinch and the economic pain, because they see the growth, they see the technology, but they don't see their paychecks getting any fatter—but they do feel themselves struggling more and more and more. We have got to change that.

I would like to again thank Representative BOYLE just for being an advocate for the hardworking citizens in the Philadelphia area in his district, just for being a voice on this, and other Members of Congress that came out tonight—Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. LIPINSKI, and others—because we know that this is important.

We have to keep talking about this. We cannot continue to let the American worker fail. We cannot continue to let the American worker's dollar not grow while we see our economy grow and while we see new technology and fat cats getting rich, seeing corporate America getting rich but the average, everyday American just continues to fall further and further behind. It has to end. It has to end.

Congress needs to work together to do something about that. I am glad that the Democratic Party in the United States House of Representatives is taking the lead on this issue.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A Bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 867. An act to provide support for law enforcement agency efforts to protect the mental health and well-being of law enforcement officers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 43 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, May 18, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

1359. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter authorizing 26 officers to wear the insignia of the grade of major general or brigadier general, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 777(b)(3)(B); Public Law 104-106, Sec. 503(a)(1) (as added by Public Law 108-136, Sec. 509(a)(3)); (117 Stat. 1458); to the Committee on Armed Services.

1360. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Indirect Food Additives: Polymers [Docket No.: FDA-2016-F-1805] received May 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1361. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Food Labeling; Nutrition Labeling of Standard Menu Items in Restaurants and Similar Retail Food Establishments; Extension of Compliance Date; Request for Comments [Docket No.: FDA-2011-F-0172] (RIN: 0910-ZA48) received May 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1362. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting the Army's proposed Letter of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of India, Transmittal No. 17-08, pursuant to Sec. 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1363. A letter from the President and Chief Executive Officer, Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka, transmitting the 2016 management report of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka, pursuant to the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1364. A letter from the Chairperson, Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, transmitting the Council's FY 2016 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3242); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1365. A letter from the Acting Chairman, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting the Administration's Inspector General's semi-annual report for October 1, 2016, through March 31, 2017, pursuant to Sec. 5(b) of the Inspector General Act of 1978; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1366. A letter from the Acting Officer, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's FY 2016 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3242); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1367. A letter from the Chief, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the Secretary (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's resolution of interim final rule — Extension of Pharmacy Copayments for Medications (RIN: 2900-AP87) received May 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

1368. A letter from the Chief, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the Secretary (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Payment or Reimbursement for Certain Medical Expenses for Camp Lejeune Family Members (RIN: 2900-AO79) received May 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. CHAFFETZ: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. H.R. 195. A bill to

amend title 44, United States Code, to restrict the distribution of free printed copies of the Federal Register to Members of Congress and other officers and employees of the United States, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–128, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. CHAFFETZ: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. H.R. 2227. A bill to modernize Government information technology, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–129, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GOODLATTE: Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 2266. A bill to amend title 28 of the United States Code to authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges; and for other purposes (Rept. 115–130). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on House Administration discharged from further consideration H.R. 195 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Appropriations discharged from further consideration H.R. 2227 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. SCOTT of Virginia (for himself, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. NORCROSS, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. KIHUEN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. NADLER, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. EVANS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. KAPTUR, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. VELA, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. RUSH, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. POCAN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. COHEN, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. CLAY, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. MOORE, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT):

H.R. 2475. A bill to provide for the long-term improvement of public school facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. BLACK (for herself, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, and Ms. BASS):

H.R. 2476. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a refundable adoption tax credit; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COURTNEY (for himself, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. AGUILAR, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. BEYER, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CORREA, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Mr. EVANS, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HOYER, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. RASKIN, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SABLAN, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SOTO, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. TITUS, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. TSONGAS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. WELCH, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. POCAN, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. NEAL, Mr. KILMER, Mr. KIND, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. KEATING, Ms. KAPTUR, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. BASS, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. MOORE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. HECK, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. WALZ, and Mr. SARBANES):

H.R. 2477. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. COLLINS of Georgia (for himself, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. SMITH of Texas, and Mr. LAMALFA):

H.R. 2478. A bill to amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to clarify the distance requirement with respect to determining the eligibility of veterans to receive hospital care and medical services from non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. PALLONE (for himself, Mr. RUSH, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. WELCH, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. TONKO, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. RUIZ, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. PETERS):

H.R. 2479. A bill to rebuild and modernize the Nation's infrastructure to expand access to broadband internet, rehabilitate drinking water infrastructure, modernize the electric grid and energy supply infrastructure, redevelop brownfields, strengthen health care infrastructure, create jobs, protect public health and the environment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Science, Space, and Technology, Transportation and Infrastructure, Ways and Means, and Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. HARTZLER:

H.R. 2480. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to include an additional permissible use of amounts provided as grants under the Byrne JAG program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California (for himself and Mr. FARENTHOLD):

H.R. 2481. A bill to establish the Vulnerability Equities Review Board, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. STEFANIK (for herself, Mr. POCAN, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Mr. DESAULNIER):

H.R. 2482. A bill to extend temporarily the Federal Perkins Loan program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. HUDSON (for himself and Mr. BUCSHON):

H.R. 2483. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for the establishment of a third-party quality system assessment program for devices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. NOEM (for herself, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. ROYCE of California, and Mr. ENGEL):

H.R. 2484. A bill to ensure that the United States promotes the meaningful participation of women in mediation and negotiation processes seeking to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York (for himself and Mr. FASO):

H.R. 2485. A bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to evaluate and consider revising regulations relating to emergency medical equipment requirements for passenger aircraft; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. SCOTT of Virginia (for himself, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. SABLAN, and Ms. ADAMS):

H.R. 2486. A bill to amend title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to restore the right to individual civil actions in cases involving disparate impact, and for other purposes; to

the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself and Mrs. DAVIS of California):

H.R. 2487. A bill to amend title 37, United States Code, to provide for the housing treatment of members of the Armed Forces and their spouses and dependents undergoing a permanent change of station in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ (for herself, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. SOTO, Mr. DUFFY, and Mrs. MURPHY of Florida):

H.R. 2488. A bill to provide for small business concerns located in Puerto Rico, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ:

H.R. 2489. A bill to amend the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 and the Small Business Act to include small business investment companies in the Small Business Innovation Research Program and the Small Business Technology Transfer Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. BERA:

H.R. 2490. A bill to amend title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 in order to increase the amount of financial support available for working students; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CICILLINE (for himself, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. KEATING, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KILMER, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. LEE, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. NADLER, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. PETERS, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. RUSH, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. SIRES, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. TITUS, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. WALZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. YARMUTH):

H.R. 2491. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to foreign persons responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 2492. A bill to amend chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code, to require the forfeiture of worker's compensation benefits under such chapter by any individual who, while serving as a Member of Congress, converted campaign funds to personal use in violation of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 or engaged in other offenses relating to the abuse of the public trust, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DEUTCH (for himself, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. POCAN, Mr. SARBANES, and Mr. CICILLINE):

H.R. 2493. A bill to amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to require individuals nominated or appointed to Senate-confirmed positions or to positions of a confidential or policymaking character to disclose certain types of contributions made or solicited by, or on behalf of, the individuals; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. ESPAILLAT (for himself, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H.R. 2494. A bill to amend the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 to require the President to place any financial conflicts of interest into a blind trust, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. FRANKEL of Florida (for herself, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Mr. WELCH):

H.R. 2495. A bill to protect consumers from deceptive practices with respect to online booking of hotel reservations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. FRANKS of Arizona:

H.R. 2496. A bill to prohibit assessed or voluntary contributions to the United Nations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. FRANKS of Arizona:

H.R. 2497. A bill to prohibit assistance for the Palestinian Authority and the West Bank and Gaza, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. GOTTHEIMER (for himself, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. TSONGAS, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. PETERS, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. POLIS, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. DELBENE, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. LEE, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. HIMES, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. POCAN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. CROWLEY, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. MENG, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. CRIST, and Mr. COFFMAN):

H.R. 2498. A bill to amend the Equal Credit Opportunity Act to prohibit discrimination on account of sexual orientation or gender identity when extending credit; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. GRIJALVA (for himself, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. LEE, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. NADLER, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. POLIS, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. MCNERNEY, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. NORTON, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. COHEN, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. MOORE, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ):

H.R. 2499. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to require States to meet standards for the location and operation of polling places used in elections for Federal office, including a standard requiring States to ensure that no individual waits for longer than one hour to cast a vote at a polling place, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. HUFFMAN:

H.R. 2500. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit high-level Federal employees from participating in any matter substantially related to the appointee's former employment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia (for himself, Mr. TURNER, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts):

H.R. 2501. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with the option of providing medical assistance at a residential pediatric recovery center to infants under 1 year of age with neonatal abstinence syndrome and their families; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 2502. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude certain compensation received by public safety officers and their dependents from gross income; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PAULSEN (for himself, Mr. KIND, and Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California):

H.R. 2503. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to promote health care technology innovation and access to medical devices and services for which patients choose to self-pay under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. PINGREE (for herself and Mr. POLIQUIN):

H.R. 2504. A bill to ensure fair treatment in licensing requirements for the export of certain echinoderms; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Ms. SÁNCHEZ):

H.R. 2505. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a nonrefundable credit for working family caregivers; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio (for himself and Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 2506. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to award grants to nonprofit veterans service organizations to upgrade the community facilities of such organizations; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SARBANES (for himself and Mr. MCNERNEY):

H.R. 2507. A bill to provide for a technology demonstration program related to the modernization of the electric grid; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space,

and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SERRANO (for himself, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. SOTO, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. KILMER, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. EVANS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. NADLER, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Mr. SMITH of Washington):

H.R. 2508. A bill to provide discretionary authority to an immigration judge to determine that an alien parent of a United States citizen child should not be ordered removed, deported, or excluded from the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TONKO (for himself, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. CONYERS):

H.R. 2509. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to eliminate the 190-day lifetime limit on inpatient psychiatric hospital services under the Medicare Program; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BUDD:

H. Res. 329. A resolution recognizing the significance of the hundredth anniversary of the soda Cheerwine; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DAVIDSON:

H. Res. 330. A resolution authorizing and directing certain authorizing committees to review laws within their jurisdiction and submit to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform changes in such laws necessary to eliminate excessive Executive Branch discretion in the application of those laws; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mr. FRANKS of Arizona:

H. Res. 331. A resolution expressing the policy of the United States with respect to a two-state solution between the State of Israel and the Palestinian people; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. LEE (for herself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. POCAN, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. KILMER, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. KEATING, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. HANABUSA, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. HIMES, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. SIRES, Mr. ENGEL, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. POLIS, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. RASKIN, and Ms. JAYAPAL):

H. Res. 332. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico (for herself and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico):

H. Res. 333. A resolution expressing support for States to adopt ''Racheal's Law''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MCNERNEY (for himself and Mr. LATTA):

H. Res. 334. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding grid modernization; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WALZ (for himself, Mr. MAST, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. JONES, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. EVANS, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Mr. PETERS, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, and Mr. PANETTA):

H. Res. 335. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Purple Heart Recognition Day; to the Committee on Armed Services.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. SCOTT of Virginia:

H.R. 2475.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mrs. BLACK:

H.R. 2476.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I of the Constitution and its subsequent amendments and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. COURTNEY:

H.R. 2477.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. COLLINS of Georgia:

H.R. 2478.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 14: To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of our Land and Naval Forces.

By Mr. PALLONE:

H.R. 2479.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof. [Page H1244]

By Mrs. HARTZLER:

H.R. 2480.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clauses 1 and 3 of Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California:

H.R. 2481.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Ms. STEFANIK:

H.R. 2482.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. HUDSON:

H.R. 2483.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mrs. NOEM:

H.R. 2484.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 2485.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Sec. 8

By Mr. SCOTT of Virginia:

H.R. 2486.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 2487.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8; and Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution of the United States of America

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ:

H.R. 2488.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

The Congress shall have Power to . . . provide for the . . . general Welfare of the United States; . . .

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ:

H.R. 2489.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

The Congress shall have Power * * * To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. BERA:

H.R. 2490.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution

By Mr. CICILLINE:

H.R. 2491.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 2492.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 6, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. DEUTCH:

H.R. 2493.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. ESPAILLAT:

H.R. 2494.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article One of the United States Constitution, section 8, clause 18:

The Congress shall have Power—To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof

or

Article One of the United States Constitution, Section 8, Clause 3:

The Congress shall have Power—To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes;

By Ms. FRANKEL of Florida:

H.R. 2495.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 and 18 of the U.S. Constitution, respectively giving Congess the authority to regulate interstate commerce and to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying into execution the powers of Congress.

By Mr. FRANKS of Arizona:

H.R. 2496.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1. The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States

By Mr. FRANKS of Arizona:

H.R. 2497.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1. The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States

By Mr. GOTTHEIMER:

H.R. 2498.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. GRIJALVA:

H.R. 2499.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Const. art. I, §§1 and 8.

By Mr. HUFFMAN:

H.R. 2500.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or office thereof.

By Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia:

H.R. 2501.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 2502.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. PAULSEN:

H.R. 2503.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8, Congress shall have the power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.

By Ms. PINGREE:

H.R. 2504.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 ofthe U.S. Constitution

By Mr. REED:

H.R. 2505.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the U.S. Constitution and the 16th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio:

H.R. 2506.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 Section 8 of Article 1 ofthe United States Constitution

By Mr. SARBANES:

H.R. 2507.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8.

By Mr. SERRANO:

H.R. 2508.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 4, which states that Congress shall have the power ''to Establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization,'' and Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, which states that Congress shall have the power ''to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations.''

By Mr. TONKO:

H.R. 2509.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 60: Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 77: Mr. MEADOWS.

H.R. 83: Mr. ROKITA.

H.R. 91: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.

H.R. 100: Ms. ADAMS.

H.R. 106: Mrs. DINGELL.

H.R. 108: Mr. VARGAS.

H.R. 154: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and Mr. WEBER of Texas.

H.R. 179: Ms. ESTY of Connecticut.

H.R. 203: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 214: Mrs. RADEWAGEN.

H.R. 227: Mr. BUCHANAN.

H.R. 299: Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. KIHUEN, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. STIVERS, and Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 305: Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 314: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.

H.R. 367: Mr. LUCAS.

H.R. 389: Mrs. TORRES.

H.R. 400: Mr. ROKITA.

H.R. 414: Mrs. TORRES.

H.R. 429: Mr. ROKITA.

H.R. 468: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 490: Mr. HUNTER, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. MOOLENAAR, and Mr. SHIMKUS.

H.R. 568: Ms. LEE.

H.R. 613: Mr. LAMALFA.

H.R. 619: Mr. LATTA, Mr. ROKITA, and Mr. KIND.

H.R. 632: Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 638: Mr. CÁRDENAS and Mrs. DAVIS of California.

H.R. 672: Mr. LEVIN, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. BACON.

H.R. 681: Mr. GAETZ, Mr. ARRINGTON, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mr. GOWDY.

H.R. 721: Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky and Mr. TIPTON.

H.R. 747: Mr. KNIGHT.

H.R. 750: Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 807: Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mr. PERRY, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. MCSALLY, and Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 812: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 813: Mr. CORREA, Mr. NORCROSS, and Mr. LAWSON of Florida.

H.R. 816: Mr. CARTWRIGHT and Mr. PANETTA.

H.R. 821: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 828: Mrs. TORRES.

H.R. 849: Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. BUDD, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota, and Mr. MOOLENAAR.

H.R. 851: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.

H.R. 856: Mr. NORCROSS.

H.R. 866: Mr. BROWN of Maryland.

H.R. 916: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 924: Mr. LUETKEMEYER.

H.R. 927: Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 952: Mr. LAWSON of Florida and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 968: Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H.R. 980: Mr. QUIGLEY.

H.R. 1000: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 1017: Mr. KNIGHT, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. SHIMKUS, and Mr. BYRNE.

H.R. 1046: Ms. DEGETTE.

H.R. 1057: Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida, Mr. FLORES, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 1069: Ms. BARRAGÁN.

H.R. 1090: Mr. KNIGHT.

H.R. 1098: Mr. SWALWELL of California and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.

H.R. 1116: Mr. GALLAGHER.

H.R. 1130: Mr. MARSHALL.

H.R. 1148: Mr. MARSHALL and Mr. PAULSEN.

H.R. 1156: Mr. BARR and Ms. CHENEY.

H.R. 1164: Mr. BRAT and Mr. RUSSELL.

H.R. 1185: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 1186: Mr. MCGOVERN and Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 1200: Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. LOUDERMILK, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 1212: Mr. KING of New York, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Ms. PINGREE, and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 1231: Mr. BILIRAKIS.

H.R. 1235: Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. POSEY, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. ROSS, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. TIPTON, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. HILL, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. REED, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. YODER, Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. OLSON, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Mr. HUIZENGA.

H.R. 1253: Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 1267: Mr. ROKITA, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, and Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 1296: Mr. SMITH of Missouri.

H.R. 1300: Mr. CRIST.

H.R. 1318: Mr. PETERS and Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 1334: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona and Mr. LOUDERMILK.

H.R. 1339: Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.

H.R. 1361: Mrs. COMSTOCK, Ms. TITUS, Mr. SUOZZI, and Mr. BILIRAKIS.

H.R. 1405: Mr. ESPAILLAT and Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 1406: Mr. KILMER, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. ROSS, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. KIHUEN, Mr. DESAULNIER, and Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 1409: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. COFFMAN, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. YODER, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and Mr. KELLY of Mississippi.

H.R. 1422: Mr. ROKITA and Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

H.R. 1432: Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 1443: Ms. KAPTUR.

H.R. 1456: Mr. ROUZER, Mr. DESAULNIER, and Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H.R. 1460: Mr. BRAT.

H.R. 1486: Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 1491: Mr. KNIGHT.

H.R. 1498: Mr. HECK.

H.R. 1528: Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 1539: Ms. CLARKE of New York and Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H.R. 1545: Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mrs. WALORSKI, and Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1555: Mr. YOHO and Mr. LABRADOR.
H.R. 1565: Mr. RENACCI.
H.R. 1566: Mr. CASTRO of Texas.
H.R. 1606: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 1626: Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. CRAWFORD, and Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 1652: Ms. LOFGREN,
H.R. 1673: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 1697: Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H.R. 1698: Mr. HARPER, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H.R. 1699: Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 1711: Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER.
H.R. 1734: Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 1759: Mr. CARTWRIGHT and Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.
H.R. 1772: Ms. STEFANIK and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
H.R. 1777: Mr. BRAT, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH, and Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.
H.R. 1793: Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 1811: Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. WOMACK, Ms. CHENEY, Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota, and Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 1815: Ms. MENG.
H.R. 1838: Mr. MCNERNEY and Mr. WESTERMAN.
H.R. 1876: Mr. WENSTRUP and Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 1904: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1920: Mr. SESSIONS and Mr. CARTER of Georgia.
H.R. 1928: Mr. KHANNA, Mr. DEUTCH, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. LANCE, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mrs. COMSTOCK.
H.R. 1939: Mr. TIPTON.
H.R. 1953: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.
H.R. 1955: Ms. STEFANIK.
H.R. 1957: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. DENT, and Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 1968: Ms. HANABUSA, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. BERGMAN, and Mr. BACON.
H.R. 1972: Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania and Mr. RUTHERFORD.
H.R. 1993: Ms. MOORE and Mr. TURNER.
H.R. 1997: Mr. SHIMKUS.
H.R. 1999: Mr. ROKITA.
H.R. 2004: Mr. PALAZZO and Mr. ISSA.
H.R. 2022: Mr. RUTHERFORD.
H.R. 2023: Mr. OLSON and Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 2029: Mr. BARTON.
H.R. 2040: Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 2043: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 2051: Mr. STIVERS, Mr. SCHRADER, and Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 2062: Mr. BYRNE and Mr. SCHNEIDER.
H.R. 2063: Mr. DEUTCH.
H.R. 2079: Mrs. RADEWAGEN.
H.R. 2090: Mr. LAMALFA.
H.R. 2107: Mr. ABRAHAM.
H.R. 2133: Mr. HULTGREN and Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota.
H.R. 2142: Mrs. COMSTOCK.
H.R. 2151: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.
H.R. 2155: Mr. BYRNE.
H.R. 2170: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida and Mr. GIBBS.
H.R. 2200: Mr. MEEHAN and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.
H.R. 2223: Mr. CAPUANO and Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 2225: Mr. JONES, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. LANCE, Mr. HARPER, Mr. KNIGHT, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. UPTON, Mr. FARENTHOLD, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 2226: Mr. ROSS.
H.R. 2230: Mr. ROKITA.
H.R. 2245: Mr. FOSTER and Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 2262: Ms. PLASKETT.
H.R. 2268: Ms. STEFANIK.
H.R. 2272: Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER and Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 2319: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.
H.R. 2327: Ms. TENNEY, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. MARINO, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mr. KIHUEN, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. OLSON, Mr. CHABOT, and Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 2353: Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 2358: Mr. BEYER, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. COOK, and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 2359: Mr. TIPTON.
H.R. 2386: Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 2395: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 2410: Mr. BUTTERFIELD.
H.R. 2421: Mr. DENT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. DINGELL, and Ms. ESTY of Connecticut.
H.R. 2428: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. LEE, and Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 2431: Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 2432: Ms. STEFANIK.
H.R. 2450: Mr. ROYCE of California and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 2460: Mr. ROUZER and Mr. MULLIN.
H.J. Res. 51: Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. BUDD, and Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota.
H. Con. Res. 8: Mr. ROUZER and Mr. CORREA.
H. Res. 15: Mr. KILMER.
H. Res. 30: Mr. MARCHANT, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. TAKANO, Mrs. LOWEY, and Mr. KENNEDY.
H. Res. 31: Mr. CRIST and Mr. PANETTA.
H. Res. 69: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H. Res. 128: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER and Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H. Res. 161: Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. JOYCE of Ohio.
H. Res. 165: Ms. PINGREE.
H. Res. 220: Mr. NUNES.
H. Res. 259: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.
H. Res. 279: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. KILMER, and Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H. Res. 285: Mr. CUMMINGS.
H. Res. 320: Mr. KATKO.

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Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2017 No. 85

Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God and God alone, we praise You that You give power to the weak, and to those who have no might You increase their strength. Increase the stamina of our lawmakers when their hearts are overwhelmed by challenges.

May they look to You, the fountain of every blessing, to enable them to solve our national problems with wisdom and faithfulness. May they not be afraid or dismayed, always placing their trust in You. Lord, inspire them to remember that Your plans stand firm, as Your purposes prevail through all generations. Instruct them in the way they should go as You give them Your peace.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

NOMINATION OF RACHEL BRAND

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate voted to confirm Jeffrey Rosen as the Deputy Secretary of Transportation. In a couple of hours, we will take a cloture vote to advance another well-qualified nominee, Rachel Brand, to serve as the Associate Attorney General.

Rachel Brand's impressive background includes experience clerking for Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, and she has already been confirmed by the Senate twice before. She is ''extraordinarily talented,'' as Chairman GRASSLEY noted at her hearing, and ''dedicated to the full and even-handed enforcement of our laws.''

Ms. Brand also has the support of a bipartisan group of former senior officials at the Justice Department, including Jamie Gorelick and Seth Waxman, who, in a recent letter on her behalf, cited her ''stellar reputation for . . . integrity, legal skills, and respect for the law.''

As they pointed out, Ms. Brand's extensive private and public sector experience would serve her well as the Associate Attorney General. They also noted she would be a ''trusted leader in the Department.'' I look forward to advancing her nomination later this morning.

TAX REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, as I outlined last week, during the Obama years, the American people struggled with an economy that failed to meet its potential. It had the slowest recovery since World War II, the middle class losing its historic status as the majority in our country, too many out of a job and looking for work, too many giving up after years of fruitless searching, too many fortunate just to have a paycheck but not one large enough to keep pace with ever-rising health costs and energy bills. This is the Obama legacy on the economy.

Over 8 long years of failed leftwing policies on everything from regulations to taxes, a Democratic administration put on a virtual clinic in how not to get an economy moving again. No wonder the American people opted for a pro-growth direction in November.

Ever since, this Republican Congress has been working to get our economy moving again and spur job creation. Rather than bury our economy in an avalanche of redtape, like the last administration, it is time for a new direction on regulations—smarter and pro-growth. Already, we have taken action to kick-start those efforts, like passing important legislation to provide relief from Obama-era midnight regulations.

Rather than make our Tax Code more complex like the last administration, we think it is time for a new direction on taxes—simpler and pro-jobs. Passing tax reform legislation would mark a major achievement in bringing us closer to that goal. This Republican Congress and this administration made it a priority from the very start. Over the years, many of our Democratic friends have also expressed the view that we need tax reform.

For years, it has been clear that we should help American workers by reforming our outdated and convoluted tax system, which currently discourages investment here in America and deters companies from growing, creating jobs, and increasing wages.

For years, it has been clear that we should remove a huge drag on job creation by reforming our overly complex and punitive tax system, which currently undercuts employers that want to expand with new investments, jobs, wages, and employee benefits.

For years, it has been clear we should make taxes simpler and lower for both businesses and individuals; that we should strive for a tax code that works for American families and for American businesses, rather than working against them. This year, we finally have the perfect opportunity to achieve that goal. Rather than engage in blind opposition for its own sake on yet another issue, I hope Democrats will instead take the kind of constructive approach we saw the last time our country enacted comprehensive tax reform. Back then, both parties recognized the

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

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need to address the burden and growing complexity of our Tax Code, and they came together to actually do something about it. Republicans and Democrats worked side by side and across the aisle to move that tax legislation. It was a big win for both parties, for Ronald Reagan and the Republicans, for Tip O'Neill and the Democrats.

Now it is once again time we do something about the issue, and I would hope our Democratic colleagues will once again work on a bipartisan basis toward that end. This has been a growing problem for a number of years now. The American people deserve a tax system that allows them to keep more of their hard-earned money, that empowers them to invest in their futures, and actually makes it easier to succeed rather than harder.

We have to get this accomplished because Americans have waited long enough for an economy that finally lives up to its potential and finally allows them to realize theirs as well.

I appreciate the House under Speaker RYAN's leadership for the role it is playing in these efforts. That work continues now with a Ways and Means Committee hearing dedicated to tax reform tomorrow and more to follow in coming days.

I also appreciate the good work of Members in both the House and the Senate, particularly the Senate Finance Committee under Chairman HATCH, who has been leading our discussions. For years, the chairman has been hard at work with fellow Finance Committee members on both sides of the aisle on options for tax reform, and I am confident Senator HATCH will continue to lead the way on these efforts in the days and months ahead.

The task before us is certainly a significant one, but I am confident we are up to the challenge because we know how important it is for us to get this done, and we know how long overdue this is as well.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Brand nomination, which the clerk will report.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon will be equally divided in the usual form.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS FOR SENATOR TILLIS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I just heard that our friend and colleague from North Carolina has collapsed during a race in DC and is receiving medical attention. Until we hear further news, our hearts will be in our mouths, hoping for the best. Our thoughts and prayers, as a Senate family, are with the junior Senator from North Carolina and his family.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. President, on a different subject, the events of the last 2 weeks have shaken my confidence in this administration's competence and credibility. There has been revelation after revelation, allegation after allegation of misconduct on the part of the President and his team. In the past 2 days, it has reached new heights.

The President, according to reports in the Washington Post and the New York Times, may have divulged classified information to a known adversary and actively tried to quash an investigation of a close political ally.

From the President's own words, we already know that the Russia investigation was on his mind when he fired Mr. Comey. We now know it may not have been the first time the President has taken an action to impede an active investigation of his campaign or associates, if the reports in the New York Times are true.

Concerns about our national security, the rule of law, the independence of our Nation's highest law enforcement agencies are mounting in this land. The stated explanations for these events from the White House have been porous, shifting, and all too often contradictory.

The country is being tested in unprecedented ways. What is now required are the facts and impartial investigations into these very serious matters. The White House should make available to the Intelligence Committees the transcripts and any related summaries of the Oval Office meeting between President Trump and the Russian Foreign Minister and Ambassador. We can then assess exactly what was said and understand the consequences of any intelligence that was shared with the Russians.

On the topic of Mr. Comey, if the President has tapes of his conversation with Mr. Comey, we ought to be able to review those tapes as well to see if the President pressured the FBI Director to shut down an active investigation. The Times reported that Mr. Comey kept contemporaneous memos of his conversation with the President, and Mr. Comey has a reputation for accuracy in those memos. Those memos should also be provided to the congressional Intelligence and Judiciary Committees, and Mr. Comey should testify before those committees in public. Indeed, providing the Congress the tapes and memos may be the only way for this administration to credibly make a case to a justifiably skeptical American public about its version of the story reported by the New York Times. The President says what Comey said was wrong. Prove it. It is easy to prove it, as long as there are tapes or transcripts of what happened. If the President is right, he will have no problem releasing memos, tapes, or transcripts that corroborate his story. But if he fails to release them, the American public will justifiably tend to side with Mr. Comey, not what the President had to say, particularly in light of so much backtracking, backsliding, and factual fabrication in this White House.

Finally, the events of this past week only heighten the need for a special prosecutor who is truly independent to run the Department of Justice's investigation into potential collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. The American people must have faith in the integrity and impartiality of this investigation. We have learned, if the reporting is accurate, that the President is willing to directly interfere with an active investigation. Whether or not it breaks the law is not the point here. The point is, he was trying to interfere with an investigation. How can anyone trust someone in the President's chain of command, someone who the President has appointed, after those actions? The only way out is a special prosecutor. It is the right thing to do.

We know the President is willing to fire an FBI Director because of this investigation, in his own words. It makes all the sense in the world to have a special prosecutor who can be fired only for cause to lead the Russia investigation. That would help protect the integrity of the investigation by insulating it from a White House, which at the very minimum, is overreaching.

Given the circumstances, these requests are reasonable. They are modest. I hope—I really pray—that my friends on the other side of the aisle will see that now is the time to put party considerations aside and do what is right for our country. I know that several of my colleagues—Senators from Maine, Tennessee, Arizona—have expressed concerns. A few have gone further and endorsed some of the actions I have mentioned. It is a good first step, but it is not enough. In the past 24 hours, there has been more movement among Republicans in the House than here in the Senate. The Senate, by its traditions, should be leading this effort, not following. More of my Republican friends should join the Senators from Maine, Tennessee, and Arizona in speaking out about these events first but, far more importantly, helping us get to the bottom of them in an impartial, trusted, and respected way.

To my friends on the other side of the aisle: America needs you; America

needs you now. America needs you to help pressure the Deputy Attorney General to name a special prosecutor to compel this White House to turn over the transcripts and tapes to Congress, to demonstrate that the Congress the American people elected, Democrats and Republicans, can come together to do the right thing when it matters most. I repeat to all of my colleagues: History is watching.

This is not a casual or usual time. As great as the desire would be to repeal ObamaCare or do tax reform, the very faith in the institutions of government now are being tested. They have been tested in the past. This is not the first time in American history they have been tested, but in the past, there have been people who rose above party, rose above an immediate interest to defend the needs of the Republic. Is it going to happen now?

History will judge on whether this Congress and these Senators have been able to do what so many Senators before us, Democrats and Republicans, have done in the past: Put country above party. Whether we have decided to act as an appropriate check and balance as the Founders intended or whether we will let this continue, history will judge us all. Whether we decide to act in the way that is appropriate, history will judge us. Whether, in this moment of trial, the Senate is able to rise above partisanship and achieve statesmanship, again, history will judge us.

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. SCHUMER. 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. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time during the quorum call be charged equally to both sides.

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

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

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

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, more than 3 million Illinoisans—about 20 percent of the people in my State—currently depend on Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program for healthcare. That is one out of five people in my State who need these programs to have basic health insurance for themselves and their children.

This includes 300,000 Illinois seniors and people with disabilities, 650,000 who were recently added as part of the Affordable Care Act. It also includes 1.5 million children. Half of all the kids in Illinois are enrolled in Medicaid and the CHIP program, which in Illinois is called ALL Kids.

Nationwide, the Medicaid Program helps pay for two out of three seniors in their nursing homes. It pays for about half of all children born in this country. It is the primary payer of all mental health and opioid addiction treatment. It provides healthcare to 25 percent of people in rural communities. It pays for special education in nearly half of all school districts and provides critical support for veterans with chronic conditions.

What does the House of Representatives Affordable Care Act repeal do to the programs I have just described? It ends the expansion of Medicaid. It would eliminate coverage for 650,000 people in the State of Illinois. Think about that. We had seven of our Republican Congressmen vote for a program that will eliminate health insurance under Medicaid for 650,000 people in my State and cut $840 billion in Federal Medicaid funding. Well, if they are going to cut this money for Medicaid funding, what are they going to do with it? The House knew exactly what to do with it: They give it back in tax breaks to the wealthiest people in America. Is there justice in that decision? Is it too much to ask that those of us who are better off in life pay a little more in taxes so that those who are struggling have basic healthcare? I don't think so, but those who voted for the Republican House plan do. The bill cuts healthcare for struggling families, women, seniors, and children in order to give a tax break to the wealthiest people in America.

Illinois would lose $40 billion over the next decade, and 3 million people would be at risk of losing their care. Absolutely no one believes Illinois is going to magically come up with $40 billion to fill this Medicaid shortfall. I doubt many other States will be able to either. With funding cuts this dramatic, even Illinois's Republican Governor spoke out against the House action repealing the Affordable Care Act. He said it is going to force us to make significant changes in healthcare in Illinois. He would have to decide who gets healthcare and who doesn't. He would have to decide whether healthcare services are just too expensive to cover.

Hospitals, too, would be devastated by the proposed Medicaid cuts. I was born and raised in downstate Illinois. It doesn't look at all like the city of Chicago. I am proud to represent that city. I enjoyed being there and being a part of it. I grew up in smalltown America, and the congressional district I represented basically was smaller cities—no more than 100,000 population at the time—with a lot of smaller towns. I can't tell you the pride those communities take in downstate Illinois in their hospitals. Some of those hospitals are a lifeline—the only source of healthcare for miles around. They are great employers. They bring in medical specialists who are paid good salaries by local standards.

The Illinois Hospital Association is dead-set against what the House Republicans did in passing their repeal of the Affordable Care Act. They have told us that Illinois stands to lose up to 60,000 healthcare jobs because of that vote in the U.S. House of Representatives. Of course, that means that for many of the people who count on these rural hospitals, even inner city hospitals in Chicago, those services are going to be curtailed and denied.

When I sit down with people like Ed Curtis, who is the president of Memorial Medical Center in Springfield and speaks for Illinois hospital administrators across the State—he tells me the devastating impact it will have when Medicaid coverage is eliminated and sick people still show up for care. They will be taken care of; their expenses will be shifted to other people. That is the way it used to be before the Affordable Care Act, before Medicaid expanded and gave these individuals in low-income situations basic health insurance.

Why would Republicans in the House of Representatives want to have such a devastating negative impact on Medicaid? So they can give tax cuts to wealthy people? That, to me, is inexplicable.

The Illinois Hospital Association speaks across our State for those who really care about those great institutions, but they are not alone in opposing this bill. The Illinois Nurses Association opposes it, as do the Illinois pediatricians and the Illinois Medical Society. Why does every medical advocacy group in Illinois oppose this bill, this so-called Republican reform of our healthcare system? Because they know it moves in the wrong direction. It eliminates healthcare coverage instead of expanding it. It makes healthcare too expensive and out of reach for people who are not lucky enough to have it at work and not wealthy enough to buy it on their own. It moves in the wrong direction. It is not a solution to any problem; it is a new and even worse problem than the ones we faced in the past.

Remember when Candidate Donald Trump tweeted in May of 2015: ''I was the first and only potential GOP candidate to state there would be no cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid''? Then he tweeted in July of 2015—''The Republicans who want to cut Social Security and Medicaid are wrong,'' said Candidate Trump. He was right, but now he supports this bill which dramatically cuts Medicaid coverage across America.

What is going to happen to the elderly in nursing homes who, despite all their Social Security payments and despite all of their Medicaid reimbursement, still don't have enough resources for the basic care they need to stay alive? When they cut back on that Medicaid coverage, what happens to them? What do their families do to make up the difference? Reach into their savings? Bring mom home from the nursing home in the hopes that they can take care of her in their own home? Those are choices no family should face and no family need face.

I hope the Senate will show the courage and leadership on a bipartisan basis to say no to this terrible bill that passed the U.S. House of Representatives just 2 weeks ago. We need to put together a bill that expands the coverage of health insurance, gives people more peace of mind; a bill that addresses some of the built-in challenges we had with the Affordable Care Act, which is far from perfect. There are things we can do to improve it.

We need to do something about the cost of pharmaceutical drugs. The current law doesn't really affect that. They are out of control at this point.

Secondly, I think we ought to offer a public option. There ought to be a Medicare-type program available across the United States for those who wish it. Medicare enjoys a very positive reputation in America for good reason. Most Americans would feel honored and happy to be protected by a Medicare-type program.

We also need to go to those premiums that are too high and ask why. In many cases, there are individuals who are buying health insurance from very narrow pools of people who are older and sicker. We need to expand that pool so it is real insurance, and we can bring those premiums down. There are ways to do that.

There are many things we can do with reforming the Affordable Care Act, but what the House of Representatives did, what some want to do, is just repeal it and walk away. It would be devastating to the women in America who rely on Medicaid to pay for their delivery expenses, as well as prenatal and postnatal care. It would be devastating to seniors who are in nursing homes and are dependent on Medicaid supplements and for those who are disabled with chronic conditions and have to turn to Medicaid just to make sure they can maintain their lifestyle and still be productive, happy, and safe. These are the elements and these are the costs we would have to charge if we are not careful.

Wouldn't it be great, wouldn't it be terrific, wouldn't it be a headliner to say that Democrats and Republicans came together in the U.S. Senate to make the Affordable Care Act better, to make sure there was more accessible, affordable, quality coverage for more Americans? I think that is why we were elected, and I hope we can achieve that goal.

Mr. President, before I yield, I ask unanimous consent that the time during quorum calls until 12 noon today be charged equally to both sides.

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

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

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

YEMEN

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, colleagues, I am very pleased to be joined on the floor today by Senator YOUNG. We are both members of the Foreign Relations Committee, and both have an interest in Middle East security. We have joined together on the floor today to give remarks and perhaps have a short colloquy about a humanitarian crisis that is unfolding before our eyes in the Middle East.

Today, inside the country of Yemen—a country that, frankly, not a lot of our constituents give much thought to—every 10 minutes a child under the age of 5 is dying due to preventable causes. Today, 18 million Yemeni civilians—two thirds of the entire population of this country—cannot survive without humanitarian or protection support, and 7 million of those are on what we would call a starvation diet, which means that on a daily basis they don't know where their next meal is coming from. They don't have enough food to eat in order to remain healthy. Three million have already fled their homes because of the violence that has been caused by a civil war—that both Senator YOUNG and I will talk about—inside their country and the humanitarian catastrophe that has resulted from that civil war.

This is one of four current famines that exists in the world today. But I would argue that this particular humanitarian crisis is in some ways the most relevant to the discussions we will have here in the Senate because the United States is participating in the military campaign that is, in fact, causing in part this humanitarian crisis.

The United States is an active participant with a Saudi-led military campaign seeking to regain control of Yemen from a group called the Houthis, who overran the capital and now control large portions of the country.

We, of course, are allies of Saudi Arabia. The President will be visiting Saudi Arabia very soon to solidify that alliance. But it is time we started asking some really hard questions about the conduct of the Saudi campaign inside Yemen and whether we are, in fact, helping to create a humanitarian catastrophe on the grounds that is impossible to defend on moral grounds but also is hard to defend based on national security grounds as well.

Let's be honest about what is happening here. The Saudis are deliberately trying to create a famine inside Yemen in order to essentially starve the Yemenis to the negotiating table. Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman said:

> Time is on our side. Being patient is in our interest. We have the supplies and we have the logistics and high morale. The enemy does not have supplies and funds and is impatient. Time is on our side and we will exploit the time to serve our interests.

What are the Saudis doing to try to exploit this question of time and supplies? First, they are coming directly after the main port city, which brings 70 percent of food into Yemen and about 80 percent of all of the oil. That port city is called Hodeidah.

Senator YOUNG has been very good in meetings to draw issue with what is believed to be deliberate targeting by the Saudis of the cranes and infrastructure in this port which allow for the supplies to come off of boats and move into these desperately, desperately needy areas of the country.

Second, they are requiring an additional screening process for this humanitarian aid above and beyond the one the United Nations has put into place. The United Nations is vetting supply ships coming in to Hodeidah to make sure there is really food and aid on these ships, not weapons, and it is working. But the Saudis are putting an additional process on top that is adding up to a month from the time the aid gets off the ship and into the country. Between that and the military campaign targeting the port and its infrastructure, this has essentially resulted in an effective blockade being put in and around Hodeidah, such that humanitarian support cannot effectively get into the country. But that is just the beginning.

The Saudi bombing campaign has deliberately targeted roads and bridges throughout the country, many of them in and around north Yemen. There are reports that the bombers have engaged in something called double tapping, which is where you hit a humanitarian—a civilian—asset. You wait until the workers come to try to address that first strike, and then you hit it a second time to take out the civilians who have responded to the emergency. This isn't just my opinion of the situation. Representations have been made by multiple aid organizations on the ground, and, more importantly, by U.S. officials who have been embedded with the coalition.

This is a quote from Dafna Rand, the former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State who was in charge of the Saudi coalition portfolio at State:

> In 2015, the U.S. Government offered technical training on cyber, ballistic missiles, border security, counterterrorism, and maritime security, [and] the precision guided munitions were transferred in 2015 on the hopes that they would enable better and more precise targeting by the coalition of the targets

itself. [But instead,] what we have seen since is not an improvement in the targeting, and the issue itself is the target selection. It is not the precision of the target itself, but it is the choice of targets and adherence to the no-strike list.

That is a really important statement, a really important sentence, because what is happening is that the United States is telling the coalition: What are the civilian targets you should stay away from, so the humanitarian aid can move into the country? The coalition is deliberately ignoring that advice. It is not a matter of mistakes being made on the ground, though there have been mistakes. It is also a matter of a no-strike list being ignored.

I mention that this is not just about the millions and millions of Yemenis who are starving today because of this civil war. It is also a question of whether this is accruing to the U.S. national security interests. Again, I am speaking just for myself on this matter.

We are allies of the Saudis, and there is no doubt that an Iranian proxy state inside Yemen presents a threat to the Saudi State. There is no doubt that Houthis have been launching attacks into Saudi Arabia. This is a real security threat for our allies. But we do have to acknowledge that there are other players that exist inside Yemen today. It is not just the Houthis and those Yemeni forces supported by the Saudis. There is also al-Qaida—a branch of al-Qaida we know well because it has traditionally been the piece of al-Qaida that has the most advanced threats to the U.S. homeland—and ISIS, which is growing inside Yemen. They have taken advantage of this civil war to fill in the ungovernable spaces.

Recently, with the help of the UAE, we have begun to hit back against al-Qaida and ISIS inside Yemen. But for a portion of time, they controlled a sizeable amount of territory and revenue inside that country. ISIS is growing as well.

As a group of Yemeni Americans told me in my office about a year ago, to Yemenis the bombing campaign is not perceived as a Saudi bombing campaign; it is seen as a U.S. bombing campaign or, at the very least, a U.S.-Saudi bombing campaign.

So when responsibility inside Yemen is allotted and attributed for this starvation campaign, it is placed upon the United States, as well as on Saudi Arabia. We have to think about what that means, given the fact that there is the potential for millions of Yemenis to be radicalized in a place with very sophisticated radical infrastructure. This is a real national security concern for the United States.

I think it is time for us to draw a hard line with this coalition and say that we will not continue to support it if there is not a real commitment made to change the way the targeting happens and to make sure that relief supplies can flow into that country to try to address this unfolding famine and humanitarian catastrophe. We can be allies with the Saudis. We can be military allies with the Saudis. But they have to understand and their partners need to understand that this humanitarian nightmare inside Yemen is both immoral—to participate in a campaign that perpetuates that kind of humanitarian crisis—but it also, in the end, doesn't benefit the long-term security of the United States or our partners in the coalition.

So we come down to the floor today to try to explain to our colleagues what is happening on the ground and to see if there is a bipartisan way for us to have a policy that brings significant relief to the suffering of the Yemeni people and strengthens our national security in the region.

With that, I notice Senator YOUNG is going to say a few words, and then I think we will engage in a colloquy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senator MURPHY to discuss the importance of this humanitarian crisis in Yemen. As he so cogently emphasized, this is, at once, a humanitarian crisis and also a security crisis in the region and beyond.

I am a new member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and I have to say that I have quickly come to admire Senator MURPHY for his forceful advocacy of our values of universal human rights and of American international leadership. So I commend him for his leadership on this issue in particular.

I share many of the concerns articulated by Senator MURPHY with regard to the situation in Yemen and the Saudi-led coalition there in that country. Before getting into the specific situation in Yemen, however, I think it is important to step back and look at the big picture.

The world currently confronts humanitarian crises of a magnitude we haven't seen in many, many years. Parts of Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen are all in famine or prefamine stages. According to the United Nations, 20 million people are at risk of starvation within the next few months in these four countries.

The Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross appeared before our Senate Foreign Relations Committee just weeks ago, and he called the crises ''one of the most critical humanitarian issues to face mankind since the end of the Second World War.'' He warned that ''we are at the brink of a humanitarian mega-crisis unprecedented in recent history.''

Each of these crises are unique. They have their unique man-made causes. But in each case, the crises are preventable. They have been exacerbated by war and restrictions on humanitarian access. Now, they are complicated. The situation in Yemen is certainly a complicated one. But the United Nations calls the situation in Yemen the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. According to their Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Yemen has almost 19 million people in need of humanitarian or protection assistance, including approximately 10 million who require immediate assistance to save their lives or to sustain their lives.

This is an urgent matter, which is why I am so glad we have the leadership of Senator MURPHY on this matter and some of my other colleagues on various fronts. This is why I led a 10–Member letter to Secretary Tillerson on March 23 calling for a diplomatic surge to address the political obstacles preventing the delivery of humanitarian aid. I note that Senator MURPHY joined me on that letter, which I personally hand-delivered to Secretary Tillerson. It is also why I raised the issue with Ambassador Haley in New York City. It is why I introduced a resolution on April 5 calling for the very same thing. Senators CARDIN, BOOZMAN, COONS, GARDNER, and RUBIO joined that resolution.

Throughout this process, rather than just studying the problem, I—working with my colleagues—have tried to focus on tangible steps we can take to save lives and address this very troubling national security situation. For that reason, on April 27, joined by Senator MURPHY and several other colleagues, I sent a letter to the incoming Saudi Ambassador. Noting the important security partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia's essential role as a regional leader and an ally and a partner, I asked Riyadh to consider five specific steps related to Yemen that would prevent thousands or even millions of additional people from starving there.

There is no doubt that the Houthis and the Iranians bear a very large portion of the blame for this whole situation. I asked our ally Saudi Arabia to take these steps because the United States has a valuable security relationship with Saudi Arabia and because we can oppose Iran's activities in Yemen while ending unnecessary delays in the delivery of desperately needed humanitarian assistance. These two goals are not mutually exclusive.

I didn't receive a satisfactory response, so I subsequently raised these issues with the Saudi Foreign Minister in a meeting on Capitol Hill. In that meeting, I cited the fact—confirmed again by the administration within the last week—that the Saudi-led coalition continues to impose significant delays on the delivery of humanitarian aid to the port of Hodeidah on the Red Sea. Again, this is important because the port of Hodeidah processes roughly 70 to 80 percent of Yemen's food and other critical imports. I mentioned to the Foreign Minister the U.S.-funded cranes for the port of Hodeidah that would dramatically improve the ability to offload humanitarian supplies at that port. I expressed concerns to the

Foreign Minister about the humanitarian impact of an attack on the port of Hodeidah. Yet, as the suffering of the Yemeni people continues and even worsens, these issues regretfully remain unresolved.

According to the administration—confirmed again this morning—the Saudi-led coalition continues to be responsible for an average of 16 days of additional delays to humanitarian shipments into the port of Hodeidah after vessels are cleared by the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen. Think about it. Your children are starving to death. Perhaps your entire village is starving to death. And you have a delay of an additional 16 days in humanitarian shipments. Think of the impact that has on security in the region as desperate people are forced to take desperate measures to associate themselves with bad actors in the area. It is certainly troubling to me.

For that reason, I have decided to cosponsor Senator MURPHY's legislation, S.J. Res. 40. Before the United States can transfer air-to-ground munitions to Saudi Arabia, the legislation requires the President of the United States to make a number of certifications. One of those includes a certification that Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners are making demonstrable efforts to facilitate the flow of critical humanitarian aid and commercial goods. I don't believe the President could credibly make that assertion until the Saudis take some of the steps I have called for.

As President Trump prepares his visit to Saudi Arabia, I urge him to raise these critical issues with the Saudi Government. I urge our President to emphasize that these are humanitarian and national security issues that are priorities of the American people. I urge the administration to ask the Saudi Government to take the following concrete actions: First, renounce any intention to conduct a military operation against the port of Hodeidah; second, redouble efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution; third, end any delays to the delivery of humanitarian aid caused by the Saudi-led coalition; and fourth, permit the delivery of much needed U.S. funded cranes to the port of Hodeidah that would permit the quicker delivery of food and medicine.

I have said it before: With more than 10 million Yemenis requiring immediate humanitarian assistance, there is no time to waste. I stand ready to work with our Saudi partners to fight Iran's malign influence and to take these specific steps to begin to address the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Yemen.

I again thank Senator MURPHY for his leadership and for the opportunity to join him on the floor today. I look forward to working together again in the future.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Indiana. I think he walked through his thoughtful approach to this issue, which has led him to cosponsor this resolution placing these very commonsense conditions upon the transfer of further munitions.

I might ask him a question. In his list of steps he has asked the Saudis to take—I have joined him in that letter, as have many of our colleagues—amongst them is a commitment to not take military action against the port of Hodeidah.

We both met with the Foreign Minister, who talked about the need to use increased military pressure inside Yemen backed by U.S. participation in the coalition to try to draw the Houthis to the table. We have both expressed reservations about the effectiveness of that tactic, and we have something to say about it because none of this can occur without U.S. military support.

Can the Senator talk a little bit about our joint fears or his personal fears about a major new campaign on this port that brings in so much of this aid and how, in the end, that really doesn't further the goals of the coalition, the United States being amongst the partners?

Mr. YOUNG. It is a critical question, and it is one I have been asking so many stakeholders involved in this issue. No one has presented to me persuasive evidence indicating that a Saudi-led attack on the port would result in defeat of the Houthis-Saleh bloc. No one has presented to me evidence that I find compelling that that action would even force the Houthis bloc to the negotiating table.

The onus ought to be on those who might take a military action—which would exacerbate the worst humanitarian crisis in the world—to present that evidence. I have asked for it. I haven't received it.

I think it is just as likely that an attack would push the Houthis, as I alluded to earlier, into further alignment with and dependence on the Iranians, with whom they are allied. That is the exact opposite of what we are trying to accomplish in the region, as the Iranians continue to spread their influence and their terroristic activities across the Middle East. So this is not in the interests, as I see it, based on all the evidence available, of the United States, UAE, or Saudi Arabia, and it would result in both a humanitarian catastrophe and exacerbate the national security situation.

Mr. MURPHY. I thank Senator YOUNG for making it clear in his prepared remarks that while we are focusing on the Saudis because we are part of this coalition, the Houthis do not have clean hands here either. Part of the reason humanitarian supplies have a hard time getting to places that need them is because there are roadblocks put up by the Houthis as well. And there is this known connection between the Houthis and the Iranians—sometimes, in my opinion, a bit overplayed by some foreign policy thinkers, but it is real.

To your second point in answer to my question, Senator YOUNG, that is, to my mind, also a likely result of a deepening of the military conflict. If the Houthis had nowhere to turn, then the calculation might be different, but because the Iranians are there as a support system to lean on, a continued military campaign against Hodeidah would push them deeper into a corner and just broaden the scope of the military conflict.

There ultimately has to be a political resolution here, and by simply upping the military ante and continuing the humanitarian crisis, you get further away from that political negotiating table rather than closer to it.

Mr. YOUNG. Indeed. The last thing we want to do is to exacerbate a situation where we already have 10 million desperate people on the cusp of starvation or passing away on account of a lack of medical supplies.

We need assistance here, which is why it is important for the President to elevate the importance of this issue in his conversation with the Saudis during his coming visit, and I believe he will do so. I believe he will do so because the international community, NGOs, understand the importance of this. Many at the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development have spoken about what a serious crisis this is. And we don't want to be shortsighted with respect to what a bombing of the port could catalyze.

We also need to recognize that there are other players in the Saudi coalition that can be constructive as well. The Emirates, I would note, have shown a willingness to be helpful on a couple of different fronts.

I had the opportunity to visit with the Crown Prince yesterday and received his assurance that he would seek to resolve without delay a situation related to the forward stationing of inspectors in his country so that they can pre-inspect cargo before it goes into the port of Hodeidah, and that would expedite the process and help mitigate a lot of the suffering that is occurring. Also, I had an opportunity to discuss with the Crown Prince this issue of four cranes. U.S. taxpayers paid for these cranes. I mentioned them in my prepared remarks earlier. And I have heard from the Crown Prince; he made a commitment there as well. So I am grateful for his commitment, and I look forwarding to following up with the UAE Government on this front. They are good allies to the United States.

Mr. MURPHY. It goes without saying that it is in no one's interests in the region for this civil war to continue at its current pace. So this is an important moment at the beginning of a new administration, with a pending arms sale on the table with the Saudis, to

use that transition moment and the leverage that exists with this new proposal for major arms sales to the Saudis to make sure we get this right.

I think there is nothing political about this. We all join together in trying to abate humanitarian crises and famines around the world, and we all want a policy that is going to bring an end to this civil war because, as I said, it is just as important to remember that the most immediate enemies of the United States—those terrorist groups who want to do harm to us—find their most fertile ground today inside Yemen. The sooner we can put an end to this civil war and be able to have a central government structure that spreads across the scope of the country, the quicker we can all be focused on trying to eliminate the ISIS and al-Qaida presence—AQAP, as we refer to them—in Yemen from that battlespace.

I say to Senator YOUNG, I don't know if you have closing remarks, but I appreciate your willingness to speak up and your leadership here, and I hope we can get others on both sides of the aisle to propose and support these commonsense conditions upon this new military transfer so that we can get the situation right inside Yemen.

Mr. YOUNG. I say to the Senator, let me end by reiterating my gratitude to you, of course, for your exceptional leadership, for walking points on this issue, and I look forward to our continued work together.

I thank all our colleagues who have engaged on this matter. And I, of course, before the U.S. Senate here, want to invite others to engage in this. If they have questions with respect to this matter, which is critical for our national security, I know they can reach out to the Senator or me, and it is imperative that we send a respectful message to the administration that we think this is something that needs to be addressed in the near term.

I have nothing else to say.

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

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

(The remarks of Mr. KENNEDY pertaining to the introduction of S. 1150 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, if I came to you today and told you we had received a job application from somebody to work for the government, and you and I looked at her job application and we saw she had graduated from Harvard Law School, if we looked at her job application and we saw she had worked for a Presidential campaign, if we saw she had practiced law in the private sector, if we noticed from her resume that she had actually worked as a counsel, as a lawyer, in the White House, if we saw she had clerked for a Supreme Court Justice, Justice Anthony Kennedy—each Justice of the United States, I think, has four law clerks every year. I don't know how many tens of thousands of lawyers and law students apply, but to be chosen is one of the highest honors you can receive as a young lawyer. If I told you this person who applied for a job in government used to work at the Department of Justice as Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Office of Legal Policy, if I told you she had also worked for one of the most prestigious law firms in the country, Wilmer, Cutler, Pickering, Hale & Dorr—I remember them as Wilmer, Cutler, but they have changed their name since then. They have been around forever. If I told you all of those things, I think any reasonable person would say: Wow, let's hire her here immediately. Let's do it before she finds another position. Well, that person has applied for a job in government. Her name is Rachel Brand. She has been nominated by President Trump to be Associate Attorney General.

That is a position that is vitally important within the Department of Justice. It is responsible for the oversight of the Civil Division, the Civil Rights Division, the Office on Violence Against Women, and many other important components of the Department of Justice. I think no matter what political party you happen to be in or whatever your political persuasion, we can all agree that right now it is particularly important not only to have a Department of Justice that is fully staffed but to have it fully staffed with extraordinarily qualified people whom every American can look at and go: Wow, is she qualified. I am so pleased she is working for the Federal Government and my tax dollars are being well spent.

Ms. Brand has broad experience, as I indicated, both within the Department of Justice and in the private sector. As I indicated—I am going to say it again—she worked for Justice Anthony Kennedy of the U.S. Supreme Court. Wow, what an honor. She has served as Assistant Attorney General under President George Bush. She has been in private practice, as I indicated. She has been chief counsel for Regulatory Litigation in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and I could go on and on and on.

I fully support Ms. Brand's nomination. I sit on the Judiciary Committee, the committee of the Senate that vetted her. She is highly respected, she is whip smart, she is well qualified, and she is fully prepared to hit the ground running. That is exactly what we need.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Rachel L. Brand, of Iowa, to be Associate Attorney General, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted ''yea''.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 130 Ex.]

YEAS—51

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

NAYS—47

Baldwin	Donnelly	King
Bennet	Duckworth	Klobuchar
Blumenthal	Durbin	Leahy
Booker	Feinstein	Manchin
Brown	Franken	Markey
Cantwell	Gillibrand	McCaskill
Cardin	Harris	Menendez
Carper	Hassan	Merkley
Casey	Heinrich	Murphy
Coons	Heitkamp	Murray
Cortez Masto	Kaine	Nelson

Peters	Shaheen	Warner
Reed	Stabenow	Warren
Sanders	Tester	Whitehouse
Schatz	Udall	Wyden
Schumer	Van Hollen	

NOT VOTING—2

Hirono	Tillis

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 47.

The motion is agreed to.

The majority whip is recognized.

AMERICAN LAW ENFORCEMENT HEROES ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I know people outside the beltway think nothing ever happens here—and certainly that nothing ever happens on a bipartisan basis—but they would be wrong on both counts.

Last night, the Senate passed a piece of bipartisan legislation called the American Law Enforcement Heroes Act. It is a great example of legislation everyone can agree on and get behind.

The main goal is to connect veterans—those who have served in our military and have a passion for public service—to opportunities in State and local law enforcement. When we think about it, who better than our retiring military personnel who are accustomed to wearing one uniform, moving then into the civilian law enforcement world wearing another uniform but continuing their legacy of public service. That way, those who have voluntarily put themselves in harm's way to keep the peace and promote American interests abroad and defend our homeland can continue the record of public service at home.

For veterans, that can mean a rewarding job in law enforcement. Through their training, experience, and sacrifice, there is no doubt that our veterans are equipped with valuable skills to keep our communities safe. By prioritizing existing Federal funds for State and local law enforcement agencies to hire veterans, we can better serve them as they transition into civilian life. We know that can be a challenging transition, but that is exactly what the American Law Enforcement Heroes Act that we passed yesterday does.

For State and local law enforcement groups, that means they can attract the best qualified men and women who are eager to serve their country in a new way. So this is really a win-win.

Fortunately, this legislation builds on the good work already underway in places like my home State of Texas. Over the last several months, I have had a chance to visit cities and counties all over the State that are actively recruiting veterans to serve as police officers or sheriffs. That includes law enforcement leaders from San Antonio to Houston, to Fort Worth. As my colleagues may recall, following the terrible killing of five police officers and shooting of seven more in Dallas, Police Chief David Brown made an appeal for people who were protesting or otherwise concerned about the law enforcement agencies involved to sign up and join them—to be a part of the solution and not just protesting the problem.

Thankfully, we have set a tremendous example in Texas of how hiring veterans to serve as law enforcement officers benefits all of our communities. I am glad this bill will follow their inspiration and help communities across the country hire more veterans.

I said before that this legislation is something everyone can agree on, in a polarized political environment, and that is of course evident by the broad bipartisan support it has received.

Let me express my gratitude to the senior Senator from Minnesota, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, as well as the senior Senators from Connecticut and California—all Democratic colleagues—for being my original cosponsors on the bill. I am also grateful to my Republican colleagues, including Senator CRUZ, as well as the junior Senator from North Carolina and the senior Senators from Iowa, Utah, and Nevada, for working with us on this legislation.

My friend Congressman WILL HURD on the House side introduced the same bill there, and I am hopeful it will pass sometime today so we can get this to the President's desk for his signature without delay.

I would also note that the American Law Enforcement Heroes Act is backed by major law enforcement groups across the country, including the Fraternal Order of Police, the Major County Sheriffs of America, the Major City Chiefs Association, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I have been grateful for their help along the way toward passage of this bill.

I look forward to this bill becoming a law—hopefully, this week, as we continue to celebrate Police Week honoring the service of the men and women in blue who keep our communities safe—and making it clear that this Congress cares not only about our veterans but also our law enforcement officials as well.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, just last Wednesday, I spoke on the Senate floor about the extremely suspicious timing of the firing of FBI Director James Comey by President Trump.

In the past few days, President Trump's actions, statements, and changing of his story on the Comey firing has only strengthened the case for the appointment of a special counsel to investigate ties and collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russian Government in the 2016 Presidential election. Congress should also establish an independent commission to get to the bottom of the Russian interference in our election. In addition, there needs to be an independent investigation into whether Mr. Trump abused power and played a role in obstruction of justice in terms of the ongoing criminal investigation at the Department of Justice.

Let me start by going back to the beginning of the Trump administration. According to news reports, on January 27, Mr. Trump invited Mr. Comey to a private dinner with him at the White House. Mr. Trump then asked Mr. Comey for his ''loyalty,'' but Mr. Comey only promised to provide his ''honesty'' or his ''honest loyalty.'' Why did the President allegedly ask Director Comey for his loyalty?

On March 4, President Trump tweeted without evidence that ''how low has President Obama gone to tap my phones during the very sacred election process. This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!'' On March 20, Mr. Comey testified he has ''no information'' to support Mr. Trump's claim. Why did the President try to distract the public's attention by blaming President Obama for the Russia investigation?

On April 12, in an interview, Mr. Trump said Mr. Comey ''saved Hillary Clinton'' during the campaign and said that ''it's not too late'' to remove Mr. Comey. Mr. Trump continued: ''But, you know, I have confidence in him. We'll see what happens, you know, it's going to be interesting.''

What changed between Mr. Trump having confidence in Mr. Comey in April and firing him in May?

On May 3, Mr. Comey testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee and said ''it makes me mildly nauseous to think that we might have had some impact on the election.''

On May 8, former Acting Attorney General Sally Yates and former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper both testified before the Judiciary Committee.

Ms. Yates testified about the warnings she gave to White House Counsel Don McGahn about how National Security Adviser Michael Flynn was compromised by the Russians and was lying to White House staff and the Vice President about his conversations and interactions with the Russians.

On May 9, we witnessed a series of three letters, all dated that day. The first letter was from Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein to Attorney General Jeff Sessions. The Rosenstein letter concludes that the FBI's reputation and credibility had suffered ''substantial damage'' due to Mr. Comey's actions during the Clinton email investigation. Notably, Rosenstein's memo does not explicitly recommend Mr. Comey's removal. That same day, Attorney General Sessions, who has recused himself from the Russia-Trump campaign investigation, sent the Rosenstein letter to the White House, along with his own letter, concluding that ''a fresh start is needed at the leadership of the FBI.'' Again, on the same day that Mr. Trump fired Director Comey, the Trump letter includes a curious aside: ''I greatly appreciate you informing me, on three separate occasions, that I am not under investigation.'' Did Director Comey really give those assurances to President Trump when the criminal and counterintelligence investigations into the

Trump campaign and Russia connections are still active and ongoing?

At the same time, we heard from White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer and we heard from the Vice President of the United States that the reason for the firing of Mr. Comey was the recommendation of the Department of Justice. That is what they said it was, only to find the next day President Trump saying:

> In fact, when I decided to just do it, I said to myself, I said ''You know, this Russian thing with Trump and Russia is a made-up story, it's an excuse by the Democrats for having lost an election that they should have won.''

Then he talked about Mr. Comey and said he had decided to fire him. So it was not the memos; it was what Mr. Trump had decided. So there is a lot of misinformation being sent out, which raises a lot of questions.

Over the weekend, former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper stated:

> I think in many ways our institutions are under assault both externally—and that's the big news here is the Russian interference in our election system—and I think as well our institutions are under assault internally.

So we have the former Director of National Intelligence, Mr. Clapper, saying we have some problems internally.

The only way we are going to get to the bottom of this, the only way we are going to find out what this loyalty oath is all about or how Mr. Trump came to the conclusion to fire Mr. Comey or, more recently, where we hear Mr. Comey has memos of a meeting in which the President asked him to go easy on an investigation, which could rise to obstruction of justice—the only way we are going to get to the bottom of all this is by having an independent special counsel prosecutor appointed by the Department of Justice. That is what needs to be done. The facts need to go where they take us, but we also have to have an investigation that has the credibility that it will not be interfered with by the President of the United States. The only way to do that is by having special counsel appointed by the Department of Justice. It is the only way to restore the reputation of the Department of Justice.

I might say that we also need to understand exactly what Russia was doing here in the United States. There are so many examples of Russia being aggressive in our campaign. We know they wanted to discredit the American campaign. We know they took sides in favor of Mr. Trump over Mrs. Clinton. We know they hacked information. We know they used misinformation. We know they used cyber and social media in order to further their advancements. We also know they met with representatives of the Trump campaign. The American people have a right to understand exactly what those contacts were all about. That is why I filed the resolution, which is supported by many of my colleagues, to set up a 9/11 independent commission in order to get to the bottom of what is happening. That can be done simultaneously with the work being done by the Senate Intelligence Committee, which is important work for us to do, but we also need to have an independent commission in order to determine exactly what Russia was doing so we can take the necessary steps to prevent this from occurring in the future.

There are a lot of unanswered questions. People say: Well, how can you call for action if you don't know all the facts? I am calling for us to know all the facts. I am calling for us to understand exactly why on one day the White House sends out one story that the Department of Justice recommended the firing of Mr. Comey, and then on the next day the President said: No, I decided that before I met with the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General.

We need to understand why there was a conversation in which Mr. Comey has notes that indicate Mr. Trump wanted him to go easy in an investigation. That is a pretty serious charge. We need to understand this information. That is why it is impossible for the Department of Justice to do an independent investigation. It will always be suspect as to whether that investigation of the President of the United States or the White House will have impact as to how that investigation is being done because there is already evidence that they tried to do that previously in this investigation.

The law is clear; the law is clear as to how special prosecutors and counsel are appointed where conflicts exist. The Department of Justice has this authority. We know that Attorney General Sessions has recused himself from the Russia investigation. Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein now has the authority to make that decision. He should clearly make that decision, not because it is the right thing to do—which it is, which it is—and we have the obligation to make sure the American people get all the facts as to what happened here, but it is also the reputation of the Department of Justice that is at stake.

I urge my colleagues to continue. I know we will have a chance tomorrow in our meeting with Mr. Rosenstein, but I would urge us to listen to what the American people are saying and recognize that we are an independent branch of government, and one of our principal responsibilities is oversight—and oversight of the executive branch of government. I urge us to carry out that responsibility by collectively—it shouldn't be partisan—collectively telling the Department of Justice: Get all the facts, do it in an independent way, appoint an independent prosecutor, let the facts lead us where they are going to lead us, and let's not prejudge. But this is a serious, serious matter.

In order to protect ourselves from an aggressive enemy—and that is Russia, which is trying to bring down our democratic government, which has now been acknowledged not just by the intelligence community over and over again, but their ability to try to compromise our system is now much better understood—we need to have that independent commission devoted to giving us the recommendations to keep America safe.

I urge my colleagues to exercise that independent function and to set up an independent commission.

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

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

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I rise today to honor our law enforcement officers during National Police Week and to talk about the importance of supporting law enforcement, including their mental health.

During National Police Week, we recognize and remember the sacrifices of the law enforcement officers we lost in the line of duty in 2016. Every day and through every night in communities across Indiana and our country, law enforcement officers are patrolling our streets, arriving at the scenes of challenging and often traumatic incidents, and even putting themselves in harm's way as they do their best to keep our families safe. They help ensure that our children can be safe at the neighborhood playground and our seniors can sit peacefully on their front porch. They help keep drugs off our streets, they are called to the scenes of opioid and heroin overdoses, and they help stem the violence and crime that has plagued many of our communities for far too long.

Our law enforcement officers put on the uniform every day. They head out the door to serve us, while their family members say a prayer hoping they come back safely into their family's loving arms at the end of their shift. Sadly, sometimes they do not.

In my home State of Indiana, our law enforcement lost one of their own last year when the Howard County sheriff's deputy, Carl Koontz, was shot and killed during a raid in Russiaville, IN, last March.

Deputy Koontz was only 27 years old, in the prime of his life, and had dedicated himself to serving and protecting the communities he loved. He left behind his wife Kassie and their young son Noah.

Deputy Koontz's loss was felt not just in Kokomo, not just in Howard County, but in cities and towns across our State. He represented the very best our State has to offer. He was smart, talented, and service driven, working

to make his community a better place to live.

Mr. President, I know your State was stricken this past year, as well, with the loss of the same kind of extraordinary individuals who went and served every day. That is at the core of what law enforcement officers strive for and why it is so devastating when they are lost in the line of duty.

While we pay our respects to those we lost, it is our solemn duty to support those who serve our communities today. As law enforcement officers go through their work, they are sometimes confronted with challenging or even horrific situations.

Recently, I joined with my friend and colleague from Indiana, Senator TODD YOUNG, to introduce the bipartisan Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act. It provides tools for law enforcement agencies to help support the mental health and wellness of our brave men and women.

We were thankful to have the support from Senators BLUNT, COONS, CORNYN, and FEINSTEIN when we introduced the legislation. I am honored that Senators BLUMENTHAL, BOOKER, BROWN, CRUZ, HATCH, KLOBUCHAR, CORTEZ MASTO, DURBIN, and TESTER have added their support in the days since.

I say to the Presiding Officer, thank you for your support of our legislation.

I am very pleased to say that our bill passed the Senate unanimously late yesterday, and it is a major step forward. I am hopeful that our friends in the House of Representatives, where a companion piece was introduced by Congresswoman SUSAN BROOKS and Congresswoman VAL DEMINGS of Florida, who served as the first female chief of police in Orlando before coming to Congress—I am hopeful Congresswoman BROOKS and Congresswoman DEMINGS can shepherd this bill through that Chamber.

This legislation is also supported by a number of law enforcement organizations, including the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the Major County Sheriffs of America, and more.

I am proud that this is a bipartisan effort, as evidenced by the Members supporting this legislation. It is time to get this to the President's desk to be signed into law as soon as possible.

The Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act is about providing resources to law enforcement agencies that want to better protect their officers' mental health, as well as the providers who strive to serve that unique population. It would direct the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services to develop resources for mental health providers to educate them about law enforcement culture and evidenced-based therapies for mental health issues common to law enforcement. It would require the Department of Justice to study the effectiveness of crisis hotlines for law enforcement. It authorizes grants to initiate peer mentoring programs in law enforcement agencies. We are already seeing the success of these programs where the IMPD, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, is utilizing peer mentoring for officer mental health.

During my time in the Senate, our main legislative focus has been to improve the availability of mental healthcare services for servicemembers and their families. We have made great progress in recent years. I am proud that my bipartisan Jacob Sexton Military Suicide Prevention Act is now law.

As of this September, every servicemember—Active, Reserve, or Guard—is required to have an annual mental health assessment. The Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act builds upon the work our military has been doing to combat suicide and mental health challenges.

It requires the Department of Defense, the VA, and the Department of Justice to consult on military mental health practices that can be adopted by law enforcement agencies. Building on the Sexton Act that requires annual mental health assessments for servicemembers, the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act examines if having annual mental health checks for law enforcement officers would help save lives.

When Senator YOUNG and I announced this legislation last month, we had the honor of being joined by a number of law enforcement professionals, including the Indianapolis chief of police, Bryan Roach. Chief Roach shared some of his experiences. He said:

> When I am came on, officers were taught to be in control of their emotions.
>
> We still teach the IMPD to be in control of their emotions. But if you think about the day in, day out routine of the things they participate in, and the things that they see, and they are confronted with on a day to day basis, it is difficult sometimes to control those emotions, but they do a very good job of it.
>
> The problem is they take those things home. The things we're talking about are not just PTSD, but depression and anxiety.

As the chief stated, law enforcement officers—like the rest of us—don't just turn themselves off when they go home. The experiences they have every day impact them and their family and their friends.

Sheriff Mike Nielsen of Boone County—located in Central Indiana, right near Indianapolis—was also on hand that day with us to share his perspective. He said:

> I have seen things that cannot be unseen. The brave men and women of police, fire, EMS, are all public safety officers who put their lives on the line each and every day.
>
> They endure more than anybody can imagine, and they must deal with the stresses of life both on the job and at home.

Sometimes it is really, really tough. Sheriff Nielsen continued:

> We must all work hard to stop the stigma with mental health issues.
>
> As administrators, we have to train our supervisors how to recognize signs of PTSD in our staff. We must administer standard officer wellness programs.
>
> As administrators and public safety, we must lead from the front, and let our staff know that it is okay to struggle with issues. That we are only human.
>
> Our emotional mental health heals just like a physical injury. With the proper treatment, and with time.
>
> We must provide the funding and resources to go beyond the critical stress debriefing. We must do this for our officers.

Both Chief Roach's and Sheriff Nielsen's comments show us the importance of ending the stigma attached to mental health issues. We can't be afraid of talking about mental health and the ways we support our law enforcement officers as they work through these challenges.

Lebanon police officer Taylor Nielsen, who followed in the tradition of her dad, Sheriff Mike Nielsen—an extraordinary family, serving our State with their lives every day—was courageous enough to share her mental health struggles following a particularly tough assignment.

She recounted the questions that she was dealing with:

> Why am I alone? Why isn't anybody else having these issues? Why can't I get this out of my head? What is wrong with me? These were the questions that repeatedly ran through my head on a daily basis last year.
>
> Questions that made me believe that there was something fundamentally wrong with me.

She continued:

> For those of you who feel you are fighting alone, know that there is relief out there. Please don't be afraid to seek out those resources. The battle will be hard, but it can be won.

Thanks to her strong will and the help of a trained therapist, Taylor was able to handle her mental health challenges. As she said, though, we have to work together as a team to beat these issues.

We will take time over Police Week to reflect on the law enforcement professionals we lost last year. As we do that, it is important that we take commonsense steps to support our law enforcement officers.

We took a major step forward with yesterday's passage of the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act in the Senate. I see my colleague TODD YOUNG, who was my teammate on that, in the Chamber as well. I am hopeful it will be enacted soon so we can bring more tools to law enforcement agencies across Indiana and our country. Congresswoman BROOKS and Congresswoman DEMINGS are working on it right now.

After the service and sacrifices law enforcement officers make every day, they have earned the resources we have, so that we can provide the very best to the very best.

Thanks again to Senator YOUNG for working with me on this effort, to the police and sheriffs in Indiana who have lent their support, to law enforcement officers protecting Hoosiers as we stand here at this moment.

May God bless all of these officers, and may God bless the family of Deputy Carl Koontz. May God bless Indiana, and may God bless America.

Mr. President, I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I rise to join the senior Senator from Indiana in voicing my strong support for the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act of 2017. During Police Week, I wish to take a minute to thank all of our men and women in blue who stand on the frontlines to protect our communities.

I have four young children. Since they could barely talk, my wife and I taught them that if they need help, they should dial 911, and the police would respond.

Every day our law enforcement communities around the country live their lives to answer these calls and to help our fellow citizens. Sometimes the job is as simple as reuniting a child with their parent at the park or at a store, but other times they see horrific scenes that no one should have to experience in their lifetimes or they experience traumatic stress in the performance of their jobs.

Ultimately, police officers see the best and the worst of humanity, which can take a heavy emotional toll, but who is there to answer the call for help when they need it after experiencing such trauma on a regular basis?

A couple of weeks ago, Senator DONNELLY and I introduced the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act. This legislation is for those who answer that call. This bill works with the relevant Federal agencies, mental health providers, and broader law enforcement communities to offer opportunities for care.

When our police force is healthy, when it is strong, our communities are healthy and strong as well. That is why it is vital that we provide our Nation's law enforcement with the resources they need as they put their health and their lives on the line in order to protect our communities day in and day out.

This includes supporting law enforcement agencies' efforts to protect and strengthen the mental health and wellness of their respective law enforcement officers. I am confident that this bill will have a positive impact on the mental health and wellness of law enforcement officers across the country.

I look forward to the findings of DOJ's collaborative reports, the efficacy of the peer mentoring pilot programs, and the results of the Department's study into the creation of a crisis hotline for law enforcement officers.

With that said, I thank Indiana's senior Senator for his hard work in drafting this legislation and allowing for my input and those of my colleagues. It has been my pleasure to work with Senator DONNELLY on this, and I look forward to continuing our work together on behalf of all Hoosiers in the future.

In fact, this legislation drew upon efforts undertaken by Hoosiers at the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department. In 2010, Indiana's IMPD recognized the need to address law enforcement mental health and wellness by creating the Office of Professional Development and Police Wellness. The IMPD captain, Brian Nanavaty, led the effort to establish the office and has recently promoted its motto: ''Healthy Hire—Healthy Retire: Wellness is more than just an annual physical.'' In 2015, Captain Nanavaty and the office received national recognition, being awarded the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund's Annual Officer Wellness Award. IMPD's innovation and forward thinking have inspired police departments across the United States to follow their footsteps and undertake similar efforts to address law enforcement mental health and wellness. But this is just the beginning of these efforts.

Senator DONNELLY and I are proud that the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act has passed the Senate and is one step closer to being signed into law, contributing to the efforts of the IMPD.

As I close, I want to recognize the leadership of a fellow Hoosier, U.S. Representative SUSAN BROOKS, and her colleagues in the U.S. House who introduced this legislation. This bill has received bipartisan, bicameral support in Congress, widespread support from several law enforcement organizations, and, frankly, support across the country from rank-and-file Americans who understand that this is a problem we have an obligation to address. We are all with you. Now we call upon all of our colleagues in the House to act on this important legislation and send it to the President's desk for his signature.

Let me finish with these words of heartfelt gratitude: Thank you to our law enforcement community for always answering the call.

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. GRASSLEY. 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. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am pleased that the Senate is considering Rachel Brand to be Associate Attorney General. Ms. Brand is a native Iowan, and I am proud to be supporting her nomination here today. She has had a distinguished legal career. In fact, she was appointed to Senate-confirmed positions by both President Bush and President Obama, and both times, she was confirmed by a voice vote in the Senate.

But it looks like this nomination somehow has become controversial. I don't understand. Ms. Brand has a broad range of legal experience that happens to be a broad range in both the government and the private sector.

With her previous positions in the White House, the Office of Legal Counsel, and the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, she has experience that touches almost every part of the Federal Government. As the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Policy, she was a member of the senior management team of the Department of Justice, working with components and law enforcement agencies throughout the entire Justice Department. Similarly, at the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board, Ms. Brand worked with diverse agencies to ensure that privacy and civil liberties are taken into account while carrying out the important mission of protecting the Nation from terrorism.

During Ms. Brand's tenure in the private sector, she gained extensive litigation management experience that will serve her very well as she oversees the Department's civil litigation components.

She has seemingly become a little more controversial. Many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have said they aren't supporting her nomination because of the work she did with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Those views are utterly ridiculous. So I will take a minute to address these concerns.

First, when she worked at the Chamber, all of her advocacy was done to represent the views of her client, the U.S. Chamber. Everybody expects that if you hire a lawyer, they are going to represent your views. We all know that we can't assume an attorney personally believes in what they are advocating for on behalf of their client, just ask criminal defense attorneys.

Furthermore, she was not involved in any policy or lobbying apparatus of the Chamber. Her role there was to bring lawsuits challenging rules that the U.S. Chamber believed were unlawful. At the same time, besides just arguing those lawsuits, she had to file a lot of amicus briefs providing the courts with the views of the business community.

During her time at the Chamber, she challenged a handful of the thousands of regulations promulgated by Federal agencies. The arguments Ms. Brand made in those lawsuits or amicus briefs were generally that the agency had acted beyond the scope of the authority Congress had granted that particular agency or had failed to follow the reasoned decisionmaking processes required by the Administrative Procedure Act of 1946. In many of those cases, the courts agreed with the Chamber that the government had acted unlawfully.

To summarize her work during that time at the Chamber, Ms. Brand argued that government agencies went beyond the authority Congress had given

them. She also argued that these agencies weren't acting under the scope of the congressional authority granted to the agency, and she argued that congressional authority had to be respected. It seems to me that it is up to Congress to give these agencies more authority if we think they need it. But it is not a good reason to vote against Ms. Brand's nomination because she argued a very commonsense and constitutional position that Federal agencies need to follow the laws of Congress.

Finally, some Senators have maintained that they are concerned about her views on the Voting Rights Act. She responded very well to that. During her hearing, Ms. Brand told the committee that she shares concerns for anyone who would violate the Voting Rights Act and would suppress votes in the process of violating that act, and she believes ''enforcement of that statute to be a core enforcement function of the civil rights division.'' I don't know about my fellow colleagues, but I take her at her word that she strongly believes in voting rights.

It is more than a little puzzling, then, that when Republicans opposed a woman for a government position, we heard from the other side. The Democrats would always bring up gender politics. But when they oppose a woman for a position, that is somehow OK. I don't see how they can expect to have it both ways.

I believe Ms. Brand will be a superb Associate Attorney General—the first female in this role, I might add—and that she will serve the office with very great distinction. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting her nomination.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 5 or 6 minutes to speak on another subject as in morning business.

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

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to share real stories of real hardships from hard-working families in my home State of Iowa. Seven years ago, Americans were promised that the Affordable Care Act would make health insurance cheaper and healthcare more accessible. Well, I won't pretend to break any news here; the facts speak very much for themselves. ObamaCare is not living up to its promises. When passing the law, the other side made promises that they knew wouldn't be kept.

The irony here is that, at the end of the day, the so-called Affordable Care Act is anything but affordable. Let's look at the word ''affordable'' in the Webster dictionary. It says ''having a cost that is not too high.'' I have heard from many Iowans who tell me in no uncertain terms that they cannot afford to buy health insurance because ObamaCare is unaffordable. Ever since ObamaCare was enacted, I have received letters and calls and emails from Iowans who are frustrated about the soaring costs of their health plans.

Here is a prime example. One farmer's insurance premium went through the roof. It jumped 43 percent in 2017 from 2016. If somebody can explain how that is more affordable, I have an oceanfront property in my home county of Butler County, IA, to sell you.

Now, we have a chart here about another Iowan. This constituent from Garner, IA, wrote about her financial hardships. She said:

> We are going to be paying over $1,300 a month on premiums, plus a $6,000 deductible. We don't have that much longer before we qualify for Medicare, but my concern is that until then, we will have to use so much of our hard-earned savings just to pay for healthcare. My fear is that those of us in the middle class will struggle with paying so much that it will wipe out our retirement savings accounts.

Another constituent nearby Garner, in Buffalo, IA, wrote to me saying:

> I am forced to pay $230 a month for a healthcare plan that covers nothing until I reach $11,000 in deductible. So on top of paying 100 percent of my medical bills anyway, now I have to pay for insurance I can't use.

So the question is, How did we get to this point? Seven years ago, I stood right here on the Senate floor and predicted what would happen to the cost of insurance if ObamaCare passed. Let's take a walk down memory lane for a moment. Here is what I said October 2009:

> And while some of the supporters of these partisan bills may not want to tell their constituents, we all know that as national spending on healthcare increases, American families will bear the burden in the form of higher premiums. So, let me be very clear. As a result of the current pending healthcare proposals, most Americans will pay higher premiums for health insurance.

Now, I am not Nostradamus. I don't have a magic crystal ball, but it was easy to read the writing on the wall. I knew that layers of new taxes and, more importantly, burdensome new mandates in ObamaCare would lead us to where we find ourselves today: a broken healthcare system that is not better off than it was 7 years ago. For millions of Americans, it is much worse.

So where do we go from here? After 7 years of rapidly rising premiums, soaring deductibles, and climbing copays, Republicans are committed to fixing the damage caused by the Affordable Care Act. Instead of joining us in an effort to fix what is broken, the other side is doing their best to scare the living daylights out of Americans.

From the way they tell it, the House bill is ''deadly.'' What is truly fatal is the death spiral the ObamaCare marketplace is in. Not only is it unaffordable for too many people, it is simply unsustainable. ObamaCare is unable to fulfill its promises to the American people. Here is what every lawmaker in Congress ought to agree on: Insurance is not worth having if patients cannot afford to use it.

The facts are very clear. A one-size-fits-all, government-run plan is driving insurers out of the exchanges, driving up premiums, driving away customers, and driving up the tab to the tax-paying public. I spoke 2 days ago about the impact of Obamacare in Iowa. Next year it is possible that 94 of our 99 counties will not have insurance plans on the Obamacare exchange.

So even if you benefit from the subsidy of ObamaCare, you are not going to have an insurance company to go to. All of this because ObamaCare has overregulated, overtaxed, and oversold its promises to the American people. ObamaCare has not healed what ails the U.S. healthcare system. It is time to move forward.

I urge my colleagues to drop the partisan charade and join us for the good of the American people. I will continue coming to the floor to share how ObamaCare is not working for Iowans, but in the meantime, the Senate will continue working to rescue our healthcare system that is sinking under this broken law.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

(The remarks of Mr. THUNE pertaining to the introduction of S. 1144 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. THUNE. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, the Senate has under consideration the nomination of Rachel Brand to be Associate Attorney General of the United States, one of the very top positions in the Department of Justice and in law enforcement. It is a position of consummate trust and responsibility, requiring full public confidence. I will oppose this nomination, and I will oppose all nominations for the Department of Justice until public trust and confidence in the rule of law is restored and sustained by appointment of an independent special prosecutor to investigate Russian interference in our last election and potential links to the Trump campaign and Trump associates.

I opposed Rod Rosenstein's nomination. In fact, I was the only member of the Judiciary Committee to vote against it and one of six on the floor to oppose it for exactly the same reason. I stated to him publicly and privately that the only way to preserve his own reputation—well established over many years—and the trust and confidence in the Department of Justice was to appoint an independent prosecutor. So far, regrettably, he has failed to do so.

That question will be the first of my priorities when the full Senate meets with him tomorrow. We will demand to

know from him what the timeline was for the firing of Director Comey, who said what to whom, why his memorandum was written, and whether he will now commit, after these most recent startling revelations just yesterday that the President of the United States suggested—indeed, explicitly demanded—that Director Comey stop his investigation involving potential ties of Michael Flynn to Russian interference in our election.

Chilling facts raised in the last several days now raise serious questions about obstruction of justice by the President of the United States. So we consider this nomination at a truly unusual, very likely unique and unprecedented time in our country.

The revelation last evening that President Trump asked the FBI Director to shut down the Federal investigation into his then-National Security Advisor, Michael Flynn, is evidence of severe political interference and possibly criminal wrongdoing in an ongoing criminal investigation. The evidence of obstruction continues to mount. We are witnessing an obstruction of justice case unfolding before our eyes in real time. Revelation after revelation continues to shake this country's confidence in our government and in this administration's competence. The need for an independent special prosecutor has never been so clear and convincing and so unquestionably necessary.

I call on my Republican colleagues now to rise to this challenge, to shine in the light of history, and to commit that an independent special prosecutor will be appointed to uncover the truth and hold accountable anyone who has committed wrongdoing.

Because so far we have no such special prosecutor, I will oppose this nomination. But I also have disagreements with Rachel Brand. I respect her record of public service. I believe she is simply not the right person to serve as Associate Attorney General because of her longstanding, apparently deeply held philosophy on the use and proper application of government power. When the Federal Government engaged in actions that threaten the privacy rights of innocent Americans, Ms. Brand has advocated nonaction. I believe the United States must protect the privacy of her citizens, and that fact is only one among many that cause me to disagree with her.

The failure to nominate and appoint an independent special prosecutor will lead me to oppose all of the nominations that are set forth by this administration, including anyone nominated for the FBI. I think it should now be clear, if it was not before, that such an independent prosecutor is necessary.

Parallels have been drawn by Members on both sides of the aisle to the Watergate scandal. To this day, we don't know whether President Nixon ordered the Watergate break-ins or simply was a beneficiary of the crime, just as we don't know now whether Donald Trump colluded with Russian interference in the 2016 election or simply benefitted from Russia's criminal aggression. The Watergate scandal gave rise to the saying that ''the cover-up is worse than the crime.'' In this instance, what we know is that the Russian interference was aimed at a wholesale theft of our democracy, far more serious than the Watergate break-in. What we do know about Nixon—and these facts became the basis for the first article of impeachment—is that he attempted to indirectly interfere with an FBI investigation into that break-in. Put very simply, while Nixon may not have directly threatened to fire the FBI Director if that Director continued to investigate Nixon associates, he made clear that his preference as head of the executive branch was that any such investigation should cease.

''History doesn't repeat, but it rhymes.'' That is a saying that has profound truth here. We now have credible reports that President Trump attempted to do directly what President Nixon sought to do indirectly. He stopped a lawful, ongoing criminal investigation. Nixon ordered his staff to work through the CIA to pressure the FBI to drop the Watergate investigation. President Trump simply summoned Director Comey into the Oval Office, according to reports that certainly need to be verified, and ordered everyone else to leave the room, suggesting then that the Director drop his investigation. He did so just 2 weeks after having told Director Comey that he might not have a place in the Trump administration and making clear that Director Comey's loyalty to him might well determine whether Comey would keep his job. When Director Comey rejected Trump's suggestion, in effect, he was fired. That is the line of facts established by this mounting evidence. It is a serious charge.

We should be cautious. If Director Comey did not write that memo or if, for some reason, there is a question about the truth, perhaps the suspicions are unfounded, but there is credible and significant evidence. Director Comey has established—to both his critics and his friends—that he is a man of probity and dedication to public service and to this Nation.

We cannot feel confident about nominations for any of these positions—whether it be Director of the FBI or Associate Attorney General—from a President who has demonstrated such contempt for the rule of law and for law enforcement, which is the job of the Department of Justice. The White House's timeline and justifications for the decision to fire Director Comey certainly now, at this moment, fail to meet the test of credibility.

We know from the President's own words in interviews he conducted late last week that the FBI investigation into possible collusion between individuals in the Trump campaign and the Russian Government was on the President's mind when he decided to fire the FBI Director. In at least two conversations, the President asked the FBI Director about this investigation and the related investigation into former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn.

Late last night the Times revealed the details of one such conversation. It occurred in the Oval Office the day after Flynn resigned. The account written by Director Comey, which seems to meet fully the test of credibility, is absolutely chilling. ''I hope you can see your way clear to letting this go, to letting Flynn go,'' Mr. Trump told Mr. Comey, according to the memo reported in The New York Times. ''He is a good guy. I hope you can let this go.'' When the FBI Director continued to pursue the investigation, President Trump fired him.

We are witnessing this obstruction of justice in realtime, and these revelations are shaking our country's faith in the independence of our Nation's highest ranking law enforcement agency, our rule of law, and our national security. It is a theft of our democracy—literally, a threat to our national security—from Russian meddling in the election, potential Trump ties, and links to that interference in our democracy—the core, foundational exercise of our democracy being voting—and then waiting for 2½ weeks when then-Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates warned that Michael Flynn was vulnerable to blackmail as National Security Adviser—blackmail from the Russians. She was fired only days later.

When the investigation into that Russian meddling and Trump's ties to it continued, Director Comey was summoned to be told that the investigation should be shut down, and he was fired when he refused to do so. Very likely, part of that decision related to the request for additional resources that Director Comey made to Rosenstein shortly before he was fired and his refusal to rule out the President as a target of that investigation when he came before the Judiciary Committee.

The facts will eventually form a mosaic, and that mosaic may dramatically show a picture of criminal conduct. That is the process of investigating and prosecuting criminal wrongdoing. Right now, that activity requires a fidelity to the rule of law in one's getting all of the evidence, including transcripts, tapes, memos, and other documents. They must be subpoenaed immediately so that they are not destroyed or concealed, so that they are preserved and produced. That must be done without delay, including there being testimony under oath, in public, from Comey, Attorney General Sessions, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, and Don McGahn, White House Counsel. They should be called to testify by the Judiciary Committee, under oath, and in public.

I hope that my colleagues will, indeed, rise to this challenge and shine in the light of history and commit now to

an independent special prosecutor who can ensure that the truth is uncovered and that accountability is imposed for any criminal wrongdoing so that we will prevent any obstruction of justice because the American people deserve it, they need it, and they demand it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Senator from Maine.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I rise to speak for a few minutes on the AHCA, which is the healthcare bill that was recently passed in the House.

I believe the letters stand for ''anti-healthcare bill'' as there are many troublesome aspects of this bill—kicking something like 20 million people off of health insurance and compromising essential benefits. It is what I call a ''fig leaf'' preexisting condition provision, which does not provide adequate funding in order to actually protect people with preexisting conditions.

Yet what I really want to focus on today are two interrelated provisions—a massive cut to Medicaid and a massive tax cut for the wealthiest Americans. By the way, that tax cut gives a zero tax cut to anyone making less than $200,000 a year. I will talk about that in a moment.

Let's talk about the Medicaid cuts, however. This is a part of the bill that has not gotten much attention. It is $840 billion over 10 years. It will be about a 10-percent cut of Medicaid funds in Maine. It is hard to get an actual analysis of that, however, because the House bill was passed without any Congressional Budget Office analysis—none, zero. Unbelievably, the Members of the House voted for a bill that they, literally, did not know the financial effects of—how it would affect the States, how it would affect the people in their States. Maybe, next week, we will get that analysis. Certainly, this body will not act in that way with no Congressional Budget Office analysis.

Let's talk for a minute about who is on Medicaid, as 34 percent of the people on Medicaid are children, 20 percent are disabled people, and 18 percent are elderly. In other words, almost three-quarters—75 percent—are children, disabled, and elderly people. Many people talk about and think about Medicaid as some kind of welfare program. This is an essential lifeline for some of the most vulnerable people in our society—children, the disabled, and the elderly—75 percent—and 75 percent of the funding goes to disabled and elderly people.

The people who sponsored this bill and who are talking about it across the country talk about flexibility. Yes, there are some cuts, but we are giving the States flexibility. That is nonsense. They are giving the States flexibility to make decisions between funding programs for the elderly and programs for children, between cutting off programs for opioids and providing support for people who are disabled. That is not flexibility. That is just passing agonizing choices off to the States. I was a Governor, and I know about having to make these kinds of decisions. To cut this money by this huge amount—almost $1 trillion over 10 years—and act as though it can all be made up through some kind of fake flexibility is just an unspeakably cruel way to shift this burden to the States.

The bill talks about saving on the deficit. It saves on the deficit because $840 billion is shifted to the States. Let them pay it—shift and shaft. That is what it is—shift and shaft. Shift the cost and shaft the States, particularly the people in those States who depend upon these programs—those people being the disabled, the elderly, children, people with disabilities, and those who are struggling to defeat the scourge of opioids and opioid addiction.

I want to talk about some people today. I want to talk about this guy, Dan Humphrey. He is 28 years old and lives in a group home in Lewiston, ME. He has autism and is nonverbal. He has some bipolar characteristics and a seizure disorder but is gentle and charming, and you can see his smile. He has very basic functional communication skills. He enjoys jumping on a trampoline and drumming. He performs all of his chores to care for himself, with prompting and guidance, such as laundry and grocery shopping. He is proud of his volunteer jobs. He serves Meals on Wheels to clients through the week, and he takes excess food from a nearby college to a local soup kitchen every Saturday.

Daniel needs around-the-clock support in order to maintain this quality of life. When this level of programming was unavailable or is unavailable, he regresses and becomes aggressive. Even at current funding, Daniel is one of the lucky ones, as he is not on a waiting list. Although he qualified for services, it took him 8 years to get a home and a community-based service waiver for him to be able to live the life he does. He is in a group home in the wonderful city of Lewiston, ME, where he lives today. He is contributing. He has a decent life.

By the way, this is all about people. It really bothers me that we talk about policy and ideology and free markets and flexibility. We are talking about people. We are talking about real people whose lives are on the line—people who are struggling with opioid addiction, elderly people who have no place to go, and disabled people like Dan and like Lidia Woofenden.

Here is Lidia. She graduated from Mt. Ararat High School in June. She turns 21 in August. That is the high school my kids went to. I had two boys graduate from that high school. When she was 4 years old, she was diagnosed with a delayed growth of myelin on her brain, and, at 15, she began having seizures and was diagnosed with a rare genetic disorder. She lives with intellectual disabilities, seizures, and their side effects, as well as with a general lack of physical coordination. Yet, as her mom says, that is not who she is. She is charming and funny. Her mom calls her friendly and goofy and the stubbornest cuss.

She was never expected to read but is now on her fourth Harry Potter book. She was never expected to ride a bike, but now she does. She even has a job. After years of volunteering at a local nursing home, she was offered a part-time job and is doing well. She is doing this because she had support from Medicaid. She cannot cross a street by herself, and she needs to be reminded to brush her teeth. She has no sense of money or danger. On the one hand, she is 20 years old; on the other hand, she is 6 years old. In other words, like most young people, she is complicated. Everything she has achieved has been accomplished with the help of dedicated teachers and therapists and has been almost exclusively funded through special education in the public schools and by Medicaid.

By the way, Medicaid provides help to the tune of $26 million a year to children in Maine schools who need it. One of the amendments passed at the last minute in the House puts that funding through the schools in jeopardy. She has made monumental gains, but she will never be able to live alone.

What happens when we make these cuts? What happens to Lidia? What happens to Dan?

In the old days, they were warehoused. They were in facilities that were far away—out of sight, out of mind—or with their parents, who had to bear the burden, who themselves could not work because they had to take care of the children. These are just two people—two examples—of what we are talking about here.

Who will speak for them? Who will stand up for them?

I will, and I hope this body will. We are the last bulwark between this terrible piece of legislation that was passed in the House and these people and millions like them across the country. Who will stand up for them?

Why are we doing this? Why are we putting States through the ringer of having to make decisions to choose between Lidia and an elderly person in a nursing home and between a child and a young man who is trying to beat opioids? Why are we forcing them to make those choices?

It is because we want to give a huge tax cut to the wealthiest Americans, and I am talking about a huge tax cut. It is the most skewed tax cut in history because it only goes to a few people. Seventy-nine percent of the benefit of this tax cut goes to millionaires, which is an average tax cut of $54,000 a year. Now, $54,000 a year to multi-millionaires—the top one-tenth of 1 percent, those with incomes above $6 million—would receive tax cuts of more than $250,000 a piece in 2025 under this legislation.

We are putting people like this at risk in order to have somebody buy another Maserati. It is unbelievable that

this body would even consider making that tradeoff. That is what we are talking about here. Let's be very clear. It is an equation of lost Medicaid benefits, a gigantic tax cut. That is what this bill is all about. If you make between $500,000 and $1 million, you will see a $4,000 tax cut, which is not so egregious as higher up, and if you are under $200,000 a year, you get zero.

This doesn't even masquerade as a middle-class tax cut. This is one of the most inequitable, cruel, and unconscionable pieces of policymaking I have ever seen. I think we need to be clear about that. If we don't stand up for Dan, Lidia, and millions like them—old and young, living in the shadows of our society, asking for nothing more than the ability to do the slightest things we take for granted, like crossing the street, having a job, dressing, feeling they are contributing—to take that away, to force States to make those decisions—and make no mistake, they are going to have to make those decisions. You simply can't cut the amount of money that is proposed in this bill—which will expand over time, by the way—and still expect the services to be the same or better through some kind of flexibility. That is nonsense. It would be bad enough, except to do it because of a massive tax cut to the people who least need it—that is what really makes this unacceptable.

I know that people in this body are working on an alternative to the bill in the House, and I hope this can be an open process where all of us participate, where we are able to contribute ideas and amendments and thoughts. Particularly, I want us to think about the fact that we are the last line of defense. We are the last line of defense for people who can't speak up. In the case of my friend Dan, he literally can't speak up. We are who they are counting on, between us, and if it weren't for us, they would have no one to think about and demand that they be treated fairly and respectfully in the richest society on Earth. I hope we can do better. I know we can.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, there is a reason we are talking about healthcare, and we should be talking about healthcare. We should be looking for the gaps and trying to find those gaps. I had a long conversation this morning about people who have disabilities, adults who have disabilities, and the challenges they have always faced in the insurance marketplace. They are people like Dan and Lidia who have a hard time working or are unable to have a full-time job, who may be covered by insurance through their parents until they are too old, or they may not be covered because their parents aren't covered. But normally, if that has been the case, where you were able to share whatever coverage your parents had—and certainly this is an area we should work on, how we deal with those who are disadvantaged. On the Medicaid front, our goal should be to look at the House bill and make it better.

The people who were added to Medicaid under President Obama's healthcare plan, decided by the States—the very group who my friend from Maine said shouldn't be making these kinds of decisions—the States made these decisions because it was left to them to make them. And they weren't children and they weren't old people; they were single adults who traditionally had not been covered by Medicaid. We can talk all we want to about how these cuts are going to affect children and old people, but that is not who would be affected.

There is a debate the States have already had. Some States added single adults for the first time, and others didn't. Many States believe they can make those decisions better in their own States, to have a healthcare home where somebody has a doctor they could go to. Having coverage doesn't matter if you can't get access to healthcare. Our debate here should be about access to healthcare, and it should be about people who, because of ObamaCare, are having problems with access to healthcare.

President Obama promised that the new plan would bend the cost curve. He said it would bend the cost curve and bring healthcare costs down. I think the topic he was discussing was healthcare coverage costs coming down by $2,500 for the typical family. The cost curve got bent all right, but it didn't get bent down, it got bent up. In our State, just last year in Missouri, 25 percent was the average increase from one year to the next. The individual policies in many of our counties—84 percent have only one insurance company that is willing to offer a plan. That should tell us something right there about whether the exchange idea worked, the way it was put together. It is clearly not working.

We can continue to move forward and act as though that doesn't matter, but it matters a lot. We have 114 counties and the city of St. Louis, and our constitution functions as if it were a county. One-hundred and fifteen of those entities, the county-like entities—97 of them have only 1 company willing to offer insurance. In all of them, the average increase statewide was 25 percent 1 year over the next, and that is just 1 year, and it is not even next year. Every estimate says that those individual policies will go up even more next year than they did last year.

We can continue to act as though this system is working and not do anything about it, or we can do something about it.

When ObamaCare was implemented, I came to the floor almost every week for the first year to share story after story of people and families who were affected, who couldn't have the kind of healthcare or the kind of coverage—either one—they had before, and I could share those same stories now. I will share a couple of them today. They haven't stopped coming in. Many people have just decided: We are never going to have the doctors we used to have. We are never going to have the insurance policy we used to have. The government has failed us.

They had a policy on which they were paying maybe a third of what they are paying now and which had higher coverage. But after a while, you quit complaining and understand that your government has actually come up with a system that—for your family, at least—was worse than the system they had.

We talk about cancellation notices being sent out by the thousands. Thousands of families and thousands of individuals got cancellation notices. Last year President Clinton, while campaigning for his wife for President, said: What a crazy system. The costs keep going up, and the coverage keeps going down.

There is clearly something wrong here. We need to do something about it. We should be working together to do something about it.

When I am home and talking to people about this or when people contact our office about this, they just continue to say over and over again that this has gotten worse. Now, we get some calls—and I am glad to get them—where people say: We want to be sure that you understand what happens to individuals like the two people my friend from Maine mentioned. And we are looking for ways to be sure they don't get left out. But let me tell you some of the people who have been left out.

Thomas and Kathy, a married couple from Kansas City, told me that their out-of-pocket costs have jumped from $2,700 in 2014—that was the first year of this healthcare plan—to $5,000 in 2017. In addition, their copays have increased—in their case, they appear to be lucky—by only 20 or 30 percent.

They are not by themselves. Tony, an insurance broker in Northwest Missouri, recently told me about a client who was shopping for coverage. The client realized that the only plan she could afford would force her to spend, for herself, almost $5,000 a year in insurance premiums on top of having another $5,000 deductible before that insurance she would be paying for every month would do any good. She said she would be spending almost $10,000 without receiving anything, and it made absolutely no sense. Well, her insurance broker couldn't help but agreed with her that in her case it didn't make much sense, and I think all of us can see why it might not.

Yesterday at a press event here in the Capitol, I mentioned a farmer who called and said she had a $12,000 deductible for her family and she was paying $16,000 in annual premiums. So in her case, she could pay $28,000 before she had any coverage at all, and that $28,000 was money—she could be paying

$12,000 of it just for access to see a doctor because her insurance company didn't help with that.

One final story I would like to share is from Rob, a small business owner in St. Joseph who pays half of his employees' medical, and his costs keep going up. His agent walks in every year, he told me, and says: Well, this year it went up 9 percent.

He said: That might have been acceptable, except it also went up 9 percent last year and 11 percent the year before that, and it was 9 percent the year before that.

Many of the losses in the individual market are being shifted to try to make the insurance market make up for what is happening on the individual side.

Year over year, we see premium increases, skyrocketing deductibles, and higher out-of-pocket costs. That is the status quo under what we have now, and it is unacceptable. That is why Republicans have made clear that we are going to move forward to solutions that will address some of the major issues in our healthcare system and look for ways to bring down costs and expand access to quality, affordable coverage, but more importantly, quality, affordable care.

I urge my colleagues to work with us and join in this effort to help us find solutions to be sure we don't leave people out who shouldn't be left out but that we also make access to healthcare more possible for more families and more individuals than it is today.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, Republicans have been warning for years now about the grave damage ObamaCare has done to the American healthcare system. We have pointed out how the healthcare law's regulations are destabilizing the health insurance industry. We have warned that the ObamaCare markets are unstable. We have talked about the death spiral which has already doomed ObamaCare.

It seems like every day we get more proof that the collapse is well underway. Last week, the insurance company Aetna announced it was exiting the individual ObamaCare markets entirely. CNN did a story about this last Wednesday. The headlines said: ''Aetna to ObamaCare: We're Outta Here.'' It is interesting because Aetna as a company was one of the cheerleaders for ObamaCare early on; they jumped in and said: We are very involved. We want to make this work. Here they are pulling out, saying it has failed.

Humana had already said it was quitting the exchanges, not just one place but everywhere.

In the past month or so, we have seen big companies drop out of the markets in Virginia and in Iowa. There is now just one company left selling in the exchanges for Nebraska and for Delaware. There is just one company selling in Alaska, in Missouri, in Alabama, in Oklahoma, in South Carolina, and in my home State of Wyoming.

For people living in all of these States, there is a monopoly for whom they get to buy their insurance from under the ObamaCare markets. That is not a marketplace, it is a monopoly.

The Associated Press looked at all of these companies dropping out. It now found that 40 percent of America—4 out of 10 counties in America—will have just 1 company selling insurance in the ObamaCare exchanges for next year; 4 out of every 10 counties in America. That is what you get with an ObamaCare exchange.

How is that supposed to bring down prices? Other companies have been saying how much they will need to charge if they are going to stick around for 1 more year under ObamaCare. It looks like we will have another year of incredible price increases. In Maryland, insurance companies are demanding average premium increases of anywhere between 18 and 59 percent. In Connecticut, they are asking for 15 to 33 percent more next year.

Democrats are desperate to blame the collapse of ObamaCare on President Trump. My question to the Democrats is this, What about all of the companies that dropped out of the marketplaces last year? What about the double-digit price increases Americans were paying year after year under ObamaCare?

The premium for the average benchmark plan in the exchanges went up 25 percent at the start of this year. Are Democrats going to try to blame that on someone else?

In March, the Kaiser Family Foundation reported the results of a poll on healthcare in America. In this poll, 4 out of 10 American adults with insurance under ObamaCare said they have trouble affording their deductible. They have ObamaCare insurance, but 4 out of 10 adults in America with ObamaCare insurance are having trouble affording their deductibles. Three out of every ten with insurance under ObamaCare said they have problems paying their medical bills. One in four Americans with insurance under ObamaCare said the costs have forced them to put off healthcare they needed or skip it entirely.

These people are suffering because of President Obama and the Democrats and what they passed. These Americans are struggling because of the flawed policies and regulations of the ObamaCare law that Democrats in Washington wrote.

Republicans are saying what we have said all along: Healthcare reform should be about helping people get the care they need, from a doctor they choose, at a lower cost. We need to do something to rescue the people who are being crushed under this collapsing ObamaCare system. That is why Republicans are the ones talking about solving the problems that have been caused by ObamaCare. The House of Representatives passed a bill that includes some important things that could help stabilize the markets. It includes things to stop these double-digit premium hikes that have been occurring every year.

In the Senate, we have already started mapping out the ideas. We are going to continue offering our ideas. We are going to continue debating them. I want to invite Democrats in the Senate to come to the floor and offer their ideas as well. It doesn't have to be a partisan fight. It shouldn't be a partisan fight that drags on for months and months. We need to find solutions for the American people who are suffering under President Obama's healthcare law.

For all the Democrats who are now trying to redirect the blame away from themselves, the problems they caused, trying to pass the buck, we are trying to pass a bill. I can tell from listening at home in Wyoming, where I will be again this weekend and was last weekend, people know who caused the problems of ObamaCare. The American people are looking for solutions. They don't care who offers it. They want solutions. I think if we can get a bipartisan solution, all the better. I invite the Democrats to come to the floor to give us their best ideas.

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

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

WELCOMING BACK THE SENATOR FROM NORTH CAROLINA

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, before I move into my remarks, I would like to say welcome back to the Senator from North Carolina. We are happy to see him hale and hardy.

I was worried until I saw your little internet video and you looked fine. It is nice to see you. We welcome you back to the Senate floor—and looking more energetic than the rest of us, in any case. So happy to have you back, Senator TILLIS.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. President, in the rubble of this week, the Federal Communications Commission is going to formally start the process of destroying net neutrality. A free and open internet is without question important to democracy and American innovation.

Apparently this FCC believes we no longer need the protections that keep internet service providers from discriminating against websites and online content, but these protections are

what make the internet what it is today. They mandate, very simply, that ISPs have to treat websites the same, whether they are Twitter or Facebook, Breitbart or the New York Times. The FCC is supposed to be there to make sure ISPs follow this basic principle: Treat all content the same. But under this administration, these protections are being undermined.

It starts tomorrow when they will vote to begin the process to repeal net neutrality. I really don't know why the FCC thinks this is a good idea, because the internet is not broken. What problem were you trying to solve by getting rid of these protections, and on whose behalf are you working? There is not a single constituent in my State with whom I ever interacted—and I bet this is true for many other Members of the Senate and House—who says: You know those net neutrality protections? I hate them. You have to get rid of that net neutrality thing. It is bugging me and harming my access to the internet. I would like fast lanes and slow lanes. I would like my ISP to determine what I get to see and how quickly I get to see it.

There is literally no constituency for what is happening tomorrow, but there is one group that stands to gain here, and that is the ISPs, the companies that control your access to the internet. It is true that they are promising to keep the internet open and free. In fact, they did it just this week. A group of ISPs published a full page ad in the print version of the Washington Post reaffirming their commitment to voluntary net neutrality. In other words, they promised to be good to all of us as consumers. They are basically saying: You don't need the Federal Communications Commission to enforce any rule or law related to a free and open internet. We will do it voluntarily.

But here is the thing: Without net neutrality as a matter of rule and law, there is nothing that prevents them from treating content or websites differently. In fact, they will have financial incentives to do just that because making profits is their obligation. They have to maximize their profits. They have a fiduciary obligation to maximize profits. If there is an opportunity now or in the future to change the business model for internet service, changing the internet as we know it along the way, they are duty bound to pursue it. They do not have an obligation—a moral one or a statutory one or a legal one—to a free and open internet; they have an obligation to their shareholders and profits.

Here is what is going to happen if the FCC succeeds ending net neutrality once and for all: ISPs would be allowed to split content into two lanes—favorite content would be in the fast lane and everything else in the slow lane. Companies that need their content to be fast for video streaming or cloud services would have to pay to be in the fast lane. At the end of the day, the cost is going to be transferred to you, the consumer.

We would pay more for the same internet, but the issue here is bigger than a company that streams video asking an ISP to stream their content faster in exchange for more money. It is not just that. This is an era, as we all know, of corporate consolidation. The content companies and the ISPs are often one and the same. So it is not just that you would get Netflix negotiating with Comcast and maybe paying extra so they can stream their content so you can view it; it is also what happens when Comcast or some other company is also the content company.

I want everybody to think this through. If you were running a company that provided access to the internet and also owned content, wouldn't you be at least a little bit tempted—wouldn't your board of directors at least make you look at the possibility that if you have television shows and if you have websites and you depend on traffic, why in the world wouldn't you prioritize your own stuff? It is not apocryphal. It is not apocalyptic to imagine that a company would say: We are a vertical now, and we own content. Why are we going to put up our competitor's stuff at the same rates? The law doesn't provide for that anymore. Net neutrality is a thing of the past.

You don't have to imagine that these are bad people who are running these companies; you just have to imagine that they are businesspeople and that they run publicly traded companies that have to give quarterly earnings reports and have to show profit every single quarter. What better way to make profit than to create what they call on the internet a walled garden?

Everything seems like the internet you used to have, except it is all within one family of companies, and that is what net neutrality is designed to prevent. When you get on the internet, your ISPs can't tell you whether to go to Google or Bing or Yahoo or Facebook or Breitbart or the New York Times or the Honolulu Star-Advertiser or wherever it wants; you get it all at the same speed. That is what net neutrality is all about. But to the degree and extent that net neutrality protections are repealed as a matter of law, these companies can suddenly provide you with opportunities to see all their stuff and only their stuff. You will still have access to the other stuff. It might not stream very well or load very fast. That is what net neutrality is all about.

Entrepreneurs and small business owners will also be hurt. Think about what it takes to start and grow a business. You don't have extra cash to hand over to your ISPs to make sure people can access your content. Without net neutrality, new services, new websites, new big ideas will have a harder time competing with established businesses. That is why more than 1,000 entrepreneurs, investors, and startups from every single State have signed a letter asking that the FCC protect net neutrality—because it is critical for innovation.

When you think about how quickly the internet of things is gaining steam, it is also a big deal for what they call IoT. We are at a historic moment in innovation in the digital space.

Kevin Kelly, internet pioneer, recently did an interview with Stephen Dubner of Freakonomics Radio. They talked about the fact that in 2015 alone, 5 quintillion transistors were added to devices that were not computers. A quintillion is a billion billion. That is such an enormous number, it is hard to fathom. That is how fast the internet of things is growing. That is the level of innovation that is taking place, but this innovation depends on a free and open internet.

So the degree and extent that individual ISPs are able to control who gets what and at what speed, all of that innovation at the app level, the IoT level, all the cool stuff you are looking forward to from Silicon Valley or wherever it may be, is in danger because then it becomes about paying tolls. Then it becomes about a commercial negotiation. Then it becomes about lawyering up. You have a really good idea? Lawyer up. You have a really good idea? Get people who have a master's in business administration. Forget the engineers. Forget the content developers. Forget the creative class. What you have to do is figure out how to get in on what will essentially be what they call a closed shop. And that is what net neutrality is all about.

What if your internet service provider has a relationship with one of these websites? What if an auto sales website is purchased by a media company or vice versa? If you try to purchase a car online, you may end up in an internet funhouse if the FCC takes away net neutrality. It will look like the internet, but you may not have complete access to all the options. The same idea applies to the internet of things. If every car connects to the internet, broadband providers could decide that it takes too much bandwidth and pick and choose which brands are allowed to connect to the internet. That is what can happen without net neutrality.

They could offer a basic internet package that limits customers to certain websites or content, sort of how you buy basic cable and then decide whether you want ESPN or HBO or whatever additional channels. It is not totally out of the question that that could be the way you access the internet in the future.

The thing is, it sounds so scary, it sounds so crazy that you can't imagine it would happen. And it is true that it didn't happen in the past, but that is because it wasn't in their commercial interest to do it. Think about towns where there are one or two ISPs. Think about a future 5 or 10 years from now when net neutrality is repealed. The moment it is in their commercial interest to do something to change the

very nature of the internet is the moment they will be duty bound to consider going forward.

When net neutrality was adopted under the previous FCC, there were 3.8 million people who provided comment. This is a very unique process. When the law passed that allowed ISPs to sell your commercial data, to sell your browsing data to third parties—that happened in a 30-hour period—basically, nobody noticed. We tried to mobilize. We got the word out. They had the votes, and it happened very quickly. This is different. Under the law, there is a public comment period. There were 3.8 million people who commented on the last net neutrality debate. There are already 1 million people who have commented through the FCC's website.

Tomorrow, the FCC will take an action that will open up the comment period and provide people an opportunity to weigh in on this. I would just offer that I do not believe there is any real constituency for what the FCC is doing. I think people across the country—young and old; left, right, and center; Democratic and Republican; urban and rural—everybody who cares about a free and open internet ought to care about what is happening tomorrow.

With that, I would like to yield to a Member of the Senate who has many years of leadership in this space, someone who has authored some of the statutory architecture that has allowed this innovation on the internet to occur, someone who fights for consumers, the Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. MARKEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I say to Senator SCHATZ, thank you for organizing our Senate net neutrality champions out here on the floor today so that we can all stand up and add our voices to your voice in speaking on this critical issue. Now, there are people watching the Senate floor right now by watching the live stream on c-span.org or on Facebook Live.

They might be engaged citizens, they might be political junkies, or maybe they need something to help them to ensure that their newborn is going to go to sleep this afternoon. That is watching C–SPAN. That helps the family. Let's face it. The action in this most deliberative body can sometimes feel a little slow.

Now, imagine just a few companies deciding that c-span.org will be put in a slow lane, that the public interest content streamed out to the world from this Chamber will be sent out at an even more deliberative pace, all while kitten videos get priority in an internet fast lane.

When people talk about net neutrality, that is what we are talking about. Instead of an open and free internet where the billions of clicks, likes, and links made by customer and entrepreneurs in their living rooms and offices determines who wins and loses, it will be just a few companies in a few corporate boardrooms deciding who gets into the express lane and who falls behind in an internet traffic jam.

That is why we need a true open internet. That is exactly what I heard last month when I hosted a roundtable in Boston with a number of our tech firms—Carbonite, TripAdvisor, Wayfair, iRobot, and others. Their message was clear: Net neutrality impacts businesses across the entire internet ecosystem, and the ever-changing environment of entrepreneurship can be easily disrupted without this ingredient—net neutrality.

Today, essentially every company is an internet company. Consider these statistics. In 2016, almost one-half of the venture capital funds invested in this country went toward internet-specific and software companies. That is $25 billion worth of investment.

At the same time, to meet America's insatiable demand for broadband internet, U.S. broadband and telecommunications industry giants invested more than $87 billion in capital expenditures in 2015. That is the highest rate of annual investment in the last 10 years. So we have hit a sweet spot. Investment in broadband and wireless technology is high, job creation is high, and venture capital investment in online startups is high. Disrupting that formula now would only create chaos and uncertainty.

With strong net neutrality protections in place, there is no problem that needs to be fixed. But the Trump administration wants to upend this hallmark of American innovation and democratization by gutting net neutrality rules. Tomorrow, Chairman Ajit Pai and the Republican-controlled Federal Communications Commission will vote to begin a proceeding that will allow a few powerful broadband providers to control the internet.

Now, the big broadband barons and their Republican allies say: We don't need net neutrality. They say: What we really need is a ''light touch'' regulatory framework for broadband.

But let's be clear here. When the broadband behemoths say ''light touch'' what they really mean is ''hands off''. They really want hands off of their ability to choose online winners and losers.

That is what they really want, to allow AT&T, Verizon, Charter, Comcast, and all of the other internet service providers to set up internet fast lanes for those with the deepest pockets, pushing those who can't onto a slow gravel path. Then, they will just pass any extra costs onto the consumer. What they really want is to sideline the FCC, our telecommunications cop on the beat, and to create an unregulated online ecosystem where broadband providers can stifle the development of competing services that cannot afford an internet E-ZPass.

No one should have to ask permission to innovate. But with fast and slow lanes, that is precisely what an entrepreneur will need to do. Right now, the essence of the internet is to innovate and test new ideas first, and if an idea then takes off, the creator can attract capital and expand.

Creating internet fast and slow lanes would flip this process on its head. Instead, an entrepreneur would first need to raise capital in order to start innovating, because she would need to pay for fast lane access to have a chance for her product to be seen and to succeed. Only those with access to deep pockets would develop anything new. Imagine the stifling of creativity if startups need massive amounts of money even to innovate.

Now, Chairman Pai says he likes net neutrality. But in reality, his proposal would eliminate the very order that established today's network neutrality rules. That is like saying you value democracy but you don't see a need for a constitution. It makes no sense.

For Chairman Pai and the ISPs, title II is a bad word. It is some terrible thing. But for everyone else—consumers, activists, and entrepreneurs—title II is a reason to celebrate. Back in 2010, the FCC attempted to put net neutrality rules in place without reclassifying under title II of the Communications Act. The DC Circuit Court invalidated those rules. Then, in 2015, the Federal Communications Commission rightfully adopted the open internet order, which reclassified broadband under title II, and the DC Circuit upheld the rule in 2016.

The issue is settled. The FCC should not repeat past mistakes and instead should maintain the successful current regime. Why is title II appropriate? It was Congress's intent to preserve the FCC's authority to forestall threats to competition and innovation in telecommunications services, even as the technologies used to offer those services evolved over time.

Now, classifying broadband under title II is just a very fancy way of saying broadband is like telephone service. It is a basic utility that Americans rely on every day to work, to communicate, and to connect. Broadband has become the single most important telecommunications service Americans use to transmit information from one to another. This is common sense to Americans around the country, with the only exception being high-powered telecommunications lobbyists inside the beltway here in Washington.

Chairman Pai also claims that he wants internet service providers to voluntarily decide to follow net neutrality principles. That is like asking a kid to voluntarily swear not to stick his hand in the cookie jar. It just won't happen. We know the broadband industry—your cable, wireless or telecommunications provider—can't self-regulate themselves. They struggle to even show up on time to install or fix your service. Do we really trust them to resist using their internet gatekeeper role and putting their online competitors at an unfair disadvantage?

This effort on net neutrality is just one piece of the Republicans' effort to dismantle the basic protections safeguarding American families. Instead of protecting our privacy, our healthcare, our environment, or our net neutrality, the Republicans want to give it all away to their friends and allies and big corporations.

The FCC has received more than 1 million comments already, and I am sure millions more will flow in the weeks and months to come, as the FCC comment period will stretch until at least August. Those are comments from every corner of the country and from every walk of life. They are standing up to say we need a truly open and free Internet.

Openness is the internet's heart. Nondiscrimination is its soul. Any infringement on either of those features undermines the spirit and intent of net neutrality.

So I proudly stand with my fellow netizens out on the Senate floor and all across America who oppose any efforts to undermine net neutrality. We are on the right side of history. I am ready for the historic fight to come.

Twelve years ago, I introduced the first net neutrality bill in the House of Representatives. In the Senate, the first net neutrality bill was introduced by the Senator from Oregon, RON WYDEN. This has been a long battle, a long struggle coming. We now have America in its sweep spot, with net neutrality on the books for software and broadband companies, which allows for a fair balance in terms of the competition in the marketplace.

So I now turn and yield for the Senator from Oregon, RON WYDEN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Massachusetts for not just today but all of the years in which he has led this battle. He is right. We have served together now in both Chambers and, in fact, when I was here and he was in the other body, we talked often about why this was such a bedrock principle.

You know, sometimes you listen to the head of the FCC and you get the sense that somehow he is saying that the internet either is broken or is about to break—that some horrendous set of problems are going to ensue without his ill-advised ideas. The fact is that the internet is not broken. The Federal Communications Commission is not trying to help consumers by rolling back net neutrality protections. They are doing it to make it easier for the big cable companies to be in a position to shove out true and real competition. That, I would say to my friend Senator MARKEY and my friend from Hawaii, Senator SCHATZ, who has been championing these efforts in the Commerce Committee, is what this is really all about.

You know, the reality is that the internet is now the shipping lane for the 21st century. It is that place—a global marketplace—where you have the free exchange of ideas, and today's rules protect that shipping lane of the 21st century—the freedom for Americans and people worldwide to compete online. It exists so that the powerful interests, those who have the deepest pockets, do not go out and swallow the little guys up every single time.

Now, as we talk about net neutrality and why it is so essential for jobs, free speech, political engagement, education, economic opportunity, and better competition, there are really just three points. First, protecting the free and open internet under Title II of the Telecommunications Act, in my view, is the best way to proceed at this point. It is the only way, at present, to ensure a free and open internet, and that is, by rejecting this idea that somehow the internet is broken and we should upend the current rules. The Federal Communications Commission should not only leave the current net neutrality rules in place, they ought to aggressively move against companies that violate those rules. As my friends from Massachusetts and Hawaii know, there is not exactly a lot of evidence that the Federal Communications Commission is doing that either.

Net neutrality, in short, protects the internet's ability to give a fair shake to every single person in America and literally in the world with a good idea—they don't have to have money. They don't have to have lobbyists. They don't have to have PACs. All they have to have with net neutrality and the internet is an idea to compete with the establishment. This level playing field is a prerequisite for protecting free speech.

A level regulatory playing field means that these powerful interests—the cable companies, specifically—can't pick winners and losers because of their political or personal views. Our colleague, Senator FRANKEN of Minnesota, has correctly said that net neutrality is the First Amendment issue of our time, and I think he is spot-on on that matter.

Finally, because there really hasn't been the competition in the broadband marketplace that would best serve the consumer and the public, what you should definitely do is operate under the theory that you need strong rules. We all know that too many people don't have a choice when it comes to a broadband provider; often it comes down to Comcast or nothing. Without real competition, America needs strong net neutrality rules to prevent Comcast or AT&T from basically tossing consumer choice and free speech in the trash can to rake in even more profits.

A lack of broadband competition and consumer choice is clearly a problem you cannot solve by giving the big cable companies more freedom—freedom to run at will through the marketplace.

So the question now is—and I think my friend from Massachusetts just touched on it—what happens now? What happens now is making the American people aware that this is the time for their voices to be heard.

The fact is, there are two notions of political change in America. Some people think it starts in Washington, DC, and in government buildings in various capitals and then trickles down to the grassroots.

Senator SCHATZ, Senator MARKEY, and I take a different view with respect to how you bring about political change in America. It is not top-down; it is bottom-up. It is bottom-up as Americans from all walks of life weigh in with their legislators, weigh in with the Federal Communications Commission. My guess is that pretty soon—probably tomorrow—the future of the internet is going to be in the hands of the Federal Communications Commission.

I just want to wrap up my remarks by talking about how important it is for the American people to go online to the Federal Communications Commission website and file a comment, and visit my website—wyden.senate.gov—where you can get more information.

I will close with this: I think my friends—certainly Senator MARKEY and Senator SCHATZ—may have heard this. I want to talk about the fight against internet piracy because we are all against internet piracy. No one is in favor of that kind of thievery, but we didn't think it made sense to damage the architecture of the internet—the domain name systems and the fundamental principles by which the internet operates—in the name of fighting piracy.

When there was a bill with a shortsighted view—it was called SOPA and PIPA—and it was introduced, scores and scores of Senators supported it immediately. I put a hold on this bill. I put a public hold on the bill. I chaired a little subcommittee of the Senate Finance Committee. There were close to a majority of Senators already in support of this flawed bill. We began to talk to those around the country who understand what it really means if you damage the internet and its architecture for a shortsighted and, in this case, unworkable approach.

Everybody thought we didn't have a chance of winning. There was very close to a majority in the Senate actually cosponsoring it. So a vote was scheduled on whether to lift my hold on this bill, the flawed PIPA and SOPA bill.

Four days before the vote was to take place on whether to lift my hold, 15 million Americans emailed, texted, called, went to community meetings. They went out all across the country. Mind you, these 15 million Americans were focused and spent more time online in a week than they did thinking about their U.S. Senator in a couple of years.

They said this defies common sense. We are not for internet piracy, but don't destroy the internet.

My hope is, once again, with the odds stacked against our side—the odds stacked against Senator SCHATZ, Senator MARKEY, and all the Senators who have been willing, on our side, to speak up against these powerful interests that really would like to gut net neutrality—that those who understand what the freedom of the net is all about, what it means to have this ability to communicate that is so vital to people without clout and power, will take the fight for the consumer, for the man and woman who just want a fair shake when they get an idea. My hope is, just as they did a few years ago in blocking this ill-advised SOPA and PIPA bill, that those who care so much about freedom and a fair shot for everybody will, once again, take the fight to the Federal Communications Commission, knowing that their voices can make a difference. They have made a difference in the past.

It is a real pleasure to be with Senator MARKEY and Senator SCHATZ.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, will the Senator from Oregon yield?

Mr. WYDEN. I yield.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, as the Senator from Oregon remembers so well, when he and I started in Congress, there was one telephone company.

Did we have innovation? Well, we had a company winning Nobel Prizes in basic research. Did we see applied research out there, new technologies? No. We saw a black rotary dial phone. So AT&T had to get broken up so there would be new companies, new competition, new technologies.

Ultimately, because of all of that effort toward deregulation to let more companies in, more innovations, we now have devices that we walk around with, which are just minicomputers in our pocket. We have millions of apps that people sitting in any city and town all across our country can develop and get online to try to make a few bucks.

Ultimately, it is still that old AT&T mentality: How do we shut it down? How do we close it down? How do we make it hard for the entrepreneur, hard for the innovator, hard for that new idea to get out there that makes it more productive, easier for the American people to be able to have access to these new programs?

I agree with the Senator from Oregon that this is a pivotal time in our country's entrepreneurial history. We have learned this lesson over and over again. The Senator has been a great leader on these issues, and I just want to compliment him on that. I compliment the Senator from Hawaii for his leadership on the issue.

I yield back the remainder of my time to the Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Massachusetts. In fact, I have to leave the floor right now to wrap up business for a very important Finance Committee meeting tomorrow. It is a markup where we are going to be looking at ways as part of the transformation of Medicare—what I call updating the Medicare guarantee—that some of the technologies my friend from Massachusetts talked about are going to be available to seniors.

I know our friend from New Hampshire has arrived, and she has been a very strong advocate of principles of net neutrality.

I yield the remainder of my time to her.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

I thank my friends from Oregon, Massachusetts, and Hawaii for their leadership on this very important issue concerning net neutrality.

Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the Federal Communications Commission's proposal to undermine critical net neutrality rules, which would change the internet as we know it today.

Tomorrow the FCC will vote on a notice of proposed rulemaking, which begins the unraveling of commonsense consumer protections that enhance our online experience. Net neutrality is a concept that requires internet service providers to provide equal access to online applications and content. It prevents internet service providers from discriminating against content and content providers, discrimination that can take the form of making certain web pages, certain applications, or videos load faster or load slower than others.

Net neutrality is integral to promoting innovation, supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses, and encouraging economic growth in my home State of New Hampshire and across the entire Nation.

In March, Washington Republicans, with the support of the Trump administration, voted to take away critical online privacy protections giving ISPs the green light to collect and use a consumer's online data without the consumer's consent. So it is no surprise that what corporate ISPs want next is to remove baseline protections that allow even the softest voice to be heard or the smallest of businesses to thrive against larger competitors.

I have heard time and again from Granite Staters who call and write to my office that we must fight to protect the net neutrality rules, rules that create an even playing field and protect consumers from unfair practices.

What we are seeing here in Washington is different. At the request of big cable companies and internet service providers, the Republican-controlled FCC, led by Chairman Ajit Pai, is taking aim at commonsense consumer protections that could change the free and open internet as we know it. As rationale, Chairman Pai has claimed that since net neutrality rules went into effect 2 years ago, investments in U.S. broadband companies have dropped to historically low levels.

Quite the opposite has occurred. Since the rules went into effect, AT&T's share price has gone up more than 20 percent, Comcast has increased 26 percent, and several ISPs have reassured investors that net neutrality would have no impact on their broadband investments. So this is just another ''gimme'' to big cable and industry stakeholders who want to put profits ahead of customer service and consumer protections.

In New Hampshire, innovative, small businesses are the backbone of our economy, creating good jobs, stimulating economic growth, and net neutrality has been integral to their success. More than 1,000 startups, innovators, investors, and entrepreneurial support organizations from across the country, including the company Digital Muse, in New Hampshire, sent a letter to Chairman Pai urging him to protect net neutrality rules. I plan to fight to do just that.

In giving entrepreneurs a level playing field to turn an idea into a thriving business that reaches a global audience, net neutrality helps promote innovation and boost economic growth. By dismantling net neutrality rules, internet service providers will be allowed to force small service providers to pay to play online, causing instability to startups and entrepreneurs across the Nation who might not be able to afford such fees. Companies like Digital Muse should be able to compete based on the quality of their goods and services, not on their ability to pay tolls to internet service providers.

Net neutrality isn't just good for startups and entrepreneurs, it has also created a platform for traditionally underrepresented voices, including women and minorities, to be heard and, as important, to add to our economic strength. Last week, my friend Senator CANTWELL and I sent a letter with several of our colleagues to Chairman Pai highlighting the importance of net neutrality to women and girls across the country. An open internet serves as a platform to elevate voices that are underrepresented or marginalized in traditional media, an experience many women in the field know all too well.

When turned away from traditional media outlets, women can turn to the internet as an autonomous platform to tell their stories in their own voices thanks to the vast array of media platforms enabled by net neutrality. Between 2007 and 2016, while the total number of business firms in America increased by 9 percent, the total number of women-owned firms increased by 45 percent, a rate five times the national average. This growth in women-owned business mirrors the emergence of the free and open internet as a platform for economic growth. Net neutrality has been essential to the growth of women-owned, innovative businesses, ensuring them the opportunity to compete with more established brands and content.

In addition to empowering women economically, an open internet has the

ability to empower all citizens civically. The National Women's March in January brought together hundreds of thousands of people to raise their voices and organize in marches across the country and around the world, largely through online activism. The Women's March and the many other marches that have followed since January demonstrate how an open internet can serve as a powerful mechanism for civic engagement and strengthening communities. The open and free internet is too powerful of a tool for civic engagement and social and economic mobility—especially for our underrepresented populations—to take away. Strong net neutrality rules are absolutely essential. They protect against content discrimination, they prevent internet toll lanes, they allow the FCC adequate room for oversight, and they require reasonable transparency from internet service providers. The rules also provide stability to our economy, to our entrepreneurs, and our innovative small businesses—enterprises that are integral to New Hampshire's and America's economic success.

I will continue fighting to ensure that our regulatory environment is one that spurs innovation, fosters economic growth, supports our small businesses, and allows the next young person with a big idea to prosper. I strongly oppose rules that would undermine net neutrality, and I hope the FCC listens throughout the comment period to concerns from Granite Staters and Americans who feel the same way.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I see that my friend from Minnesota is here and wonder if he would like to speak to this issue as well.

Mr. FRANKEN. I would.

Ms. HASSAN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise to discuss the Trump administration's effort to undo the open internet order. Together we must protect net neutrality and ensure that all content on the internet receives equal treatment from broadband providers regardless of who owns the content or how deep their pockets are.

Two years ago, American consumers and businesses celebrated the FCC's landmark vote to preserve the free and open internet by reclassifying broadband providers as common carriers under title II of the Communications Act. The vote came after the SEC received nearly 4 million public comments, the vast majority of which urged the agency to enact strong rules protecting net neutrality.

Consumers urged the Commission to protect their unfettered and affordable access to content. A wide range of advocacy organizations pressed the Commission to ensure that broadband providers couldn't pick and choose which voices and ideas would actually reach consumers. Small and large businesses alike asked that the internet remain an open marketplace where everyone can participate on equal footing, free from discrimination by companies like Comcast, Verizon, and AT&T.

The FCC responded by establishing rules that are strong, clear, and enforceable; rules that prevent broadband providers from blocking or throttling lawful online content, and rules that stop providers from charging websites for access to fast lanes.

Perhaps, most importantly, the FCC implemented these rules within the time-tested legal framework that allows the agency to respond to challenges to net neutrality that arise in the future. Following the commonsense path I have long urged, the FCC recognized that broadband access is a title II service—a classification that the DC Circuit has upheld and had previously signaled was necessary in order to establish strong rules.

The FCC's vote to implement strong net neutrality rules was an important victory for American consumers and for American business, and that victory demonstrated the overwhelming power of grassroots activism and civic participation. In 2014, millions of Americans from across the political spectrum organized to ensure that their voices were heard, and in the process, they redefined civic engagement in our country, but in the 21st century, that kind of participation requires an open internet, a place where people can freely share information and engage in meaningful public discourse.

Because of net neutrality, a handful of multibillion-dollar companies cannot bury sites offering alternative viewpoints or attempt to control how users get their information. Because of net neutrality, people from across the Nation can connect with each other, share their ideas on the internet, and organize a community effort.

I have always called net neutrality the free speech issue of our time because it embraces our most basic constitutional freedoms. Unrestricted public debate is vital to the functioning of our democracy. Now, perhaps more than ever, the need to preserve a free and open internet is abundantly clear. That is why I am so concerned about Chairman Pai's proposal to gut the strong net neutrality rules we fought so hard for.

Tomorrow, the FCC will vote officially to initiate a proceeding to undo the open internet order, but, importantly, American consumers and businesses will once again have an opportunity to make their voices heard. I hope the American people will contact the FCC, that they will remain engaged and willing to speak up, and that they will continue to use the internet to spread ideas, organize support, and ultimately counter the deep-pocketed ISPs and the politicians who seek to undermine net neutrality.

Two years ago, the best principles of our democracy won out. I do believe that with the same energy and determination that has gotten us this far, net neutrality supporters can garner another win for the American people.

I thank the Presiding Officer for this opportunity to speak.

I yield to my good friend from the State of Hawaii.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I thank Mr. FRANKEN for his leadership on this issue. He is a person who understands the content industry and has been a fierce defender of people's ability to view content online, people's ability to express themselves online, and understands that a fair and open media marketplace is central to our democracy.

I want to address one assertion that was made by the proponents of repealing net neutrality; that is, that somehow the investment climate under net neutrality was harmed. They say there is some reason to believe that under net neutrality, the investment climate was diminished, but the Internet Association published research today that addressed this very issue, and their findings show that since 2015, when the rules went into place, telecommunications investment has actually increased. ISPs and their consumers are enjoying historically low production costs and innovation has increased. Free Press also published a report on this question earlier this week, and they found that investment in broadband by publicly traded companies actually went up after net neutrality went into place. Here is what the research director at the Free Press had to say: ''If investment is the FCC's preferred metric, then there is only one possible conclusion—net neutrality and Title II are a smashing success.''

Here is the point. The internet is not broken. There are parts of the economy that are not working well. We struggle with manufacturing. We need to invest in infrastructure. We have a trade imbalance. We have a higher education system that is not working for everybody. We need to do more work in these areas, but the part of our economy that is working great for consumers, for entrepreneurs, for the private sector, for engaged citizens is the internet itself. Tomorrow, the FCC is going to endeavor to break it.

Before I hand it over to someone who has been working on these issues for many years, I want to point out that nobody would have anticipated that the Affordable Care Act would still be on the books because of unprecedented online and inperson organizing.

The FCC has a very unique process where there is going to be a 3-month public comment period. The statute actually allows the public to go and weigh in on what they think. The last time this happened when net neutrality principles were being established, 3.8 million people commented. So far, before they even take their first formal action, there are 1.6 million people who have already commented. My guess is, by the time tomorrow is

done—maybe the next day—we will be well into the 2 to 3 million comment range, and they still have 3 months to go. Understand the power in our democracy still resides with the people. Somebody who has been working in the trenches on this issue and many consumer issues for a very long time is my great colleague, the senior Senator from Connecticut, and I will yield to him as I realize I think I am standing at his dais.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I begin by thanking my colleague and friend Senator SCHATZ for his extraordinary leadership in this area that has brought us to the floor. I am proud to speak against the Federal Communications Commission Chairman's proposed order that is in fact slated for a vote at the open commission meeting tomorrow morning. That vote would undo the open internet order.

What is at stake here is, really, First Amendment rights to free speech. Those rights are threatened. Net neutrality has never been more important. Allowing broadband providers to block or discriminate against certain content providers is a danger to free speech and the freedom of our press. These principles are fundamental to our democracy. We should safeguard them by stopping this proposed repeal of the open internet order.

The internet's astonishing economic success is due to its being open and the access that it provides as an open platform. Anyone with a good idea can connect with consumers. Anyone who wants to reach across the globe to talk to others or to pitch and promote ideas and products encounters a level playing field, and that ought to be the reality.

On February 25, 2015, the FCC adopted the open internet order to preserve that open nature of the internet. The order, essentially, embodies three rules—no blocking, no throttling, no paid prioritization. Those principles are now at risk. In fact, they are in grave jeopardy. Those principles guarantee people, within the bounds of the law, access to different web content regardless of the political views expressed and regardless of the wealth of a site. They assure that the internet is open—that it is not a walled garden for wealthy companies. A lot is at stake here, and consumers and others should prevail because their interests are, ultimately, what is involved.

Ultimately, the Administrative Procedure Act requires, in my view, that Chairman Pai prove, through a fact-based docket, that something has significantly changed in the market since the open internet rule was established in February of 2015. Without that change in facts, the decimation of this rule cannot be justified. We cannot allow Chairman Pai to succeed in this plan to gut neutrality at the behest of moneyed internet service providers. Chairman Pai's proposal, if it succeeds tomorrow, will deprive the American people, startups, and businesses of important bright-line net neutrality rules. For that reason, I will fight it, and I hope my colleagues will join me in this effort.

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.

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

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

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise during Police Week to pay tribute to our police officers around the country—the men and women in blue who serve us every day in Ohio and in every State represented in this Chamber.

In Ohio, this is a particularly difficult week. Here we are during Police Week, and we are, once again, mourning the loss of a police officer. This happened just last Friday. Last Friday, a gunman took two people hostage in the woods behind a nursing home in Kirkersville, OH, which is a small town about 25 miles east of Columbus.

The first one to arrive on the scene was the police chief of this small town. His name was Steven DiSario. Chief Steven DiSario confronted the assailant, and he was ambushed by this assailant. He was shot. He was killed. This gunman then went inside the nursing facility, and he murdered two staff members—a registered nurse, Marlina Medrano, and a nurse's aide named Cindy Krantz. Then he took his own life.

By the way, Police Chief Steven DiSario was 36 years old and had just become the police chief in Kirkersville a month ago. The women who were slain were Marlina Medrano, who had a son, and Cindy Krantz, who had five kids, including a 10-year-old son. Those kids had to spend Mother's Day preparing for their moms' burials.

On Monday, I went to Kirkersville and saw the memorial there for the officer. I also had an opportunity to meet with some of the officers who were from neighboring communities. There was just one police officer in Kirkersville—just the chief. I was able to express to them the sympathy and the gratitude of the people throughout Ohio. I had brought a flag that had been flown over the U.S. Capitol in honor of Chief DiSario, and that flag will go to his family as a very small token of the appreciation and gratitude of all of us for their father's and husband's service.

Chief DiSario had six kids, and his widow, Aryn, is currently pregnant with their seventh child—a child who is never going to know his or her dad. What he or she will know is that he died a hero, that he died a hero in risking his life to protect innocent people.

That is what police officers do every single day. They keep us safe. They take dangerous criminals and weapons and drugs off our streets. They enforce the law. Even their very presence helps to deter crime and keep our communities safer, but they do it all at great risk—at great risk to themselves and at great sacrifice to their families.

A little more than a year ago, I did a ride-along in Columbus with Officer Greg Meyer. He is one of those brave Columbus police officers who goes out every day to help keep our communities safe, and we were focused on a couple of issues that night in Columbus.

One was the drug trade, particularly the opioid crisis we face in Ohio. He was able to show me where much of this activity occurs, and we were able to see with our eyes some of the people who were trafficking drugs, dispersing, and what goes on in our communities.

We were also talking about human trafficking and his work in that area. We were able to go to some particular places at which there had been trafficking in the past and where the police had broken up trafficking rings in which girls and women had been made to become dependent on heroin. Then the traffickers had them, often in a hotel for a week until they had moved on to another one and trafficked—sold—human beings, usually online, usually through the iPhone. Again, this police officer was able to tell me about what he has done and what his force has done to help protect these girls and women and to help get them out of that situation.

This was just a few hours for me, and I always enjoy doing these ride-alongs, but this is his life and their lives every day. They are out there doing their best to try to protect us and to make our communities safer.

The day before this tragedy occurred in Kirkersville, we had had a lot of police officers here in town because, on Thursday and Friday and over the weekend, police officers had been coming in for Police Week and Police Memorial Day, which was on Monday, so I had a chance to meet with a bunch of these officers and thank them for their service.

We talked about the fact that the job is dangerous and increasingly dangerous. Unfortunately, the numbers show that. Little did we know that, the day after we had been talking, there would have again been this tragedy in Ohio. We talked about the fact that some of their families have had sleepless nights because they do not know whether their husbands or their wives or their sons or daughters are going to be coming home.

In our Nation's history, more than 21,000 police officers have died in the line of duty. Think about that—21,000. We have already had 42 this year, 2017. In 2016, we lost 143, which is about one officer every 3 days. Again, last year, five of those fallen officers were from Ohio: Aaron Christian, a patrolman with the Chesapeake Police Department; Thomas Cottrell, a patrolman

with the Danville Police Department; Sean Johnson, of the Hilliard, OH, Division of Police; Steven Smith, of the Columbus Division of Police; and Kenneth Velez, an Ohio State trooper.

I had the opportunity to meet with some of the families of these fallen officers to express our appreciation, to express our respect for them and the sacrifices that they bear. It takes courage to wear the badge, and those officers wear the badge day in and day out. They knew what they were getting into. Yet they wore that badge; they died wearing that badge.

Although these heroic men were taken from us, their examples can never be taken away and will not be. Ohioans are going to remember them as models of bravery and service, as examples of fellow citizens who, on behalf of all of us, were in the habit of walking into danger rather than running away from it.

We have an opportunity to do something that will make a difference for our police officers by supporting the Police Week resolution that the House and the Senate are working on. I urge all of my colleagues to support it, and I am sure they will. I think we need to show our men and women in blue, who are on the frontlines, that we do appreciate them.

There is also legislation that can be supported. Most recently, with the majority whip, I introduced legislation that is called the Back the Blue Act. It is very simple. It says, if you target law enforcement officers, you are going to have to pay a very high price. That is appropriate. We think the Back the Blue Act, which would increase penalties on those who would attempt to harm or kill a police officer, is going to make a difference because it will send a strong message and help deter some of these crimes. Ultimately, I think that it will make our heroes in blue safer and help save lives.

Again, I urge my colleagues to join me in the wake of this terrible tragedy we had in central Ohio. I know the people of Ohio are looking for Congress to stand tall and to stand with our police officers and to thank them for what they do to protect us every day.

Let's support this Police Week resolution. Let's support the Back the Blue Act. Let's do everything we can to ensure that our police officers know that we are with them—that we are at their side—as they do their job every day to protect us.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, pending before the Senate is the nomination of Rachel Brand to be the Associate Attorney General of the United States—the United States, not of the President.

We once had an Attorney General who told us on the Judiciary Committee that as a member of the President's staff, it is not the Secretary of Justice; it is the Attorney General of the United States.

I say this because her nomination to the third most senior position at the Department of Justice comes at an unprecedented time of chaos and upheaval—not only at the Justice Department, but also at the White House, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and across much of this administration.

We should all agree that it is more important than ever that the Justice Department be led by public servants with independence and integrity. Unfortunately, President Trump's Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General have failed this test. I did not expect Attorney General Sessions to show independence from the President, which is why I voted against his nomination.

But I had higher hopes for Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein. Mr. Rosenstein's role in the dismissal of FBI Director Comey and his willingness to provide pretext for President Trump's interference in the Bureau's ongoing Russia investigation has precipitated a crisis of confidence in the Department.

The Senate must take steps to restore the independence of the Department of Justice. After reviewing her record and hearing her testimony at her confirmation hearing, I am not confident that Rachel Brand is up to that task. Like so many of the President's nominees, she carries a heavily skewed, pro-corporate agenda that would do further harm to the Justice Department and its independence.

Ms. Brand has long championed deregulation and the rolling back of vital environmental, consumer, and labor regulations protecting the American people. Ms. Brand has justified indiscriminate surveillance of Americans and defended broad assertions of Executive power. She even refused to say whether she would recuse herself from matters involving the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber Litigation Center, her current employer. I cannot support a nominee who lacks an independent voice. I will therefore vote against her nomination.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. President, every day seems to bring new, disturbing revelations involving this President and his administration. I almost hesitate to say ''every day'' because sometimes it is every hour.

Yesterday's report that the President pressured former FBI Director Comey to terminate the ongoing investigation into Michael Flynn is extraordinary. If true, the President's conduct could warrant charges for obstruction of justice.

Now, the notion that the Russia investigation could be led by a political appointee of this President, who serves at the pleasure of this President, is preposterous; yet Senate Republicans have attempted to justify Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein's failure to appoint a special counsel. Their arguments are wrong. I want to take a few minutes to explain why.

The President says he fired James Comey because James Comey wouldn't pledge loyalty to him. Apparently, pledging loyalty to the rule of law was not as important. Most Americans don't care whether the Director of the FBI is a Republican or Democrat; they just want him or her to be committed to upholding the law, not a political position.

Every lawyer knows that, when you are considering a legal question, you begin with a statute or regulation at issue. The relevant regulation, found in the Code of Federal Regulations, is worth reading in full.

I ask unanimous consent that the regulation be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my statement.

The rule requires that an independent special counsel be appointed if three conditions are met.

The first condition is that a ''criminal investigation of a person or matter is warranted.'' This is not an open question in this instance—there is already an active investigation.

The second condition is met when an investigation by the Justice Department ''would present a conflict of interest for the Department or other extraordinary circumstances.'' If Mr. Rosenstein, a political appointee, were to lead this investigation, he may be forced to investigate both his immediate supervisor, the Attorney General, and the President. That is the definition of a conflict of interest. That alone is enough.

But in this investigation, extraordinary circumstances abound. Last week, the President admitted that he fired the official leading this investigation because of ''this Russia thing.'' His Deputy Press Secretary then said, ''We want this to come to its conclusion. . . . And we think that we've actually, by removing Director Comey, taken steps to make that happen.'' Yesterday, we learned that President Trump may have also pressured the FBI Director to close the investigation into Michael Flynn's contacts with Russian officials. If these are not ''extraordinary circumstances,'' then those words have no meaning at all.

The third condition is met when ''it would be in the public interest to appoint an outside Special Counsel.'' I cannot recall a more serious national security investigation. Russian interference in our election, possible collusion with the Trump campaign and administration, and the President's repeated assaults on the rule of law have eroded trust in our democratic institutions like nothing I have seen. According to the President's own statements, this investigation has been repeatedly compromised by political interference.

Because all three conditions are met, the Deputy Attorney General does not have a choice in this matter. It is not discretionary. The regulation requires that Mr. Rosenstein appoint a special counsel. Each minute that he refuses

to follow this rule, he further diminishes the integrity of this investigation, as well as the integrity of the Justice Department itself.

I would ask anyone who still claims that a special counsel is not required to reconcile their opinion with the Justice Department rules. We may disagree on policy matters, but I hope we all agree on the supremacy of the rule of law and that no person and no President should be above it.

I know some Republicans have expressed concerns about the integrity of this investigation in public, and many others have expressed it to me privately. At this critical time, we cannot stand on the sidelines. We have a constitutional requirement to act as a check and balance on the conduct of the President. That starts with joining the call for a special counsel.

Mr. President, I love the Senate. I think of the Senate as a place that can be the conscience of our Nation. But more than that, I love the system of government where we have real checks and balances. I respect the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch, but in my decades here, I have never seen such an assault by the President of the United States on the integrity and the independence of our Federal court system; the assault on our free press, including the suggestion that we should pass new libel laws to go after members of the press who might dare criticize this administration; or the assault, of course, on the Congress; or the pitting of one religion against another—this undermines everything that has kept this nation strong. It is not just our weapons and our military. As General Clapper indicated the other day, if we break down our institutions of government, if we let them attack each other and break each other down, then they lose credibility, and we as a country suffer.

Our Nation is too great for this, and we Senators in both parties have to stand up and help bring the country back together.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

28 C.F.R. § 600.1 GROUNDS FOR APPOINTING A SPECIAL COUNSEL.

The Attorney General, or in cases in which the Attorney General is recused, the Acting Attorney General, will appoint a Special Counsel when he or she determines that criminal investigation of a person or matter is warranted and—

(a) That investigation or prosecution of that person or matter by a United States Attorney's Office or litigating Division of the Department of Justice would present a conflict of interest for the Department or other extraordinary circumstances; and

(b) That under the circumstances, it would be in the public interest to appoint an outside Special Counsel to assume responsibility for the matter.

Mr. LEAHY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, over the weekend I heard a story I wanted to share with everyone here today. The story goes that there were three candles burning on a porch right across the street from the Cornwell Funeral Home in Dardanelle, AR—my hometown, just a couple blocks away from my home. A family had lit them in the memory of the three people who were brutally murdered last week in Chickalah, just a few miles outside of Dardanelle.

One of those slain was Lieutenant Kevin Mainhart of the Yell County Sheriff's Department, who was killed after he stopped a man wanted in a domestic disturbance. In honor of his 5 years of service to Yell County—on top of the 20 years of service he rendered to the West Memphis Police Department—his fellow officers escorted in their cruisers the white hearse carrying his body from the State crime laboratory in Little Rock back to Dardanelle.

The family across the street had lit a green candle, specifically for Lieutenant Mainhart, and the three candles burned all the night. But as the hearse pulled into the funeral home, the green candle suddenly went out.

You could say that it was nothing more than a strange coincidence, but I think there is something especially poignant about the sudden, tragic loss of Lieutenant Mainhart's life so close to National Police Week, which began on Sunday. Like that green candle, Lieutenant Mainhart lit up his community, and, like that flickering flame, his life was too brief.

Like every American this week, I wish to pay my respects to Lieutenant Mainhart and the noble profession he chose. One of the things which struck me about Lieutenant Mainhart's death was that it came so early in the morning. The stop occurred at 7:18 a.m. He had the whole day and his whole life in front of him.

He was only 46 years old, but he had made the most of his time on this Earth. He was a husband, a father, an Air Force vet, a beloved member of our community. Hundreds of people don't line the streets for just anybody. Yet, in a moment, he was gone—his family bereft, our community in mourning. It is a reminder of how precious and fragile every life really is.

It also goes to show just how brave every police officer really is, because this is the risk they take every morning. They put on the uniform, they kiss their families good-bye, and they go to work, never fully certain they will get home that night. Yet the ever-present threat of death doesn't hold them down. It doesn't hold them back. It doesn't dim the brilliance of their service. They give it their all, day after day, without giving it a moment's thought. That, to me, is the ultimate sign of character—when you do the right thing without even thinking about it.

People like this are hard to come by. The sad truth is, we need a lot of them. A free country always does, because there is no freedom without security. We are so used to this basic fact—that for most of us, most of the time we are safe—that we forget how remarkable it is. Not so many people on God's green Earth can take that safety for granted. We often forget what it takes to secure it. We forget how easily we can lose it—and lose men and women like Lieutenant Mainhart—in an instant.

It is with this in mind—this grave understanding of what our safety requires—that I once again speak against continued efforts to water down Federal sentencing laws. I thought this ill-advised idea had expired last year, especially after Donald Trump's election. But advocates for criminal leniency are at it again, even though violent crime continued to rise in our cities for 2 years straight, and law enforcement officers are being killed in the line of duty.

I have already made my position clear. If we want to take a second look at punishments for first-time drug possession, let's do that. But we should know that fewer than 500 people are in Federal prison for such offenses. If we want to clean up our prisons, rehabilitate felons, and help them achieve redemption, by all means, let's do that, too. I would even consider a bill to speed up review of inmates' applications for pardons and commutations, to help the President exercise this constitutional authority. But we should not—we should not—lower mandatory minimums for violent crimes, repeat offenders, and drug trafficking. There is nothing compassionate about putting the lives of innocent people—and our law enforcement officers—at risk.

Lieutenant Mainhart isn't the only one. There were three police officers killed in the line of duty last year in Arkansas: Robert Barker in the McCrory Police Department, William Cooper in the Sebastian County Sheriff's Office, and Lisa Mauldin in the Miller County Sheriff's Office. Every one of these losses was too steep a price to pay, and unwise criminal leniency policies put at risk their fellow officers and our communities.

I know it is considered old-fashioned to be tough on crime—or, even worse, cold-hearted and mean. But a man doesn't put a lock on his door because he hates those on the outside. He does it because he loves those on the inside—his wife, his kids, all his family—because they are the joy of his life. The men and women of law enforcement don't just protect their own families—they protect all of our families. Every day those men and women put their lives on the line for their fellow citizens. The least we can do is to stand behind them and support them, both for the work they do and for the lives they lead.

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

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

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the recent firing of FBI Director Jim Comey and Russian interference in our democracy. Jim Comey was my law school classmate, and I know that in my State he has a lot of respect from our agents and also from law enforcement in general in our State.

When we had the stabbing in the mall in St. Cloud, MN—it was just with our police chief from St. Cloud—it was the FBI that came in and helped at the crime scene and with other things, because for a smaller police department it is difficult to deal with something like that and because they also had work to do working with the community to calm people.

The result was a good one because of the courageous work of an off-duty police officer. While people were injured, no one was killed, and the investigation was completed.

This is just one example of the work the FBI has done when Director Comey was in charge. I think we focus very much on what goes on in this town, but there are a lot of agents and law enforcement out there who have deep respect for him.

Last week, when Director Comey was fired, I came to the floor and said that in the recent months foundational elements of our democracy—including the rule of law—have been questioned, challenged, and even undermined. Today I return to the floor with the same concern.

In the last 48 hours alone, we have learned that, in addition to sharing top secret intelligence information with Russia without checking about it ahead of time—and we know Presidents have the right to share information and declassify it, but in instances of which we are aware, the President checks with intelligence agencies ahead of time. Was this shared with an ally? No. This was shared with Russia, a country that 17 intelligence agencies in the United States of America established was trying to undermine our election; Russia, which was found responsible for trying to shoot down and successfully brought down a plane, killing innocent people in Ukraine; the same regime that has poisoned dissidents; the same regime that has put people to death for simply expressing an opinion that is different from Vladimir Putin's. That is the country with which the President chose to share this information.

What else happened in the last 48 hours? Well, President Trump allegedly urged Director Comey—this news dropped in the last 48 hours—to end the investigation into ties between Russia and General Flynn and to put reporters who publish classified leaks in prison. This was information I didn't know before. It happened in the last few months, of course, but it all came out in the last 48 hours.

The American people are looking to Congress for answers in the face of this assault on our democracy. It is our job to give them the answers they deserve and to right this ship. That is why I continue to call for a special prosecutor. Ever since the Attorney General had to recuse himself because of his own meetings and ties with Russia and ever since this mess kept getting messier, I have been calling for a special prosecutor. I believe that is the way to go.

Also, I have long called for an independent commission, and this is for a different purpose. As the Senate Intelligence Committee continues its bipartisan work, a special prosecutor and the FBI would get to the bottom of any criminal investigation. To me, the purpose of an independent commission would be to set the rules of the road so that this doesn't happen again and so our country can protect itself. This would be a panel of experts appointed by both sides. Their focus could well be to take these facts but to put them into a future election, as in, what do we do when campaigns get information that clearly is from a cyber attack from a foreign power?

Our Founding Fathers have said that our elections are precious and that they should be protected from foreign powers. Way back then, they were thinking of Great Britain. Now we are thinking of Russia. Next time, it could be another country. We should have some rules of the road.

It is not that long ago that—I remember when Presidential campaigns would be given some information that they weren't supposed to get from the opposing side, and they would actually return it to the opposing side. We could go back to that kind of day.

We could also have the media have some rules of the road. Look at what happened with the recent French election when there was a cyber attack there. The media didn't put out every rumor and everything they got out of that cyber attack; they showed some discretion.

Those are the kinds of things we could do with an independent commission in addition to factfinding.

I will start with this special prosecutor. The stack of reasons why we need a special prosecutor is getting higher and higher every day. Aides and surrogates of the Trump administration during both the campaign and in the transition were in contact with officials from a foreign government that was actively working to tear our democracy apart. That is pretty much established.

We know that the campaign chair for the Trump campaign had to step down because of his ties to Russia. We know that General Flynn was on the phone with the Russian Ambassador on the very day President Obama declared he wanted to expand sanctions against Russia. We also know he then lied to the Vice President of the United States about it. Those things happened during the campaign and during the transition.

Last week, former Acting Attorney General Sally Yates and former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper reminded us—I was there in the Judiciary Committee—they reminded us that on the very day that President Obama imposed those sanctions, that was when General Flynn—the former National Security Advisor; the person charged with the most sensitive matters of U.S. national security—was contacted—the Ambassador—and then he later lied to the Vice President about that contact.

I actually asked them specifically that after the fact that Flynn knew he was on tape, that they knew that, that there was a tape of him saying one thing to the Russians and then another to a high-ranking official in America—that would be the Vice President—I asked them if that was material for blackmail. They both said definitively that it was.

Yet, when Sally Yates went to the administration twice for two formal meetings with other people—this wasn't just a little heads-up at a cocktail party; she actually went to the White House to inform them that she believed the National Security Advisor had been compromised. What happened? They let him stay on for 18 days. And 2 days in, he was on an hourlong call between Vladimir Putin and the President of the United States of America.

Then, of course, we have the fact that the Attorney General was forced to recuse himself from any involvement with the Russia investigation because he met with the Russian Ambassador.

I will note that he met with the Russian Ambassador just a few days after President Obama and President Putin had met at an international meeting. At that meeting and then publicly President Obama had said: No, I am not pulling back these sanctions. Then what happens? Jeff Sessions, who was closely affiliated with the Trump campaign, a surrogate for the campaign, goes and meets with the Russian Ambassador.

Because of that and some things that happened in his confirmation hearing, he has now recused himself from any matters regarding the investigation between Russia and this administration and the campaign.

In addition to the recusal, we have seen two people resign, as I noted: the campaign manager, the campaign chair, and the National Security Advisor. The one thing they have in common is Russia and President Trump.

We have seen three people fired. One is Sally Yates, who was the Acting Attorney General of the United States. While the reasons given for her firing were, of course, related to the refugee order, in fact, she was fired on the very

same day she had gone to the White House to talk to them about General Flynn. We have Preet Bharara, who was fired after saying he could stay on. He was the U.S. attorney in Manhattan, in a very major position to investigate these kinds of issues and crimes. And then, of course, we have Jim Comey. The one thing they all have in common is that they were all investigating various facets of this.

In fact, Director Comey, as I noted—who had gotten support and respect from law enforcement—was fired the same day Federal prosecutors issued grand jury subpoenas to Michael Flynn's associates, just days after Comey requested more resources, according to news reports, to carry out the Russia investigation, and 2 days before he was scheduled to testify publicly before the Senate Intelligence Committee, where Members of that committee were going to ask him about Russia.

Think about it. The independent government officials who are charged with getting to the truth, no matter where it leads, were fired. And the President of the United States reportedly now—and this is what we have learned in the last 48 hours, and of course we want to get to the bottom of the evidence, but according to news reports, he urged the FBI Director to end the investigation into the ties between Russia and Mike Flynn.

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. The President can't fire Congress. He can fire the Acting Attorney General. He can fire the FBI Director, although I think it is very important that we get to the bottom of why the FBI Director was fired and whether it was for the reasons that were given in the memo that was prepared by the Justice Department or whether it was because of what President Trump has said—that it was related to Russia—or whether was because at one point he said he wasn't doing his job, which is not what I have heard from agents on the street. The one group the President cannot fire is right here in this room. The President cannot fire the U.S. Senate. The President can't fire the House of Representatives. He is not above the law.

This administration cannot investigate itself. We have the ongoing and important investigation led by bipartisan leaders, Senator BURR and Senator WARNER. That is important and must continue. We also need a special prosecutor to look into the President's most recent conduct and all contacts between Trump campaign aides and surrogates and Russian officials during the campaign, the transition, and the administration. This prosecutor must be fair and impartial and completely unattached to either political party. Above all, this prosecutor must be comfortable speaking truth to power.

In addition to a special prosecutor, we need an independent commission. When I came back from my trip with Senator MCCAIN and Senator GRAHAM to Ukraine, the Baltics, and Georgia, I made it very clear—I remember speaking to my colleagues about this—that what we saw there made me even more concerned about the finding of our intelligence agencies because those countries have seen this movie over and over again where Russia has cyber attacked them. It happened in Lithuania just because they had the audacity to invite members of the Ukrainian Parliament from Crimea, who were in exile in Kiev, for their 25th anniversary, and they got hacked into. It happened in Estonia, where they moved a bronze statue out of a public square and into the cemetery with other statues of soldiers. But this was a Russian soldier. The Russians didn't like it. This was in 2007. What did they do? They shut down the internet for the entire country. This is not just a single incident involving one candidate or one political party or one election or even one country; this is something widespread. It is an attack on democracy.

That is why, when I came back from that trip, I stood with Senator CARDIN and House Members ADAM SCHIFF and ELIJAH CUMMINGS to stand up for a bill, which has a number of other sponsors, to create an independent, nonpartisan commission to uncover all the facts and make sure future elections and political campaigns are safeguarded from foreign interference.

For months, U.S. intelligence agencies—17 of them—have said that Russia used covert cyber attacks, espionage, and harmful propaganda to try to undermine our democracy. Reports show it. The facts prove it. Some $200 million dollars was spent alone on Russian TV on our own election. Much of it was passed out on the internet.

Last week, the former Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, testified that Russia will continue to interfere in our election system. This is what he said:

> 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.

Vigilance. He said that Russia felt emboldened by what happened. What happened in the last 48 hours? We find out that he had given high-level intelligence to the Russians before we gave it to any of our allies, before we checked it out with intelligence agencies. That actually emboldens them. We find out that, in fact—because Director Comey kept such meticulous notes, we find out that allegedly the President asked him to discontinue the investigation into General Flynn. What does that do? That emboldens Russia even more.

What former Director Clapper was telling us was that we need vigilance. We need oversight. We need to send a clear message that they cannot continue doing this. We do not need to embolden them.

What message does it send when the President urges the person in charge of the investigation into Russia's election interference to let it go? It is not one of vigilance in seeking the truth and fighting against a foreign adversary.

An independent commission of nonpartisan experts can get to the bottom of this and tell us how we can prevent this from happening again. They can provide recommendations to help prevent future attacks on our democracy from being successful.

In addition to a special prosecutor and independent commission, we also need our congressional committees 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 the fundamental jobs of Congress is to closely oversee the executive branch to ensure that the law is being properly followed and enforced. That means we need congressional committees to continue their investigation into Russian inference in our political system. We have subpoena power for that reason, and we need to use it. There are tapes. The President says there may be tapes. Of course, redact the classified information. We don't want to hurt anyone any further from what has been happening in the last few weeks. But we should see the transcripts. We should have the tapes. There is bipartisan support for turning over this material, including the memos prepared by Director Comey.

(Mr. LEE assumed the Chair.)

Today Senators GRASSLEY, FEINSTEIN, GRAHAM, and WHITEHOUSE sent a letter to the FBI and White House Counsel requesting these documents. Many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle understand the importance of doing our jobs to get to the bottom of this. The ongoing bipartisan Intelligence Committee investigation is vital to addressing the covert and classified aspects of Russian interference, but we also need transparency because the American people deserve to know as much as possible about what happened and how we are going to prevent it in the future.

That is why I fully support the Judiciary Committee hearings that Senators GRAHAM and WHITEHOUSE have held in the Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism. I also believe, as a member of the Judiciary Committee, that if the Director is to testify—former Director Comey—he should come before the Judiciary Committee because these are matters related to his service as an FBI Director. They are related to the justice system, to the criminal justice system, and we should hear from him.

I hope Senator GRASSLEY has requested that he come before our committee. I am aware that the Intelligence Committee also would like him to come, but I think it is important, given the substance of what is at issue

here. Yes, he should appear before Intelligence about ongoing matters related to the Russian investigation, but there is also the issue of the fact that he was fired. We heard one thing in a memo from the Justice Department, we heard one thing from the White House, we heard another thing from the White House, and then we heard another thing from the President. That is all true. We need to get to the bottom of this.

On Monday, Republican Senator BOB CORKER said that the administration was in a ''downward spiral.'' He used the word ''chaos.'' That was before we even knew that the President may have urged the FBI Director to end the Russia investigation and put reporters in prison. This is an unprecedented time in our country's history.

The Presiding Officer, having written a book on the Constitution, knows that one of our jobs is to stand by that Constitution. Yet we are witnessing a singular moment of constitutional and democratic unease.

On this day in 1973, the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities began televised hearings on Watergate. One week later, Professor Archibald Cox was sworn in as special Watergate prosecutor. Like Director Comey, who was leading the investigation into Russian interference in our election, Archibald Cox was eventually fired by the President for doing his job. The night that Archibald Cox was fired by President Nixon for investigating Watergate, he 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 was right.

The American people deserve a thorough, independent investigation into whether this administration obstructed justice and the extent of Russia's interference in the 2016 Presidential election. They need to know it because we are a democracy. We don't hide things like this. We get the facts. We get the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. That is what our democracy is about, and that is what our justice system is about. But they also need to know it because our democracy is the basis of our freedoms. If we don't protect our democracy in the coming elections, then we hurt those freedoms. The only way we figure out how we are going to protect that democracy is getting to the bottom of the truth, so we can figure out how to prevent it from happening in the future. This is not a partisan issue; this is an American issue, and Americans deserve answers.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID HANKERSON AND DAVID CONNELL

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, we debate a lot of heavy things in the United States Senate. We make tough decisions. Decisions of the fate of our country lie in the balance. But day in and day out, sometimes we go an entire day or week without talking about the people who make America work: the entrepreneurs, the employees, the employers, the people who run the businesses, pay the taxes, and employ the citizens who make this country go.

Today, I rise to talk about two citizens from my home county, Cobb County. First is David Hankerson. David announced this week his retirement after being employed by our county for 33 years. He came to the community development department of the county 33 years ago, and 11 years later, he became the first county manager of the county and served in that position for a record 24 years. During that time, the county doubled, not just in its population, but tripled and quadrupled in its revenue. It did new and different and innovative things. As tax rates went down, productivity went up. Its popularity as a place to locate became preeminent. He is one of the shining stars in the State of Georgia today, in Cobb County.

I rise for a special reason to pay tribute to David Hankerson, however, because he represents something I was a part of in 1984. At the time he was being hired, I did not know him as an employee for the county; I was in the State legislature, trying to change the government for our county from an elected CEO to an appointed county manager, a professional operator of the county. That had not been done in Georgia. In other parts of the country, it had been done successfully. You had continuity of leadership—someone whose job was to be a good leader, who wasn't an elected politician, someone who could do the job.

David Hankerson was hired to do that job in Cobb County, GA. He did one of the most remarkable jobs anyone has ever done. In fact, the great testimony is that every year since he was there—24 years ago as county manager—someone has tried to hire him away from Cobb County. Every year he decided to stay because he once had said: I have made a commitment. As long as the commitment is returned by the community to me, I am going to stay and see it through.

On this day, as I rise on the floor of the U.S. Senate to pay tribute to David Hankerson, I pay tribute equally to all those who make our government work, our businesses work, our communities work, and our country work, to the men and women laboring in the fields and toiling in the vineyards, working in the shops, working in the offices who make America the great country it is today, and to the great chambers of commerce that make it happen as well.

I pay great tribute to David Hankerson and thank him for the contribution and sacrifice he made to the people of Cobb County, GA, and the State of Georgia.

Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute to one other Georgian, the retiring chairman and CEO of the Cobb County Chamber of Commerce, David Connell. This is the kind of guy you really appreciate. He worked for 40 years at the Georgia Power Company. He had 12 different titles in 40 years. He was a great employee of that company, a great member of the community of Cobb County, a great private citizen, and great personal friend of mine.

After 40 years of working there and retiring, the county had a big problem. The chamber of commerce had a scandal. It couldn't find a leader and was losing its effectiveness. David volunteered to go in as a chamber board member and spent 1 year as chamber leader. He stayed there 15 years and led the chamber to new heights unprecedented in our State and in our county: an AAA bond rating in our county, new businesses coming and relocating, and even the now-famous relocation of the Atlanta Braves from downtown Atlanta to suburban Cobb County—one of the rare moves a professional team has ever made smoothly and easily. They made it because of David Connell.

David will tell you that when the chamber board found out the Braves were interested in maybe talking about building a $750 million facility in the county, they asked David if he would stay until that was accomplished. He made the commitment to do so, and it took 3½ years—3½ long years. It was a lot of effort, all in a circuitous nature because of the popularity of the Braves and what would have happened had it gotten out as a rumor that they were coming.

David closed that deal this year. The Braves opened this season in a new stadium. With three-quarters of a billion dollar investment having been made, the county is more prosperous. David Connell made it happen.

He announced this week that he is retiring after 40 years at the power company and 15 years at the Cobb County Chamber of Commerce.

I want to take a moment on the floor of the Senate to say thank you to David Connell for what he has done for our county and our community, for our citizens and our families, and how proud I am as one of his friends. I thank him for a job well done.

David, thank you. We are proud of you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

WELCOMING BACK SENATOR ISAKSON

Mr. GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. President.

It is great to have our colleague from Georgia on the floor of the Senate once again, doing the outstanding job that he has always done for the people of Georgia, recognizing the great individuals back home who make Georgia such a great State, and we are just blessed to have him here. I thank him for his continued service for the people of Georgia and the people of this country.

WELL WISHES TO SENATOR TILLIS

I am also grateful to be standing at a desk that is next to the desk of our colleague THOM TILLIS, the Senator from North Carolina. I am glad he is ''up and at 'em'' today after a little bit of a startle this morning.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. President, I rise to talk about the sea of blue that is in Washington, DC, this week. Monday was National Police Day. This week, we celebrate National Police Week. Law enforcement personnel—men and women from around the country—are in Washington to share their incredible commitment, their stories of sacrifice, courage, and the work they have done to protect our communities. Indeed, they are the frontlines of protection for our communities.

These incredible men and women in Colorado and across the country put their lives on the line each and every day to keep us safe.

They put their lives on the line each and every day to keep us safe. While they don't do this work—this sacrifice, this commitment—selfishly or for credit or recognition, I think all of us in the Senate this week join together when we say that we are happy to see so many of them in the Nation's Capital for this National Police Week.

I will never forget one time when we were out in Colorado and we were at a September 11 commemoration service. Our son Thatcher—he is 5 years old now; at the time, he was probably about 4 years old. It was just last year that we walked by a group of police officers who were there working that day. We were talking about the loss of so many first responders and law enforcement personnel and that September 11 day in 2001, so many years ago now, it seems. But I remember telling our son Thatcher—I said: Thatcher, what do we say to police officers? I was thinking his response would be, thank you. I said: You should go tell them that. You should go tell that to the police officer.

He walked up to the police officer and he got a little nervous—4 years old. I said: What do you say, Thatcher? Again, I was thinking he would say: Thank you. Instead, he looked up at the police officer and he said: You are a hero.

It kind of choked me up a little bit. I didn't say that to him; that was something that this 4 year old knew instinctively—knew from the work they had done around communities, the conversations he has been a part of. At 4 years old, he knew the work they do to protect us.

They are heroes. They show the highest amount of courage one can imagine. They run toward danger without hesitation to keep us safe and to protect our communities.

We ask an incredible amount of our law enforcement time and again. They are answering the call, whether that is a call wondering why someone hasn't moved a car for several days, a call to do a wellness check or maybe to ask why they haven't heard from an elderly relative or maybe a call because they saw a broken window and they are concerned about what is happening inside.

We call on them each and every day to protect our communities. While we honor and celebrate the men and women protecting us this week, we must also remember our fallen heroes. Their courage is unparalleled. They went to work each and every day facing risks that most of us find unimaginable, never expecting their end of watch to occur on that day.

In Colorado and across the country last year, tragedy struck far too many times. Last year, Colorado lost three men in the line of duty, three men who will never be forgotten by the people of Colorado or their families, their communities.

Earlier this week, I met with the family of one of these fallen heroes, Corporal Nate Carrigan. Nate Carrigan, a sheriff's deputy for Park County, was a role model in the community and someone who took great pride in protecting the people and the area he loved. The pride and love Nate's family have for the work their son did to keep his community safe is unexplainable.

We also lost a sheriff's deputy, Derek Geer, this past year in Colorado, and we lost Cody Donahue in Colorado in 2016. All of them were memorialized this week. We celebrated their lives this week, and I hope their families know and recognize that we will always hold them and their loved ones in our prayers. They will always be a part of our community's fabric, knowing each and every day we rely on them to provide our own families with protection.

Mr. President, thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to Rachel Brand's nomination to the No. 3 spot in the Justice Department. Now, there are many reasons I am opposed to this nomination, but those reasons are all grounded in a central question facing America today: Whom does this government work for? Does it work just for the rich and powerful? Does it work just for the well connected? Does it work just for the billionaire in the White House or does it work for everyone?

One of the worst kept secrets in America is that there are two justice systems; one for the rich and powerful and one for everyone else. The first justice system is an exclusive club for giant corporations and wealthy individuals. In that justice system, serious crimes are punished with a slap on the wrist and a small fine. Taxpayers bail out corporations that stole the life savings, and wealthy criminals go back to their lives without missing a beat.

The second justice system is for those who can't buy their way out of prison time. In that system, minor, nonviolent offenses are punished with harsh prison sentences. When those individuals are eventually released, they are branded with the scarlet letter that closes doors to employment and opportunity. It is a system that swallows up people whole and spits them out with nothing.

Americans are very familiar with the difference between those two justice systems. We saw the difference after the worst financial crisis in a generation, when Wall Street tycoons who gambled away the life savings of working Americans walked away free as a bird. We saw it in the War on Drugs when countless Black and Brown people were shoveled into prisons, where they wasted their lives away.

We need to fix this problem. We should be devoting every resource we have to fixing this problem. That starts with the Justice Department, the agency responsible for ensuring that nobody is above the law, and everyone—everyone is held accountable.

Unfortunately, it has been pretty clear to me for some time now that President Trump's Justice Department is pushing as hard as possible in the opposite direction. For much of President Obama's second term, prosecutors were allowed some discretion to consider the unique circumstances of each case and make a measured decision about when to ask for the most serious charge with the maximum penalty or when to ask for less.

It worked. Jail time for low-level drug offenses went down. States saved money, and lives were not irretrievably broken. Last week, that modest advance came to an end. Attorney General Sessions directed prosecutors to charge individuals with the harshest sentences possible. ''Lock them up'' seems to be his approach—but not in all cases. Jeff Sessions sings a very different tune when it comes to white-collar crime. He believes corporations should not be punished for the actions of their executives. Don't punish the companies for a few bad CEO apples.

In Jeff Session's world, we should throw the book at criminals, unless they are rich and powerful. Now, President Trump has chosen to somewhat help Jeff Sessions carry out his vision. His choice to be the third highest ranking official at the Justice Department is Rachel Brand, the nominee for Associate Attorney General.

She is well equipped to carry out that soft-on-white-collar-crime approach. She has extensive experience—years of experience—fighting on behalf of the biggest and richest companies in the world. She spent years leading the Chamber of Commerce's assault on the rules that protect working families, evidently deciding time after time that it is corporations that should get every break.

As the head of regulatory litigation of the chamber of commerce, Ms. Brand worked to dismantle environmental rules that prevent companies from poisoning our air and water. She worked to shield financial companies

from accountability when they broke the law or did not play by the rules. She worked to end the employment rules that prevent companies from abusing their workers.

If she is confirmed to the No. 3 spot at the Justice Department, she can watch out for giant corporations from her perch right inside the government. The Brand nomination is just another predictable move from a President who clearly believes that one set of rules should apply to the rich and powerful, and another set of rules should apply to everyone else.

We all remember Donald Trump's promise during the campaign that he was going to drain the swamp. Well, it is 118 days in, and the swamp is bigger, deeper, uglier, and filled with more corrupt creatures than ever. Over the last several days, President Trump has made it perfectly clear that he believes he should be above the law.

After he fired FBI Director James Comey, Trump went on national television and told the world that he fired Comey, in part, because Comey was leading an investigation into ties between the Trump campaign, the Trump administration, and Russia. Trump said top of mind when he fired Comey was ''this Russia thing with Trump.''

Now we have learned that he apparently pressured Comey in private meetings to drop aspects of the Russia investigation before he fired him. It is a basic presumption of our democracy that politicians cannot interfere with the law enforcement investigations into their own potential wrongdoing, but President Trump openly admitted trying to interfere with an ongoing investigation, and he clearly believes there should be no consequences for himself.

I understand that President Trump thinks he should be able to decide what investigations into his dealings go forward and what investigations get stopped on the spot. I understand that President Trump thinks he should be able to pack his Justice Department full of people who will watch out for billionaire CEOs and giant corporations. After all, he has packed other agencies with similar people.

I understand that is what President Trump thinks, but he is wrong. One of the things that makes our democracy strong is that we believe no one is above the law, not CEOs, not giant corporations, and not the President of the United States. It is up to the Senate to remind the President of that fact. We can start by rejecting the nomination of Rachel Brand to serve as Associate Attorney General. I ask everyone who believes in the promise of equal justice under the law to do the same.

(The remarks of Ms. WARREN pertaining to the introduction of S. 1162 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Ms. WARREN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

VENEZUELA

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak about an emerging crisis in our hemisphere in the nation of Venezuela. It has been covered extensively in the press. I wanted to come today with an update and a suggestion, a request of the administration about a step we can take.

First of all, I am very pleased that today our Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, scheduled a discussion at the U.N. Security Council with regard to Venezuela. It was not an open press discussion. Again, it showed extraordinary leadership, and I thank her for her work and for doing so. This deserves attention.

By the way, Venezuela is a country that is blessed with natural resources. It was once Latin America's richest country, but today the people of Venezuela are literally starving, its financial system has collapsed, and there are, as you have seen from the press reports, massive protests in the streets. Its once proud democracy is now in the hands of a dictator, Nicolas Maduro, and his cronies and thugs, who have plunged that nation into a constitutional crisis. They are using violence and bloodshed to suppress and silence citizens speaking out against the regime's corruption and its abuse of political prisoners.

What the people of Venezuela are calling for is pretty straightforward: free and fair elections as called for under the Constitution of that country, a return to representative democracy—the democracy they once had. They are paying for these requests with their blood and even their lives. According to the most recent reports, dozens of people have been killed, including teenagers. The Washington Post reported yesterday the recent deaths of 18-year-old Luis Alviarez, who was killed by a bullet to the chest, and 17-year-old Yeison Mora Cordero, who died from a bullet to the head.

There were two reports today in the press of great interest, one from the New York Times and one from the Washington Post. Both documented the plight of members of the national guard who have been tasked with the job of suppressing the protests in the street. The gist of the articles was this: These people who are putting on these uniforms—they didn't sign up for this. They signed up for security. They signed up to protect the people of Venezuela, not to oppress them.

They, too, are suffering from poor food. There was one article that said that basically breakfast in the morning for the national guard in Venezuela consists of a boiled carrot or a potato, and then they are sent to the streets for hours. Then they come back and maybe have an arepa, which is a corn cake, and, if they are lucky, some butter. They, too, are suffering from this.

Here is the most enlightening part of this: A lot of their family members—their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, loved ones, husbands, wives, girlfriends, and boyfriends—are on the other side of the protest lines. Their fellow Venezuelans are on the other side, and they are being tasked to do this.

I just say to them: Remember what your oath was. To the members of the national guard in Venezuela, remember that your job is to protect the people of Venezuela, not to oppress them.

Beyond what we see there—the innocent people dying because of the dictatorship trampling the will of the people and destroying their democratic institutions—one of the specific things that Maduro has done to become a dictator is he has undercut and frankly tried to wipe out the authority of their National Assembly, which is their unicameral legislative body. The way he has done that is by highjacking the supreme court of the country, and they call it the Supreme Tribunal of Justice. It is packed with puppets who do his bidding. As an example, these puppets recently ruled that they would rescind the democratic powers vested to the elected members of the National Assembly by the constitution of that country. In essence, they ruled that the National Assembly no longer had legislative authority. The protests were so massive, even within the government, that they had to backtrack from that ruling.

Here is what is interesting. This is a recent opinion piece written by Francis Toro and Pedro Rosas in the Washington Post which said it best: ''Beware Maikel Moreno, the hatchet man who runs Venezuela's supreme court.''

Here is what they wrote:

> Moreno, a former intelligence agent, was tried and convicted of murder in 1987, though the corroborating documents from the court system are no longer available. . . . He spent just two years in jail before being released. He was then immediately implicated in a second killing, in 1989, for which he was charged but never tried.

He was a loyalist of Hugo Chavez, and he became a judge in the early 2000s. His ''career as a judge hit a snag in 2007,'' Toro and Rosas note, ''when he was removed from the bench for 'grave and inexcusable' errors after releasing two murder suspects against orders from the Supreme Tribunal. The government handed him a new job as a diplomat abroad. After a few years out of sight, he was appointed a supreme court justice in 2014.''

Then in 2017, Moreno—not once but twice a killer—was appointed the chief justice of Venezuela's supreme court. The Venezuelan supreme court is run by a murderer. Think about that. A convicted criminal is presiding over Venezuela's supreme court. So it is no wonder that the court's members have acted as a rubberstamp for Maduro's illegitimate power grab, and they have created a political and a humanitarian crisis.

Venezuelans, as I said, are struggling to get basic goods, like food and medicine, and access to basic services. The Wall Street Journal reported that Venezuelans have lost, on average, 19

pounds in the last year—not due to some incredible new diet, but due to the country's food crisis. This is staggering. It is appalling. It is unconscionable. It cannot be tolerated.

The Venezuelan people deserve a return to democracy. They deserve a government that respects the rule of law and the constitution.

I believe it is the responsibility and the duty of the nations of the Western Hemisphere, including our Nation, to help the Venezuelan people. Article 20 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter states:

> In the event of an unconstitutional alteration of the constitutional regime that seriously impairs the democratic order in a member state, any member state or the Secretary General may request the immediate convocation of the Permanent Council to undertake a collective assessment of the situation and to take such decisions as it deems appropriate.

This is what must be done because if we fail to help the Venezuelan people in their time of need and if the worst comes to pass, what will follow will not be confined to the Venezuelan borders.

The United States as a result, I hope, should impose sanctions against corrupt individuals—not the government, not the people; individuals—responsible for human rights violations, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, undermining the country's democratic process. President Obama began that process. President Trump actually sanctioned some additional people earlier this year, including the kingpin drug dealer who is now the Vice President of Venezuela, Tareck El Aissami.

Here are some people who should be sanctioned by the current President. He should target for sanctions Chavista officials within the judiciary—all of these magistrates who have enabled Maduro's takeover. That includes the murderer who is the chief justice of their supreme court, Maikel Jose Moreno Perez, and others like him who are part of that so-called constitutional group within the supreme court of Venezuela, many of whom have access to money and use visas to travel freely within the United States. Among these names are Calixto Ortega, Arcadio Delgado, Federico Fuenmayor, Carmen Zuleta, Lourdes Suarez Anderson, and Juan Jose Mendoza. These are the people who have helped in this coup d'etat that has canceled the democratic order in Venezuela, and they should be punished for what they have done.

I will close by pointing to two things that are of deep concern. The first is this report today in El Nuevo Herald in Miami, which basically cites that Maduro has now ordered the militarization of a border region with Colombia. We are concerned about that because we have always feared he would create some sort of a military pretext to distract people from the crisis within the country.

Then there is this unusual behavior on the part of Maduro. For example, yesterday he said that the Chavistas—the followers of Hugo Chavez—are the new Jews of the 21st century. Basically he is comparing the Chavistas with the Jews who were exterminated during the Holocaust in World War II. These comments were broadcast on state television last night. It is incredible.

By the way, this is the same man who about a week ago was caught on camera, with a straight face, asking a cow to vote for a constitutional referendum he is seeking to pass. I don't even think the cow would support him at this point in Venezuela.

Mr. President, I hope President Trump in the next few days or weeks will act against these individuals who have carried out this coup d'etat against democracy in Venezuela and have plunged this proud nation and proud people into a constitutional, humanitarian, and economic crisis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I rise to speak in opposition to the nomination of Rachel Brand to be the Associate Attorney General.

The Associate Attorney General is the third-most senior position at the Department of Justice. During these troubling times, I cannot in good conscience support Ms. Brand's nomination.

The American public must have faith in its institutions, and unfortunately that trust is eroding more and more each and every day. For the first time in recent history, we are facing questions about a significant interference from a foreign government in an American Presidential election. Even more troubling, there have been serious questions about a Presidential campaign's potential collusion with Russia, a foreign adversary.

We have an idea of the potential problem here, and the Justice Department is supposed to be a part of the solution. Unfortunately, the recent conduct of the President's appointees to the Department of Justice have only added fuel to the fire.

First, Attorney General Jeff Sessions failed to reveal his communication with the Russians during his confirmation hearings. This omission led him to publicly pledge to recuse himself from Russia-related investigations.

Then, in an inexplicable turn of events, the Deputy Attorney General and the Attorney General advised the President to fire former FBI Director Jim Comey, who we know was in the midst of investigating the Trump campaign's relationship with Russia. Let me be clear: That was a firing that the President himself admitted was related to ''the Russia thing.''

Then the day after firing Director Comey, the President revealed highly classified information to Russian officials during a meeting in the Oval Office—a meeting that, I may add, was closed to the American press but oddly included only the Russian press.

You simply can't make this stuff up. The level of turmoil and the questionable behavior on the part of this administration are deeply disturbing, not just for Americans but for our allies all across the globe.

We are currently lurching from crisis to crisis, and we must pause for a moment and consider what is at stake; namely, the security and the future of our democracy.

My Democratic colleagues and I have repeatedly called for a special prosecutor to take over all of the Russia-related investigations, and recent events show that the need for a special prosecutor is greater now more than ever. It is time to put country over politics, and it is time for a transparent and thorough investigation into these concerns. If there is no wrongdoing, then the President should not be concerned about getting the American people the truth they deserve. Our constituents need to have their faith restored in our institutions and that will require transparency, integrity, and professionalism from officials at the Department of Justice.

I joined the vast majority of my colleagues in supporting the confirmation of Rod Rosenstein to serve as Deputy Attorney General with the belief that he would bring a voice of reason to the Department of Justice. The results have been, needless to say, disappointing. With the current state of this Justice Department, I have no reason to believe Ms. Brand will fare much better.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to consider the very real challenges we face. This is not an issue of partisan politics or the outcome of a past election; this is about protecting the sanctity of our democracy from outside threats.

I believe we absolutely must work together to restore the credibility and the independence of the Justice Department. Until we have an independent special prosecutor and until we are confident that the Attorney General is truly honoring his recusal on the Russia investigation, I cannot support another senior political nomination to this Justice Department.

I urge my colleagues to vote no.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, in light of National Police Week, I rise today in support of our men and women serving in law enforcement.

Police week is a good time for reflection and remembrance. It is a time to honor those who serve and protect us. While we honor our dedicated law enforcement officers this week, I want, specifically, to recognize those fallen officers who have given the ultimate sacrifice—their lives—for our safety.

In Arizona we lost three officers this year: Officer Leander Frank of the Navajo Nation Police Department, Officer David Van Glasser of the Phoenix

Police Department, and Officer Darrin Reed of the Show Low Police Department. Today we honor the memory of these fallen heroes and pledge to never forget their sacrifice.

While the work we do in Congress pales in comparison to the service of these brave men and women, it is my privilege to sponsor several pieces of legislation to support our law enforcement officers. I have joined with Senator HATCH to introduce the Rapid DNA Act, a bill that gives State and local law enforcement agencies a way to upload a suspect's DNA analysis to a Federal offender database for immediate identification. This immediate cross-hit within the Federal system will help officers at the local level to process criminals faster and more accurately.

I have also teamed up with Senator FEINSTEIN to introduce the bipartisan Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act. That legislation criminalizes the failure to report to law enforcement incidents of suspected child abuse in amateur athletics. In addition to helping prevent sexual abuse crimes, this bill will aid State and local law enforcement investigating allegations of child sexual abuse by providing them with more information faster.

I have also supported Senator CORNYN's American Law Enforcement Heroes Act. That bill affirms a well-established practice of hiring veterans at the local level to serve as new law enforcement officers. Together, these bills will enhance law enforcement investigations and encourage better hiring practices for new law enforcement jobs.

I also want to recognize the local police officers and sheriffs in Arizona, along with those on the border who are serving on the frontlines of immigration enforcement. These men and women put their lives on the line every time they go out on patrol. For them, immigration policy is not a hypothetical exercise.

Despite the critical role these entities play in assisting their Federal partners with immigration enforcement, current Federal policy leaves them exposed to the threat of costly litigation. That is because third-party groups that oppose detention have threatened local agencies that choose to comply with valid detainer requests with lawsuits. Using punitive legal action to punish law enforcement for good-faith efforts to keep people safe is wrong. That is why a group of Arizona sheriffs came to me for help, and with their guidance, we drafted a bill requiring the Department of Homeland Security to protect State and local law enforcement entities from lawsuits that uphold valid detainer requests from ICE. This solution will enable officers to fulfill their law enforcement responsibilities without second-guessing whether or not to keep potentially dangerous criminal aliens in custody. It is a recognition that local law enforcement shouldn't be left to shoulder the burden of Washington's failure to secure our borders and to implement a workable enforcement policy.

It has been my privilege to work on this effort with the Arizona Sheriffs Association, the Western States Sheriffs' Association, the Southwest Border Sheriff's Coalition, and the Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition. I want especially to thank Sheriff Mascher of Yavapai County, Sheriff Daniels of Cochise County, Sheriff Wilmot of Yuma County, and Sheriff Clark of Navajo County for their work on this bill.

To many, Police Week is an annual opportunity to recognize the service of the many selfless men and women in law enforcement, but it should also serve as a solemn reminder of the risks they take and the sacrifices they make day in and day out. It is for this that they have my support, my respect, and my thanks, and they have it year-round.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, thank you for the opportunity to visit this evening with my Senate colleagues.

This is a special week in Washington, DC, and a number of my colleagues have paid tribute by attending the memorial or speaking of those who died in service as fallen police officers. This is our fallen officers' National Police Week.

In 1962, Congress and the then-President John F. Kennedy designated May 15 of each year to be Peace Officers Memorial Day, and the week of May 15 to be National Police Week. Each spring, we take time to recall the men and women of law enforcement who were lost in the previous year. Unfortunately, this list has become far, far too long.

Since our Nation's founding, more than 20,000 American law enforcement officers have sacrificed their lives in service to others. While I have paid many solemn visits to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, DC, to honor, respect, and remember fallen officers, my visit this year was especially somber. In 2016, Kansas suffered the loss of three law enforcement officials.

On the Senate floor today, I wish to recognize and to honor these fallen heroes: Detective Brad Lancaster of the Kansas City Police Department, Captain Robert ''Dave'' Melton of the Kansas City Police Department, and Master Deputy Sheriff Brandon Collins of the Johnson County Sheriff's Office. Their untimely deaths shook their families, the agencies where these men served, the neighborhoods they protected, and the communities they lived in. Brandon, Robert, and Brad were not only law enforcement officers, they were also sons and brothers, fathers, neighbors, mentors, and friends.

Robert Melton, Brad Lancaster, and Brandon Collins and the 140 other officers killed in the line of duty in 2016 are being honored this week in our Nation's Capital. The names of these fallen heroes will be physically inscribed into the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, set in stone as an eternal reminder to the Nation of the service of these men and the debt we owe for their sacrifice on our behalf. That debt, of course, can never be repaid, but it is certainly our duty to try.

As Americans honor these men during National Police Week, we must also remember their families, friends, and fellow officers and the loved ones they left behind. May God comfort them in their time of grief and be a source of strength for them. May He also protect all those who continue to serve and to stand today in harm's way to protect our communities.

An inscription at the memorial reads: ''In valor there is hope.'' The losses of Brad Lancaster, Robert Melton, and Brandon Collins have imposed tremendous sorrow, but our memory of their service to others and their acts of valor offer Americans hope and inspiration to carry on their missions, to better our communities, to protect the vulnerable, and to stand for what is right. As we remember, let us tirelessly pursue those ends and do all we can to honor the fallen.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

REMEMBERING WILBURN K. ROSS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to remember a noble Kentuckian and a decorated World War II veteran, Wilburn K. Ross, who passed away on May 9, 2017, just days before his 95th birthday. A native of Strunk, KY, Ross was awarded the highest decoration in the U.S. military, the Medal of Honor.

As a private, Ross gained national acclaim for his service in St. Jacques, France, on October 30, 1944. His company lost 55 of its 88 members fighting a group of German mountain troops. Ross' light machine gun was about 10 yards ahead of his supporting riflemen. As intense enemy fire fell around him, Ross repelled the enemy through seven German attacks. When the next attack came, many of his supporting rifleman had run out of ammunition. As his Medal of Honor citation read, ''Pvt. Ross fought on virtually without assistance and, despite the fact that enemy grenadiers crawled to within 4 yards of his position in an effort to kill him with handgrenades, he again directed accurate and deadly fire on the

hostile force and hurled it back.'' During the 5 hours of fighting, Ross killed or wounded at least 58 Germans and saved his brothers in arms.

Ross reenlisted in the Army to see action in Korea, serving another two decades. He retired from Active Duty in 1964 at the rank of master sergeant. He was awarded the Medal of Honor, ''[f]or conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty.''

Although he moved to DuPont, WA, after his retirement from the U.S. Army, Ross made a trip back to his hometown in Kentucky nearly every year on his birthday. In his own words, he enjoyed coming back to the Commonwealth because, ''[e]verybody here treats me well.''

He turned down offers to make his life into a Hollywood film, but Ross has been memorialized on a U.S. Postal Service stamp and by a section of Kentucky Route 92 in his home county. In 2014, Ross was a member of the inaugural class admitted to the Kentucky Veterans Hall of Fame.

Like so many other members of the Greatest Generation, Wilburn Ross answered the call to defend our Nation. Through his bravery and sacrifice, he helped secure freedom across the globe. The story of his courageous actions and selfless service will continue to be told, both in McCreary County and across the Commonwealth. Elaine and I send our condolences to his family and friends.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, today, with great humility during National Police Week, I wish to recognize the brave men and women of law enforcement across the country. These individuals have answered the call to serve and every day they put their lives on the line to keep our communities safe. I especially want to honor those who have lost their lives in the line of duty and observe the sacrifices of their families.

First, I especially want to recognize three law enforcement officers who lost their lives in New Jersey last year. These three men made the ultimate sacrifice for their communities, and we owe them and their families our sincerest respect. On July 1, 2016, the New Jersey Department of Corrections lost Nikeelan ''Nick'' Semmon. On March 7, 2016, the New Jersey State Police lost Sean Cullen. On December 5, 2016, the New Jersey State Police also lost Frankie Williams.

These officers dedicated their lives to protecting our communities, and they served our State with valor and integrity. I feel privileged to call them fellow New Jerseyans, and my thoughts and prayers continue to be with the family and friends of these brave public servants. As we continue to mourn and remember Officer Semmon, Trooper Cullen, and Trooper Williams, let us pledge to honor their sacrifice by working every day to emulate their devotion to public service through acts of service and love.

It is in that spirit that I want to talk about the important work that still needs to be done to support law enforcement. Congress plays a critical role in supporting law enforcement, both at the Federal level and at the State and local level. There are few bills I want to mention that I believe we must pass to uphold our commitment to brave men and women in law enforcement.

First, on February 16, 2017, I introduced the bipartisan Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act. Unfortunately, due to a technical error, nearly 30,000 Federal law enforcement officers classified as GS–0083 police officers did not receive enhanced benefits under the U.S. Code. For example, certain officers who work for Federal agencies, such as the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Postal Service, U.S. Mint, National Institute of Health and many more, receive lower pensions as compared to other law enforcement officers with similar responsibilities.

The Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act would expand the definition of ''law enforcement officer'' for retirement purposes to include all Federal law enforcement officers. The change would grant law enforcement officer status to the follow individuals: employees who are authorized to carry a firearm and whose duties include the investigation and/or apprehension of suspected criminals; employees of the Internal Revenue Service whose duties are primarily the collection of delinquent taxes and securing delinquent returns; employees of the U.S Postal Inspection Service; and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs who are department police offices. These officers face the same risks and challenges as the men and women currently classified properly under Federal law as law enforcement officers, and they deserve the same benefits. We must pass this bill.

I am also a proud cosponsor of the Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act. This legislation would increase the amount of Pell grant funds available to children of fallen law enforcement officers, firefighters, EMS workers, and fire police. First responders across the country put their lives on the line every day to keep us safe. When most people are running away from danger, they are running towards it. For those who put themselves in danger on a daily basis, we must honor their sacrifice and support their families in times of tragedy. Helping children of first responders pay for an education is the least we can do to honor the sacrifice of someone who fell in the line of duty. We must pass this bill.

I am also a cosponsor of the Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act of 2017, which I am pleased to say passed the Senate yesterday. We all know the stress and unique challenges police officers across our Nation face in doing their jobs. They risk their lives and are often exposed to traumatizing incidents. The Federal Government must do all it can to support police who suffer from trauma or other mental health issues due to the rigors and dangers of their job. The Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act of 2017 would direct the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Resources to provide support to State and local law enforcement to access mental healthcare services and make sure that hotlines are available for officers who are in need of help. I hope the House of Representatives takes up this bill soon and passes it.

I am proud to sponsor the Law Enforcement Officers' Equity Act and cosponsor the Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship Act and Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act. There is so much work for us to do to live up to our commitment to law enforcement across the country, and I am committed to continuing to work with my colleagues on these critical issues. Thank you.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, along with my dad, Clair, who started our family homebuilding business 45 years ago, I wish to congratulate the National Association of Home Builders on reaching its 75th anniversary.

For three-quarters of a century, NAHB has been fighting for the American dream, advocating for those who want to own a home for themselves and their families and advocating for homebuilders who provide jobs and make the homeowners' dreams a reality.

Before coming to Congress, I worked for my dad in our family homebuilding business, and I have great respect for the work their members do in our communities. They truly are job creators, economic drivers, and dream makers.

I have been happy to meet with some of their members when they have come to Capitol Hill. I can tell you that it is helpful to have face-to-face meetings with their team to talk about the issues that matter to them the most. Though I have a background in homebuilding, many congressional and Presidential staff do not. It makes a difference to hear from folks on the ground in their business.

When it comes to homebuilding and homeownership, we all share the same goal—let's keep home prices affordable.

Their advocacy has enabled millions of American families, like mine, to make one of the most important purchases of their lives: a home.

As you know, when people achieve the American dream of homeownership, they are on the path to wealth creation and upward mobility, not to

mention the sense of pride that comes with having a place to call their own.

That sense of pride overflows to the way people invest in their communities, and we all benefit from a more engaged neighbor. As they know better than anyone and Sir Winston Churchill once said, ''We shape our dwellings, and afterwards our dwellings shape us.''

When the times are good or times are tough and through the general cyclical nature of the industry, NAHB has remained a steady advocate for the importance of affordable and quality housing, both for homeowners and renters. Thanks in part to them, builders and consumers are back up on their feet.

I am grateful for their commitment to serving our Nation by building safe and beautiful homes, and I am grateful for the 75 years of advocacy from NAHB.

Congratulations again on achieving this major milestone.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA GRIZZLIES SOFTBALL TEAM

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week, I have the distinct honor of recognizing the University of Montana Grizzlies softball team for their outstanding performance at the Big Sky Conference softball tournament. This team has come a long way in a short time, and their journey this season is something that all Montanans can appreciate.

Last week at Ogden, UT, the Grizzlies won the Big Sky Conference softball championship for the first time in the school's history. This accomplishment is highlighted by the fact that the softball program is only in its third year on campus. Four years ago, there was no team or coach; today they are conference champions.

Jamie Pinkerton, the Grizzlies' coach, was also voted the Big Sky Conference ''Coach of the Year'' for the second year in a row.

As conference champions, the Grizzlies will represent Big Sky in the 2017 NCAA Division I softball championship this Friday as they travel to Washington to challenge the Huskies in the regional qualifying round. The Grizzlies will have both the Big Sky State and the Big Sky Conference rooting for them.•

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:06 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 510. An act to establish a system for integration of Rapid DNA instruments for use by law enforcement to reduce violent crime and reduce the current DNA analysis backlog.

H.R. 1428. An act 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.

H.R. 1616. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the National Computer Forensics Institute, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 510. An act to establish a system for integration of Rapid DNA instruments for use by law enforcement to reduce violent crime and reduce the current DNA analysis backlog; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 1428. An act 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; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 1616. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the National Computer Forensics Institute, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

PRIVILEGED NOMINATION REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

On request by Senator FEINSTEIN, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

Stephen Elliott Boyd, of Alabama, to be an Assistant Attorney General, vice Peter Joseph Kadzik.

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–1571. A communication from the Director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs—General Award Administrative Provisions and Specific Administrative Provisions'' (RIN0524–AA69) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 15, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1572. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting the report of twenty-six (26) officers authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of major general or brigadier general, as indicated, in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1573. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General James K. McLaughlin, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1574. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Executive Order 13611 of May 16, 2012, with respect to Yemen; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1575. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Executive Order 13667 of May 12, 2014, with respect to the Central African Republic; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1576. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Executive Order 13338 of May 11, 2004, with respect to the blocking of property of certain persons and prohibition of exportation and re-exportation of certain goods to Syria; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1577. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the stabilization of Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1578. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Department of Energy Activities Relating to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, Fiscal Year 2016''; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–1579. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel, General Law, Ethics, and Regulation, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, two (2) reports relative to vacancies in the Department of the Treasury, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 4, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1580. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Distribution of Stock and Securities of a Controlled Corporation'' (Rev. Rul. 2017–09) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 9, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1581. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Syndicated Conservation Easement Transactions Identified in Notice 2017–10'' (Notice 2017–29) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 9, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1582. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Extension of Eligibility Rule Waivers for Certain Automatic Changes Made To Comply with the Final Tangible Property Regulations'' (Rev. Proc. 2017–36) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 9, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1583. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2018 Sec. 223 Inflation-Adjusted Item'' (Rev. Proc. 2017–37) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 9, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1584. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the

report of a rule entitled ''List of Automatic Changes in Method of Accounting'' (Rev. Proc. 2017–30) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 9, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1585. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data, and defense services to Mexico to support the integration, installation, operation, training, testing, maintenance, and repair of the Star Safire 380 HD camera system in the amount of $50,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 16–107); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1586. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of firearms, parts, and accessories to Qatar under Category I of the United States Munitions List in the amount of $1,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 16–125); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1587. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data, and defense services to Japan to support the integration, installation, and maintenance of the F135 Propulsion System for the J–35 in the amount of $100,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 16–136); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1588. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data, and defense services to Italy to support the manufacture, operation, test integration, evaluation, installation, assembly, and maintenance of the G–2000 Dynamically Tuned Gyroscope product family that incorporate or operate the gyroscope for end-use on the Joint Strike Fighter Turret Stabilization, ASPIDE missile, and ASTER missile programs (Transmittal No. DDTC 16–083); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1589. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a Determination and Certification under Section 40A of the Arms Export Control Act relative to countries not cooperating fully with United States antiterrorism efforts; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1590. 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 ''Food Labeling of standard Menu Items in Restaurants and Similar Retail Food Establishments; Extension of Compliance Date; Request for Comments'' ((RIN0910–ZA48) (Docket No. FDA–2011–F–0172)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 9, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1591. A communication from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Semiannual Management Report on the Status of Audits for the period from October 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1592. A communication from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Semiannual Management Report on the Status of Audits for the period from October 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1593. A communication from the Acting Solicitor General, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to TC Reiner v. Saginaw Valley State University, et al.; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1594. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel, Office of Justice Programs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Victims of Crime Act Victim Assistance Program'' (RIN1121–AA69) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 8, 2017; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1595. A communication from the Chief of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Payment or Reimbursement for Certain Medical Expenses for Camp Lejeune Family Members'' (RIN2900–AO79) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 9, 2017; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–1596. A communication from the Chief of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Extension of Pharmacy Copayments for Medications'' (RIN2900–AP87) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 9, 2017; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–1597. A communication from the Acting Chief, International Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''The Establishment of Policies and Service Rules for the Broadcasting-Satellite Service at the 17.3–17.7 GHz Frequency Band Internationally, and at the 24.75–25.25 GHz Frequency Band for Fixed Satellite Services Providing Feeder Links to the Broadcasting-Satellite Service and for the Satellite Services Operating Bi-directionally in the 17.3–17.8 GHz Frequency Band'' ((IB Doc. No. 06–123) (FCC 17–49)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 4, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1598. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Section 73.3555(e) of the Commission's Rules, National Television Multiple Ownership Rule'' ((MB Doc. No. 13–236) (FCC 17–40)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1599. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Promoting Diversification of Ownership in the Broadcasting Services; Amendment of Part 1 of the Commission's Rules, Concerning Practice and Procedure, Amendment of CORES Registration System'' ((MB Docket No. 07–294) (MD Docket No. 10–234) (FCC 17–42)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1600. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Seaway Regulations and Rules: Periodic Update, Various Categories'' (RIN2135–AA42) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1601. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Civil Penalties'' (RIN2135–AA40) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1602. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Tariff of Tolls'' (RIN2135–AA41) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1603. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, U.S. Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to certification granted in relation to the incidental capture of sea turtles in commercial shrimping operations; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1604. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway and Indian Creek, Miami, FL'' ((RIN1625–AA09) (Docket No. USCG–2015–0768)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1605. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Navy UNDET, Apra Outer Harbor and Piti, GU'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0214)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1606. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Security Zone; Schuylkill River, Philadelphia, PA'' ((RIN1625–AA87) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0152)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1607. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Special Local Regulation; Bush River, Harford County, MD'' ((RIN1625–AA08) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0067)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1608. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Special Local Regulation; Hebda Cup Rowing Regatta; Detroit River, Trenton Channel; Wyandotte, MI'' ((RIN1625–AA08) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0305)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1609. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department

of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Chapel Street over Mill River Bridge Rehabilitation—New Haven, CT'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0257)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 12, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–17. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan memorializing the United States Congress to repeal the standards set forth by the United States Environmental Protection Agency on portable fuel container design; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 38

Whereas, The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) adopted rules to limit emissions from portable fuel containers, such as gas cans, in 2007. The standard was meant to force design changes in fuel containers to reduce evaporation, permeation, and spillage and was part of a larger package on reducing toxic air emissions from mobile sources like passenger vehicles. Since 2009, all containers manufactured now need to be designed to meet these standards; and

Whereas, Portable fuel containers are responsible for a relatively small portion of toxic air emissions from mobile sources. In 1999, these containers accounted for only 2 percent of these emissions. The EPA projects that the new portable fuel container standard will account for 6 percent of the reduction in toxic air emissions under the 2007 rule. Passenger vehicles and gasoline regulations will account for 94 percent of projected reductions; and

Whereas, Gas cans and other portable fuel containers designed to meet the new standard do not work effectively and are a continual source of frustration for consumers. To meet the standard, containers are being designed without a vent, resulting in slow, uneven flow out of the cans; and

Whereas, The portable fuel container emissions standard is not an effective way to limit toxic air emissions. Containers that work improperly may result in more spills as users are paying more attention to getting gas out of the container than how much gas is in the tank. Frustrated users may resort to modifying the container to create a vent, eliminating any environmental benefit from the design, or using other containers illegally; and

Whereas, The portable fuel container standards are yet another example of the EPA adopting regulations without properly accounting for real life use and impact. These regulations provide minimal environmental gain and make something as simple as filling a lawn mower tank an exercise in frustration; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to repeal the standards set forth by the United States Environmental Protection Agency on portable fuel container design; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives. and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation. Adopted by the House of Representatives, May 4, 2017.

POM–18. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of North Dakota requesting the United States Congress and the President of the United States to enact legislation to expand and extend the current federal tax credit for carbon capture, utilization, and storage under Section 45Q of the Internal Revenue Code; to provide appropriations to the United States Department of Energy Sufficient to achieve and sustain a robust carbon capture research, development, demonstration, and deployment program; to support the inclusion of economically and environmentally beneficial carbon capture projects in any forthcoming federal infrastructure initiative; to support policies to increase the operational efficiency; and to support the preservation of a fuel-diverse electric generation portfolio critical to our domestic economic, energy, and national security; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3037

Whereas, fossil fuels including coal, natural gas, and oil provide more than three-quarters of global and United States' primary energy demand and, according to the International Energy Agency, will continue to do so for the next quarter-century or more under current energy and environmental policies; and

Whereas, recognition of the value and enduring role of fossil fuels as an essential source of energy around the world and in the United States for decades to come has led environmental advocates to support the accelerated development and broad deployment of carbon capture technologies for fossil fuels as part of a sustainable energy future; and

Whereas, recognition of the role carbon capture can play in creating new opportunities for fossil fuels has led fossil energy advocates to similarly support the development and deployment of carbon capture technologies for fossil fuels; and

Whereas, the United States and North Dakota have abundant supplies of fossil energy, the production and use of which provide important economic, energy, and national security benefits to our nation and our state; and

Whereas, North Dakota is the nation's 6th largest producer of fossil energy, 2nd largest producer of oil, 2nd largest producer of lignite coal, 11th largest producer of natural gas, the largest consumer of coal for industrial use, and the 10th largest consumer of coal for electricity generation; and

Whereas, according to the Department of Energy, ''A diverse portfolio of energy resources is critical to U.S. energy and national policy . . . being more robust and resilient in comparison to a system that is heavily dependent on a limited set of energy resources . . . [and] helps insulate the economy from certain risks, including price volatility and risks from supply disruptions''; and

Whereas, reliable and affordable electricity is vital to economic growth and job creation in North Dakota and the overall welfare of our citizens; and

Whereas, 73 percent of the electricity generated in North Dakota is produced from fossil fuels and the average residential price of electricity in North Dakota is the 6th lowest in the nation and is 18 percent below the national average; and

Whereas, continued research and development of carbon reduction strategies for fossil fuels is an essential element of a forward-looking sustainable energy strategy for North Dakota, our nation, and the world which will simultaneously maximize both environmental quality and economic opportunity; and

Whereas, the Energy and Environmental Research Center at the University of North Dakota, the Great Plains Synfuels Plant in Beulah, and the Lignite Energy Council are engaged in efforts to address environmental, health, and economic impacts of energy production and use through collaborations on applied carbon dioxide research, practical applications, workforce development, and public education; and

Whereas, legislation was introduced in the 114th Congress to enhance and extend federal tax incentives, under Section 45Q of the Internal Revenue Code, which serve to sustain and promote such collaborations and to encourage private industry in energy generation, manufacturing, and agriculture to adopt and deploy existing and emerging technologies that increase carbon capture, utilization, and storage; and

Whereas, the coming together of environmental and energy advocates in support of carbon capture is reflected in the groundbreaking coalition of environmental advocacy groups, labor unions, and energy producers from the coal, oil and gas, ethanol, and algae-biomass industries working together in support of federal legislation; and

Whereas, similar legislation is now under consideration in the 115th Congress, and Congress and the President also are considering enactment of a large-scale federal infrastructure initiative to strengthen our nation's transportation, public works, and energy infrastructure that also could serve as a vehicle for advancing ''jobs-ready'' carbon capture projects; and

Whereas, according to the Department of Energy, ''A combination of tax incentives and research, development, demonstration, and deployment will be critical to developing transformational carbon capture technologies and to driving down the costs of capture''; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of North Dakota, the Senate concurring therein: That the Sixty-fifth Legislative Assembly requests Congress and the President of the United States to enact legislation to expand and extend the current federal tax credit for carbon capture, utilization, and storage under Section 45Q of the Internal Revenue Code; to provide appropriations to the United States Department of Energy sufficient to achieve and sustain a robust carbon capture research, development, demonstration, and deployment program; to support the inclusion of economically and environmentally beneficial carbon capture projects in any forthcoming federal infrastructure initiative; to support policies to increase the operational efficiency, and thereby the environmental performance, of existing electric-generating units in the United States; and to support the preservation of a fuel-diverse electric generation portfolio critical to our domestic economic, energy, and national security; and be it further

Resolved, that the Secretary of State forward copies of this resolution by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the President of the United States, the President and Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the Secretary of the United States Department of Energy, and to each member of the North Dakota Congressional Delegation.

POM–19. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Florida condemning the Boycott; Divestment and Sanctions movement and the increasing incidence of acts of anti-Semitism; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 1184

Whereas, Floridians have, as a matter of public policy, long opposed bigotry, oppression, discrimination, and injustice, and

Whereas, Florida and Israel have enjoyed a long history of friendship and are great allies, each supporting the best interests of the other, and

Whereas, the State of Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, is the greatest friend and ally of the United States in the region, and

Whereas, the elected representatives of the state recognize the importance of expressing Florida's unwavering support for the Jewish people and the State of Israel's right to exist and right to self-defense, and

Whereas, the incidence of acts of anti-Semitism is increasing throughout the world, including in the United States and in Florida, and is reflected in official hate crime statistics, and

Whereas, the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement is one of the main vehicles for spreading anti-Semitic perspectives and advocating the elimination of the Jewish State, and

Whereas, the level of activities promoting BDS against Israel has increased in this state, in communities and on college campuses, and contributes to the promotion of anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist propaganda, and

Whereas, the increase in BDS campaign activities on college campuses nationwide has resulted in an increase in confrontations with, intimidation of, and discrimination against Jewish students, and

Whereas, leaders of the BDS movement express that their goal is to eliminate Israel as the national home of the Jewish people, and

Whereas, the BDS campaign's call for academic and cultural boycotts has been condemned by many of our nation's largest academic associations, more than 250 university presidents, and many other leading scholars as a violation of the bedrock principle of academic freedom, Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida: That the Florida Senate condemns the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against the State of Israel and calls upon the governmental institutions of this state to denounce hatred and discrimination whenever they appear and be it further

Resolved that the Florida Senate urges the President of the United States to order withdrawal of the United States Customs and Border Protection statement dated January 23, 2016, entitled ''West Bank Country of Origin Marking Requirements,'' so that goods made in the West Bank can continue to be properly labeled ''Made in Israel.'' and be it further

Resolved that copies of this resolution be presented to the President of the United States, the President and Secretary of the United States Senate, and the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to the Embassy of Israel in Washington, D.C., for transmission to the proper authorities of the State of Israel as a tangible token of the sentiments expressed herein.

POM–20. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Florida opposing United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 and requesting its repeal or fundamental alteration; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 574

Whereas, the United States has long supported a negotiated settlement leading to a sustainable two-state solution with the democratic, Jewish state of Israel and a demilitarized, democratic Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace and security, and

Whereas, since 1993, the United States has facilitated direct, bilateral negotiations between both parties toward achieving a two-state solution and ending all outstanding claims, and

Whereas, it is the long-standing policy of the United States that a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will only come through direct, bilateral negotiations between the two parties, and

Whereas, it was the long-standing position of the United States to oppose and, if necessary, veto United Nations Security Council resolutions dictating additional binding parameters on the peace process, and

Whereas, it was also the long-standing position of the United States to oppose and, if necessary, veto one-sided or anti-Israel United Nations Security Council resolutions, and

Whereas, the United States has stood in the minority internationally over successive administrations in defending Israel in international forums, including vetoing one-sided resolutions in 1995, 1997, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2011 before the United Nations Security Council, and

Whereas, the United States recently signed a new memorandum of understanding with the Israeli government regarding security assistance, consistent with long-standing support for Israel among successive administrations and Congresses and representing an important United States commitment toward Israel's qualitative military edge, and

Whereas, on November 29, 2016, the United States House of Representatives unanimously passed House Concurrent Resolution 165, expressing and reaffirming long-standing United States policy in support of a direct, bilaterally negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in opposition to United Nations Security Council resolutions that impose a solution to the conflict, and

Whereas, on December 23, 2016, the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations disregarded House Concurrent Resolution 165 and departed from long-standing United States policy by abstaining and permitting United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 to be adopted under Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter, and

Whereas, the United States' abstention on United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 contradicts the Oslo Accords and its associated process that is predicated on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict between the parties through direct, bilateral negotiations, and

Whereas, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 claims that ''the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace,'' and

Whereas, by referring to the ''4 June 1967 lines'' as the basis for negotiations, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 effectively states that the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem and the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest site, are ''occupied territory,'' thereby equating these sites with outposts in the West Bank which the Israeli government has deemed illegal, and

Whereas, passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 effectively legitimizes efforts by the Palestinian Authority to impose its own solution through international organizations and unjustified boycotts or divestment campaigns against Israel by calling ''upon all States, bearing in mind paragraph 1 of this resolution, to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967,'' and will require the United States and Israel to take effective action to counteract the resolution's potential harmful impacts, and

Whereas, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 did not directly call upon Palestinian leadership to fulfill their obligations toward negotiations or mention that part of the eventual Palestinian state is currently controlled by Hamas, a designated terrorist organization, and

Whereas, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 sought to impose or unduly influence solutions to final-status issues and is biased against Israel, Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida: That the Florida Senate finds that:

(1) The passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 undermined the long-standing position of the United States to oppose and veto United Nations Security Council resolutions that seek to impose solutions to final-status issues or are one-sided and anti-Israel, reversing decades of bipartisan agreement.

(2) The passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 undermines the prospect of Israelis and Palestinians resuming productive, direct, bilateral negotiations.

(3) The passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 contributes to the politically motivated acts of boycotting, divesting from, and sanctioning Israel and represents a concerted effort to extract concessions from Israel outside of direct, bilateral negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians, which must be actively rejected.

(4) Any future measures taken by any organization, including the United Nations Security Council, to impose an agreement or parameters for an agreement will set back the peace process, harm the security of Israel, contradict the enduring bipartisan consensus on strengthening the United States-Israel relationship, and weaken support for such organizations.

(5) A durable and sustainable peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians is only possible with direct, bilateral negotiations between the parties resulting in a Jewish, democratic state living next to a demilitarized Palestinian state in peace and security.

(6) The United States government should work to facilitate serious, direct, unconditional negotiations between the parties toward a sustainable peace agreement.

(7) The United States government should oppose and veto future one-sided, anti-Israel United Nations Security Council resolutions that seek to impose solutions to final-status issues. And be it further

Resolved that the Florida Senate opposes and requests the repeal of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 or the fundamental alteration of the resolution so that it:

(1) Is no longer one-sided and anti-Israel.

(2) Authorizes all final-status issues toward a two-state solution to be resolved through direct, bilateral 'negotiations between the parties involved. And be it further

Resolved that copies of this resolution be presented to the President of the United States, the President and Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., for transmission to the proper authorities of the State of Israel as a tangible token of the sentiments expressed herein.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BARRASSO, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 518. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to provide for technical assistance for small treatment works (Rept. No. 115–71).

By Mr. BARRASSO, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, without amendment:

S. 675. A bill to amend and reauthorize certain provisions relating to Long Island Sound restoration and stewardship (Rept. No. 115–72).

By Mr. BARRASSO, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 826. A bill to reauthorize the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and certain wildlife conservation funds, to establish prize competitions relating to the prevention of wildlife poaching and trafficking, wildlife conservation, the management of invasive species, and the protection of endangered species, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–73).

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 831. A bill 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''.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1143. A bill to amend the Equal Credit Opportunity Act to prohibit discrimination on account of sexual orientation or gender identity when extending credit; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 1144. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage business creation by allowing faster recovery of start-up and organizational expenses, to simplify accounting methods for small businesses, to expand expensing and provide accelerated cost recovery to encourage investment in new plants and equipment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 1145. A bill to require adequate information regarding the tax treatment of payments under settlement agreements entered into by Federal agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 1146. A bill to enhance the ability of the Office of the National Ombudsman to assist small businesses in meeting regulatory requirements and develop outreach initiatives to promote awareness of the services the Office of the National Ombudsman provides, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. 1147. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the expansion, intensification, and coordination of the programs and activities of the National Institutes of Health with respect to Tourette syndrome; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. KING, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 1148. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with the option of providing medical assistance at a residential pediatric recovery center to infants under 1 year of age with neonatal abstinence syndrome and their families; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1149. A bill to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to repeal a provision limiting the export of timber harvested from land conveyed to the Kake Tribal Corporation under that Act; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 1150. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to require States to impose a work requirement for able-bodied adults without dependents who are eligible for medical assistance; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. ERNST (for herself, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. CAPITO, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 1151. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a nonrefundable credit for working family caregivers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 1152. A bill to create protections for depository institutions that provide financial services to cannabis-related businesses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 1153. A bill to prohibit or suspend certain health care providers from providing non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care services to veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 1154. A bill to amend title 37, United States Code, to provide for the housing treatment of members of the Armed Forces and their spouses and dependents undergoing a permanent change of station in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. REED, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 1155. A bill to amend title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 in order to increase the amount of financial support available for working students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1156. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow rehabilitation expenditures for public school buildings to qualify for rehabilitation credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 1157. A bill to establish the Vulnerability Equities Review Board, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. COONS, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BROWN, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1158. A bill to help prevent acts of genocide and other atrocity crimes, which threaten national and international security, by enhancing United States Government capacities to prevent, mitigate, and respond to such crises; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. MORAN):

S. 1159. A bill to protect consumers from discriminatory State taxes on motor vehicle rentals; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 1160. A bill to include Livingston County, the city of Jonesboro in Union County, and the city of Freeport in Stephenson County, Illinois, to the Lincoln National Heritage Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1161. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate copayments by the Department of Veterans Affairs for medicines relating to preventative health services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. UDALL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 1162. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mr. HATCH, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. COTTON):

S. 1163. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure compliance of medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs with requirements relating to the scheduling of appointments, to require appointment by the President and confirmation by the Senate of certain health care officials of the Department, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mrs. FISCHER, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 1164. A bill to protect consumers from deceptive practices with respect to online booking of hotel reservations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 1165. A bill to designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Huntington, West Virginia, as the Hershel ''Woody'' Williams VA Medical Center; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 1166. A bill to decrease the deficit by realigning, consolidating, disposing, and improving the efficiency of Federal buildings and other civilian real property, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 1167. A bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to evaluate and consider revising regulations relating to emergency medical equipment requirements for passenger aircraft; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COONS, Mr. HELLER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1168. A bill to facilitate efficient investments and financing of infrastructure projects and new, long-term job creation through the establishment of an Infrastructure Financing Authority, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. KING, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 1169. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with an option to provide medical assistance to individuals between the ages of 22 and 64 for inpatient services to treat substance use disorders at certain facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 1170. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to foreign persons responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. HELLER (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. Res. 167. A resolution relating to the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the relocation of the United States Embassy to Jerusalem; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. COONS, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. WARNER):

S. Res. 168. A resolution supporting respect for human rights and encouraging inclusive governance in Ethiopia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. Res. 169. A resolution congratulating Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory on 50 years of groundbreaking discoveries; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. Res. 170. 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''; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. HELLER):

S. Res. 171. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Travel and Tourism Week and honoring the valuable contributions of travel and tourism to the United States; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 14

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 14, a bill to provide that Members of Congress may not receive pay after October 1 of any fiscal year in which Congress has not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget and passed the regular appropriations bills.

S. 122

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 122, a bill to prevent homeowners from being forced to pay taxes on forgiven mortgage loan debt.

S. 198

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 198, a bill to require continued and enhanced annual reporting to Congress in the Annual Report on International Religious Freedom on anti-Semitic incidents in Europe, the safety and security of European Jewish communities, and the efforts of the United States to partner with European governments, the European Union, and civil society groups, to combat anti-Semitism, and for other purposes.

S. 244

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 244, a bill to repeal the wage requirement of the Davis-Bacon Act.

S. 317

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 317, a bill to provide taxpayers with an annual report disclosing the cost and performance of Government programs and areas of duplication among them, and for other purposes.

S. 324

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 324, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans.

S. 445

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 445, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 450

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 450, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to members of the Armed Forces who fought in defense of Guam, Wake Island, and the Philippine Archipelago between December 7, 1941 and May 10, 1942, and who died or were imprisoned by the Japanese military in the Philippines, Japan, Korea, Manchuria, Wake Island, and Guam from April 9, 1942 until September 2, 1945, in recognition of their personal sacrifice and service to the United States.

S. 455

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 455, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to count resident time spent in a critical access hospital as resident time spent in a nonprovider setting for purposes of making Medicare direct and indirect graduate medical education payments.

S. 540

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 540, a bill to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States.

S. 546

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 546, a bill to reduce temporarily the royalty required to be paid for sodium produced on Federal lands, and for other purposes.

S. 652

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 652, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a program for early detection, diagnosis, and treatment regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing newborns, infants, and young children.

S. 708

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 708, a bill to improve the ability of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to interdict fentanyl, other synthetic opioids, and other narcotics and psychoactive substances that are illegally imported into the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 720

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 720, a bill to amend the Export Administration Act of 1979 to include in the prohibitions on boycotts against allies of the United States boycotts fostered by international governmental organizations against Israel and to direct the Export-Import Bank of the United States to oppose boycotts against Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 765

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms.

COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 765, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for penalties for the sale of any Purple Heart awarded to a member of the Armed Forces.

S. 808

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) 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. 936

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 936, a bill to designate certain National Forest System land and certain public land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior in the States of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming as wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, wildland recovery areas, and biological connecting corridors, and for other purposes.

S. 951

At the request of Mr. PAUL, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 951, a bill to reform the process by which Federal agencies analyze and formulate new regulations and guidance documents, and for other purposes.

S. 1024

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1024, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1055

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1055, a bill to restrict the exportation of certain defense articles to the Philippine National Police, to work with the Philippines to support civil society and a public health approach to substance abuse, to report on Chinese and other sources of narcotics to the Republic of the Philippines, and for other purposes.

S. 1094

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1094, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1122

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1122, a bill to amend the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 to clarify when the time period for the issuance of citations under such Act begins and to require a rule to clarify that an employer's duty to make and maintain accurate records of work-related injuries and illnesses is an ongoing obligation.

S. 1137

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1137, a bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to include provisions relating to drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 75

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 75, a resolution recognizing the 100th anniversary of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the largest organization of food and nutrition professionals in the world.

S. RES. 106

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 106, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate to support the territorial integrity of Georgia.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 1144. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage business creation by allowing faster recovery of start-up and organizational expenses, to simplify accounting methods for small businesses, to expand expensing and provide accelerated cost recovery to encourage investment in new plants and equipment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, there is no doubt that the last 8 years were not good ones for the American economy. Yearly economic growth under the Obama administration averaged just under 1.5 percent. That is less than half the growth needed for a healthy economy. That kind of weak growth has consequences: fewer jobs, fewer opportunities, and lower wages.

Wage growth was almost nonexistent during the Obama administration, and new jobs and opportunities were few and far between. There have been a few encouraging signs since the election. Both wage and job growth have shown some improvement, but we are still a long way from getting our economy back to full health. The GDP report for the first quarter of this year underscored the need to implement the kind of progrowth policies that were lacking during the Obama years.

One major way to spur economic growth and improve the health of our economy is to reform our Nation's Tax Code. Our current Tax Code is strangling businesses, both large and small. Our Nation has the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world, putting American businesses at a competitive disadvantage in the global economy.

Small businesses and family farms face high tax rates, at times exceeding those paid by large corporations. These tax policies have consequences. A small company that owes a large tax bill to the Federal Government is unlikely to be able to come up with the capital necessary to expand the business or hire new workers.

When American businesses are taxed at a far higher rate than their foreign counterparts, it is likely to be the foreign rather than the American company that expands and thrives. Tax reform needs to address these obstacles to growth. Later this year, the Senate plans to consider a major tax reform package. Two of the most powerful tax-related things we can do to increase economic growth are lowering business tax rates and allowing business to recover their investments in inventory, machinery, and the like faster.

The Senate tax bill will do both. Today, I am introducing legislation that I hope will be a part of the final tax reform package in the Senate. My bill—I am calling it the Investment in New Ventures and Economic Success Today Act, or the INVEST Act for short—focuses on helping small- and medium-sized businesses by allowing them to recover their costs faster.

Earlier this year, the Economic Innovation Group released a report on economic dynamism. Economic dynamism, as the Economic Innovation Group defines it, refers to the rate at which new businesses are born and die. In a dynamic economy, the rate of new business creation is high and significantly outstrips the rate of business deaths, but that hasn't been the case in the United States lately.

New business creation has significantly dropped over the past several years. Between 2009 and 2011, business deaths outstripped business births. While the numbers have since improved slightly, the recovery has been poor and far from historical norms.

The Economic Innovation Group notes that 2012, the economy's best year for business creation since the recession, ''fell far short of its worst year prior to 2008.'' Well, this is deeply concerning because new businesses have historically been responsible for a substantial part of the job creation in this country, not to mention a key source of innovation.

When new businesses are not being created at a strong rate, workers face a whole host of problems. A less dynamic economy—the Economic Innovation Group notes—''is one likely to feature fewer jobs, lower labor force participation, slack wage growth, and rising inequality, exactly what we see today.''

Again, that is from the Economic Innovation Group.

Well, starting a new business always has a substantial element of risk. We don't need to make it harder by throwing up tax and regulatory obstacles. If we want to see our economy thriving again, we need to be encouraging the creation of new businesses, but our Tax Code, too often, does the opposite.

My bill, the INVEST Act, would encourage new business creation by allowing new enterprises to deduct a substantial part of their startup costs within the first year. Under current law, new businesses are only able to deduct $5,000 of their startup costs within their first year. Any startup expenses above that amount can be deducted, but that deduction is stretched out over a 15-year period. That is a long time.

The faster a new business can recover its startup costs, the faster it can establish itself on a secure footing. Entrepreneurs are far more likely to take the risk of starting a new venture if they know they will be able to recover their startup costs quickly. My bill would substantially increase the amount of a business's startup costs that can be deducted in the first year from $5,000 to $50,000.

Plus, any additional startup costs can be deducted over a 10-year period instead of the current 15. This will go a long way toward encouraging new business creation and the economic dynamism that comes along with it.

The second part of my bill focuses on increasing cashflow for businesses, farms and ranches, and particularly those that operate as corporations and partnerships, by allowing them to use the so-called cash method of accounting. Under current law, these businesses, farms, and ranches are generally forced to use what is called accrual accounting. Basically, what that means is, a business has to pay tax on income before it receives the cash, and it cannot deduct all of its expenses when it pays the invoice.

For a company with inventory, this means it has to deduct the investments it makes over an extended period of time. A small business might have to spend the majority of its available cash on inventory but be unable to fully deduct that expense until all of that inventory is sold.

In the case of some businesses, it might be well beyond the current tax year before that substantial investment can be fully deducted. That can leave a business increasingly cash poor. Cash poor businesses don't expand. They don't hire new workers. They don't increase wages.

Well, the INVEST Act would allow businesses to deduct investments and inventory up front, leaving them with more cash on hand to put back into their operations. It would also reduce the need for businesses to hire armies of lawyers and accountants to ensure that they have properly adhered to complex accounting rules.

Finally, the INVEST Act would substantially reform the depreciation and expensing rules. Traditionally, farms and businesses have been forced to deduct expenses like machinery, property, or agricultural equipment over an extended period—anywhere from 5 to 10 years or as many as 39 years for commercial buildings. That could leave a farm or a business with its cash tied up for years in all the property it takes to run the enterprise. Of course, that means a farm, LLC, or S corporation can spend years without being able to increase its investment in a business or to hire new workers.

My bill would permanently allow all businesses to deduct 50 percent of their investment in equipment, vehicles, machinery, and certain other kinds of property during the year in which they are purchased. It would also help small and medium-sized farms and businesses to recover an even greater portion of their capital investments by allowing them to deduct at least $2 million of new investments in business property.

My bill expands current law so additional building improvements—things like roofs, heating, and air conditioning units would qualify for immediate expensing. Farmers and ranchers who may reach the limit on full expensing are not forgotten either. The bill substantially increases the rate at which they can deduct the costs of tractors, combines, and other machinery.

Finally, for those farms and businesses that rely on cars, light trucks, and vans, this bill would substantially increase the amount of their vehicle investment that can be deducted when the business determines its taxable income each year. Currently, a light truck used on a farm or ranch could cost upwards of $30,000. Yet a farmer is only allowed to deduct $19,000 of that cost over the required recovery period for a business vehicle. My bill would substantially increase that limit to bring it more in line with the real-world costs of business vehicles.

These changes to expensing rules all have one goal: putting more money back in the hands of business owners—particularly, small business owners, farmers, and ranchers. Forcing business owners, farmers, and ranchers to lock up their capital for 5, 10, or nearly 40 years discourages growth and job creation. Under my bill, businesses, farms, and ranches would be able to redeploy that hard-to-raise capital back into business expansion, increase in wages, new jobs, and even new ventures.

The Congressional Budget Office predicts that the economy will grow at a rate of just 1.9 percent over the next 30 years. That is a full percentage point lower than the average growth rate over the past 50 years, which was over 3 percent, or between 3.2 and 3.5. That will mean decades of fewer jobs and opportunities, low wage growth, and a reduced standard of living. We don't want to resign ourselves to that, and we don't have to. If we eliminate the antigrowth features of our Tax Code, if we lift the regulatory burdens facing American businesses and free up businesses to grow and create jobs, we can achieve a future of strong economic growth—the kind of strong growth that will fuel employment and wage growth, along with greater opportunities for American workers.

I hope the INVEST Act will help us develop the kind of tax reform legislation that will help us restore strong, sustainable economic growth, and I am looking forward to working with Chairman HATCH and all of my colleagues on the Senate Finance Committee to put together the final bill and to get it to the President.

It is time that we give the American people a tax code that actually works for them.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 1150. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to require States to impose a work requirement for able-bodied adults without dependents who are eligible for medical assistance; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I would like to talk today about the need for a work requirement in our Medicaid Program. In 1969, President Lyndon Johnson addressed the American people, and he talked about breaking the cycle of poverty. This is what President Johnson said:

> I believe . . . that the key to success in this effort is jobs. It is work for people who want to work.

President Johnson, as we know, was a Democrat. He fervently believed that the people of Louisiana didn't want handouts. Most people want a chance to support themselves. President Johnson also believed that Medicaid, as originally envisioned, would be a safety net for the disabled, the elderly, and people with small children. Medicaid is not exactly that; it is dramatically different.

Whether you agree or disagree with what has happened to Medicaid, the fact is that it has turned into a health insurance program for about 20 percent of all Americans. Think about that. We have roughly 320 million people in our country, and fully 25 percent are on Medicaid. It gets bigger and bigger every year, and it gets more expensive every year. You can see that the numbers speak for themselves. You can see the trend. You can certainly see that we started in 1966, and you can particularly see the trend beginning in 1996 and its trajectory.

It also became more expensive. The cost of our Medicaid Program in 1966 was $1 billion. That is a lot of money. This is the cost of last year: $576 billion and climbing.

Let me talk about our State alone. In Louisiana, the cost of Medicaid has increased from $5.9 billion in 2008 to $10.7 billion today, and 65 percent of all of the babies born in Louisiana every year now are born on Medicaid. Think about that.

We know that Medicaid is a Federal-State program. The Federal Government puts up some of the money; the State puts up some of the money, as well. In Louisiana, we put up about one-third of the money. In Louisiana dollars, in 2008, we were putting up $1.7 billion in State money. It is called the match for the Medicaid Program. Today, the State of Louisiana is paying $3.3 billion. You can do the math. That is about a 10 percent increase every year.

If we are spending $3.3 billion of State money, that means every year, just like clockwork, we have to come up with an extra $330 million. I can tell you where that money comes from. It comes out of public schools, it comes out of universities, it comes out of our budget for roads, and it comes out of our budget for public safety.

We have a choice in America. Either Medicaid is going to be, as we originally envisioned it, a safety net for the old, the disabled, and mothers with babies or it is going to be a health insurance program for the masses.

If the American people and Congress decide that Medicaid is going to be a health insurance program for the general population, then it needs to operate as health insurance does in the private sector. In other words, able-bodied adult enrollees in Medicaid should be required to work in order to receive their benefits, if they are able.

I am filing a bill that is going to be entitled the ''Medicaid Reform and Personal Responsibility Act of 2017.'' It is going to create a work requirement for Medicaid. My reason is simple. I want Americans to prosper. I don't want our people to remain mired in poverty. I want to break poverty's back by creating a system that doesn't force the American people to subsist on handouts from government, and the best way to do that is to provide an incentive for able-bodied Americans to know the dignity of work because a person without a job is neither happy, nor is he free.

I think my bill is a commonsense approach to reducing America's reliance on entitlement programs. The work requirement will be very simple. It will be similar to the program that we have in place—the work requirement we have in place right now for food stamps.

This is what my bill would require: If you are on Medicaid or want to receive Medicaid, and you are an adult between the ages of 18 and 55, and you are able-bodied, you are not disabled, and you don't have any dependents, you don't have any children—so if you are 18 to 55, you are not disabled, and you don't have any children, then in order to receive Medicaid or to continue to receive Medicaid, you have to either work 20 hours a week—not 40 hours a week but 20 hours a week—you have to look for a job or you have to go back to school if you don't want to work. Or if you don't want to go back to school or you don't want to look for a job or you don't want to get a job, you have to perform community service for 20 hours a week. My goal is to get people off Medicaid and into the workforce, so they can support themselves and not need Medicaid.

I don't want to take Medicaid away from people in need. I do want fewer people to need Medicaid. So if you are disabled, if you are pregnant, if you are elderly, if you are caring for a child, my bill doesn't apply to you. I am not talking about telling a mother with a baby in her arms that she has to go find a job, and I am not going to ask an elderly person in a nursing home to leave the nursing home and go get a job in order to receive Medicaid. All my bill says is that if you are young by today's standards, between 18 and 55, you are able-bodied and you have no children or dependents, then you have to go get a job or you have to go to school or you have to perform community service.

I want to be very clear about something else. In my State, we have a lot of flood victims. We had terrible flooding last year. In my State, Louisiana, we have a depression in the oil and gas industry; indeed, we do throughout America, and I know we do in the great State of Alaska as well. I am not looking to add to their hurt. I am working very hard, as are you, Mr. President, to put our oilfield workers back to work and to get our flood victims the assistance they need to recover from the tragedy that has befallen them. This bill is not about them. This bill is about able-bodied adults between the ages of 18 and 55 who have no dependents and who have been unemployed for years, in many cases, by their own choosing.

Our country has grown a lot and evolved a lot since Medicaid was introduced in 1965. We now face new challenges, both at home and abroad. We know that. Medicaid has grown, as well, but it hasn't evolved in a positive way, in my opinion. Just 3 years after Medicaid was founded, we knew we were going to have a problem finding the money, given the exponential growth in the program, and more than 50 years later, it is way past time to do something about it.

We have to break the back of poverty. This is not about throwing people out into the cold. This is about helping them to know that they can get work because the best program—the best social program in the entire world is a job. By implementing a work requirement for able-bodied adults, Medicaid will evolve to the next logical step. Our goal ought to be to ensure, of course, that people are healthy. That is what Medicaid exists for, but if you are healthy, then the next step is to help you join the workforce.

The simple fact is, this is nothing new or extraordinary. We already have work requirements—required by acts of this Congress—for unemployment assistance, for welfare benefits, for subsidized housing, and for food stamps. Now, these requirements have been a success. We all know that, not just for stemming the costs of those programs but also for helping people—helping Americans build careers.

Yet we do not have a requirement—a work requirement—for Medicaid. If my bill passes, we will. Work requirements exist because these programs are supposed to be safety nets. That is what a social program is, a safety net. They are not supposed to exist to permanently support you if you can support yourself.

Our social programs in America are meant to be bridges. In way too many respects, they have become parking lots. Medicaid costs are not just a national problem. The program's expansion is clipping the wings of States like Louisiana and like Alaska because, as I pointed out, the States have to put up a substantial amount of the money.

We are becoming a country in which people subsist instead of thrive because they don't know the rewards of work. We have become a country in which poverty is a way of life for way too many people. That is just sad. More than 50 years after Medicaid began, it is time to break the back of poverty once and for all. We can start with a work requirement for Medicaid.

Thank you.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1156. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow rehabilitation expenditures for public school buildings to qualify for rehabilitation credit; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, today I want to discuss legislation I am introducing, the School Infrastructure Modernization Act.

To claim the federal tax credit for historic preservation, a building renovation must be for a different purpose than that for which the building was previously used, a requirement known as the ''prior use'' rule. This bill waives that requirement for renovations of K–12 public school buildings. This will make it easier to restore historic-but-dilapidated school buildings across the country so our children have safe, modern spaces in which to learn.

As a Richmond City Council member and later Mayor, I faced challenges familiar to many municipalities—overcrowded schools, aging buildings, and limited dollars in the budget. But in one particular case, I and a group of local stakeholders identified a creative solution. On one hand we had an overcrowded Thomas Jefferson High School with in-zone and magnet students. On the other hand, we had a closed Maggie Walker High School that needed renovations. We put together a financing package that made use of federal and state historic tax credits to renovate Maggie Walker High School and satisfied the prior use rule by consolidating the magnet program from Thomas Jefferson into a new Maggie Walker Governor's School for Government and

International Studies. Today, some 20 years later, this is one of America's highest performing public high schools. Without the federal historic tax credit, this would have been too expensive to make happen.

This bill will make it easier to do similar projects around the country. More modern school buildings will bolster the quality of public education, and carrying out these projects will generate private sector infrastructure investment and jobs. In Virginia alone, according to a 2013 study, more than 800 K–12 schools are at least 50 years old, representing some 40% of all the K–12 schools in the Commonwealth.

As the Senate considers tax reform and a comprehensive infrastructure package, I encourage my colleagues to support this common-sense incentive that is good for education, good for infrastructure, and good for jobs.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. COONS, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BROWN, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1158. A bill to help prevent acts of genocide and other atrocity crimes, which threaten national and international security, by enhancing United States Government capacities to prevent, mitigate, and respond to such crises; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, April was Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month. It commemorated some of the most horrific genocides and atrocities of the 20th century: the siege of Sarajevo in April 1992, the Rwandan genocide in April 1992; the Cambodian genocide in April 1975; and, the Armenian genocide in April 1915. Last, Yom Hashoah or Holocaust Remembrance Day fell during the month of April this year.

We must remember the past. And we must also be mindful of the present and the future. As we know all too well, criminal atrocities persist around the globe. In South Sudan, the world's youngest nation, a political and ethnic conflict is now in its fourth year. Tens of thousands of civilians were killed in mass atrocities and thousands more have fled the country fearing for their lives. In Iraq, ISIS has committed genocide against Yezidis, Christians, and Shiite Muslims, a determination made by former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry last year. ISIS has killed, expelled, raped, and enslaved Yezidi men, women, and children in northern Iraq, and has committed similar atrocities against other groups living in areas under its control.

In Burma, the Rohingya Muslim community faces such severe violence and dehumanization, including slaughtering and sequestration, that many experts believe their suffering amounts to genocide. Moreover, in Syria, repeatedly, we see a government committing atrocities against its own people. Children are being gassed. Hospitals are being bombed. Innocent people are being tortured to death.

Too often, we have done too little, waited too long, or been caught unprepared by events that should not have surprised us. We continue to forget the lessons of the past and fail to live up to the post-Holocaust pledge of ''Never Again.'' Ignoring the genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity that continue to rage around the world sends a message to the global community that criminal atrocities are tolerable. We must do better to see that atrocities never again occur on our watch.

On April 7, I introduced the Syrian War Crimes Accountability Act, which expands the tools the U.S. government is using to document atrocities in Syria and hold President Bashar al-Assad and other perpetrators accountable. Today, under the heavy cloud of atrocities occurring in South Sudan, Iraq, Burma, Syria, and elsewhere, I am introducing another atrocity-related bill, the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2017. This bill—named in honor of the courageous, inspiring Holocaust survivor and Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel—strengthens the U.S. government's infrastructure to prevent and respond to mass atrocities, wherever they may occur.

I am here today to stress that our job, our responsibility, is to make sure the United States has the full arsenal of tools—diplomatic, economic, and legal—to take meaningful action before atrocities occur. The costs—both human and economic—of addressing these atrocities too late or after-the-fact are skyrocketing. The United States must do a better job of responding earlier and more effectively to these crimes—when warning signs begin to point towards possible atrocities occurring, and when strategic investments can have a greater impact in promoting stability and security. Essential to this effort is ensuring that the United States Government has structures in place and mechanisms at hand to better prevent and respond to potential atrocities.

Atrocity prevention has long been a bipartisan cause. In 1988, President Reagan signed implementing legislation allowing the United States to become a party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In the 2006 National Security Strategy, President George W. Bush highlighted the ''moral imperative that states take action to prevent and punish genocide.'' In 2008, the bipartisan Genocide Prevention Task Force, which was co-chaired by former Secretary of Defense William Cohen and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, stated: ''Genocide and mass atrocities . . . threaten core U.S. national interests.'' In 2010, the Senate unanimously passed a resolution recognizing ''the United States national interest in helping to prevent and mitigate acts of genocide and other mass atrocities against civilians, and supporting and encouraging efforts to develop a whole of government approach to prevent and mitigate such acts.'' In 2011, President Obama declared: ''Preventing mass atrocities and genocide is a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility of the United States of America.'' The same year, former U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Samantha Power stated that preventing genocide ''required a degree of governmental organization that matches the kind of methodical organization that accompanies mass-killings.''

We need to continue taking proactive steps to enhance our Nation's capacity to quickly anticipate and address genocide and other atrocity crimes. I am introducing the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2017 to ensure that we do just that. I am joined in this effort by Senators YOUNG, TILLIS, DURBIN, RUBIO, MENENDEZ, MURKOWSKI, BLUMENTHAL, WARREN, WHITEHOUSE, GILLIBRAND, KLOBUCHAR, SHAHEEN, FRANKEN, PETERS, COONS, STABENOW, BOOKER, MARKEY, BROWN, BALDWIN, and WYDEN. This bill does a number of things. First, the bill authorizes the creation of a Mass Atrocities Task Force, which is a transparent, accountable, proactive, high-level, interagency body that includes representatives at the assistant secretary level or higher from departments and agencies across the U.S. Government. The Task Force would work collaboratively with representatives of governmental as well as nongovernmental organizations to oversee the development and implementation of U.S. policy on atrocity prevention and response.

Second, this bill gives our Foreign Service Officers the training they need to recognize patterns of escalation and early warning signs of potential atrocities and conflict. With this training, we will, over time, build atrocity prevention into the core skillset of our people on the ground. They will be better equipped to see warning signs, analyze events, and engage early.

Third, this bill calls on the Director of National Intelligence to include in his or her annual testimony to Congress on threats to U.S. national security a review of countries and regions at risk of mass atrocities as well as, whenever possible, specific risk factors, potential groups of perpetrators, and at-risk target groups. With this information, Congress will be better informed and better able to respond to mass atrocities that are brewing.

Finally, this bill authorizes the Complex Crises Fund, which is a specifically dedicated portion of our foreign assistance budget for mitigating conflict. The Complex Crises Fund enables

us to rapidly respond to emerging crises overseas, including potential atrocities. We have already used the Complex Crises Fund to respond to crises in the Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Kenya, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere. Without this important tool, our ability to effectively prevent and mitigate crises is severely constrained.

Mr. President, this is a good bill. It does good things, and places the United States on solid moral ground. However, the moral argument is not the only reason to support this bill. We must also remember that America's security, and that of our allies, is impacted when civilians are slaughtered. Our security is impacted when desperate refugees stream across borders. Our security is affected when perpetrators of extraordinary violence wreak havoc on regional stability, destroying communities, families, and livelihoods. We have seen groups like ISIS systematically targeting communities because of their ethnicity or religious beliefs and practices, and yet, we still lack a comprehensive framework to prevent and respond to genocide and other atrocity crimes. So, let this bill act as our framework, and our call to action, so that when we use the phrase ''never again,'' we know that we are taking meaningful preventative action.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. UDALL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 1162. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today to announce the reintroduction of the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act of 2017. This legislation would allow student loan borrowers to take advantage of lower interest rates, and I urge both my Senate colleagues and the Trump administration to support it. In a few short months, millions more college graduates will be hit with their first student loan bills.

Already, more than 44 million Americans have student loans, and many are struggling to pay loans that are running at interest rates of 6 percent, 8 percent, 10 percent and even more. It is time for real action to help struggling borrowers. That is why, today, I join 36 of my Democratic colleagues in the Senate and 98 of my Democratic colleagues in the House of Representatives to reintroduce our plan to allow borrowers to lower their monthly payment by refinancing their existing loans to today's lower interest rates, 3.76 percent for undergrads, a little higher for graduate students.

Supporting America's students should not be a political food fight. In fact, President Trump talked about student loans when he was on the campaign trial, including a plan to reduce the maximum number of years for repayment for most students.

As a candidate, Donald Trump said that ''students should not be asked to pay more on the debt than they can afford.'' I agree with that, which is why Congress should allow students to lower their monthly payments by refinancing to today's lower interest rates. Donald Trump also said that ''student loan debt should not be an albatross around student's necks for the rest of their lives.''

I agree with that too. The legislation I am introducing today would lower the outstanding balance for millions of Americans, allowing them to get out from under their student loans faster. Here is one more. Donald Trump said that it is ''terrible that one of the only profit centers we have is student loans.'' He also said that ''it is not fair and that should not take place.''

Unfortunately, right now, that is exactly what is happening. According to a recent analysis of Congressional Budget Office data by the Institute for College Access and Success, after all the costs are accounted for, the Federal Government is now on track to make $81 billion off student loans over the next 10 years.

That is obscene. The Federal Government should not be making a profit off the backs of our students, period. Yes, Candidate Trump talked a lot about this problem, but talk is cheap, and President Trump has not done a thing to fix the problem. In fact, he seems to have lost all interest in students and their student loans. Since his election in November, he has not even mentioned his campaign promises about student loans.

Instead, he and Education Secretary DeVos have gone in the opposite direction, using their short time in office to deliver one blow after another to hard-working Americans who are struggling with student debt. Back when he was running for President, Donald Trump made a lot of promises, but empty promises don't help the students who have been punched in the gut by Secretary DeVos's decision to roll back critical consumer protections for borrowers.

Hollow campaign pledges do not help the students, the veterans, the members of our Armed Forces when they are hurt by student loan companies, like Navient, that break the law and brazenly announce to the world that they don't think they have a responsibility to act in the best interests of students.

Rally speeches don't mean much when this administration is ripping up policies that would have made it harder for greedy student loan companies to rake in lucrative government contracts while cheating students. Last year's rhetoric means nothing to the struggling borrowers who can now be charged sky-high fees—as high as 16 percent—by student loan collection companies thanks to yet another policy Betsy DeVos ripped up.

Students know what is going on. The loan companies know too. Industry stocks have skyrocketed since November. Mr. President, keep your promise and start by supporting this refinancing bill.

For nearly 4 years, Republicans have filibustered this bill and refused to even debate it, despite its overwhelming public support. Meanwhile, congressional Republicans have offered nothing—nothing—to seriously address the problems of student loan borrowers. Those problems keep getting worse. Today's students are wrestling with $1.4 trillion in student loan debt, and every year the student loan debt increases by nearly $100 billion.

Interest rates are scheduled to jump up again later this summer, meaning the urgency for Congress to act and allow borrowers to access today's rates is stronger than ever. The Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act would give millions of borrowers across this country a chance to save hundreds and in some cases thousands of dollars a year. That is real money, money they can put toward paying down the balance on their debt, money they can use to save for a home, money they can spend on buying a car, money they can put toward building a solid future.

By refusing to act and ignoring this debt crisis, Republicans threaten to bury the hopes of an entire generation. It is time for Congress to step up and fix this problem. It is also time for the President to step up as well.

President Trump, you campaigned on the idea that the Federal Government should not be making a profit off the backs of hard-working students. So support this legislation. Put it in your annual budget, this proposal. Call on Members of your own party who have held up this bill to get on board. Demand action to refinance student loan debt, and keep the promises you made to America's young people.

Thank you, Mr. President.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mr. HATCH, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. COTTON):

S. 1163. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure compliance of medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs with requirements relating to the scheduling of appointments, to require appointment by the President and confirmation by the Senate of certain

health care officials of the Department, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1163

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Veterans' Health Care Integrity Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. COMPLIANCE OF MEDICAL FACILITIES WITH REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO SCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS FOR HOSPITAL CARE AND MEDICAL SERVICES.

(a) ANNUAL CERTIFICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the director of each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs annually certifies to the Secretary that—

(A) the medical facility is in full compliance with all regulations and other provisions of law relating to scheduling appointments for veterans to receive hospital care or medical services, including Veterans Health Administration Directive 1230 or any successor directive; and

(B) any official data on wait times for appointments to receive hospital care or medical services submitted by the director to the Secretary during the year preceding the submittal of the certification is true and accurate to the best of the director's knowledge.

(2) PROHIBITION ON WAIVER.—The Secretary may not waive any regulation or other provision of law described in paragraph (1) for a medical facility of the Department if such regulation or other provision of law otherwise applies to the medical facility.

(b) EXPLANATION OF NONCOMPLIANCE.—If a director of a medical facility of the Department does not make a certification under subsection (a)(1) for any year, the director shall submit to the Secretary a report containing—

(1) an explanation of why the director is unable to make such certification; and

(2) a description of the actions the director is taking to ensure full compliance with the regulations and other provisions of law described in such subsection.

(c) PROHIBITION ON BONUSES BASED ON NONCOMPLIANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If a director of a medical facility of the Department does not make a certification under subsection (a)(1) for any year, no covered official described in paragraph (2) may receive an award or bonus under chapter 45 or 53 of title 5, United States Code, or any other award or bonus authorized under such title or title 38, United States Code, during the year following the year in which the certification was not made.

(2) COVERED OFFICIAL DESCRIBED.—A covered official described in this paragraph is each official who serves in the following positions at a medical facility of the Department during a year, or portion thereof, for which the director does not make a certification under subsection (a)(1):

(A) The director.

(B) The chief of staff.

(C) The associate director.

(D) The associate director for patient care.

(E) The deputy chief of staff.

(d) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not less frequently than annually, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report containing, with respect to the year covered by the report—

(1) a list of each medical facility of the Department for which a certification was made under subsection (a)(1); and

(2) a list of each medical facility of the Department for which such a certification was not made, including a copy of each report submitted to the Secretary under subsection (b).

SEC. 3. UNIFORM APPLICATION OF DIRECTIVES AND POLICIES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall apply the directives and policies of the Department of Veterans Affairs to each office or facility of the Department in a uniform manner.

(b) NOTIFICATION.—If the Secretary does not uniformly apply the directives and policies of the Department pursuant to subsection (a), including by waiving such a directive or policy with respect to an office, facility, or element of the Department, the Secretary shall notify the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives of such nonuniform application, including an explanation for the nonuniform application.

SEC. 4. REQUIREMENT FOR APPOINTMENT AND CONFIRMATION OF CERTAIN OFFICIALS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PRINCIPAL DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH.—Subsection (c) of section 7306 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(c)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), appointments under subsection (a) shall be made by the Secretary.

''(2) Appointments under subsection (a)(1) shall be made by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

''(3) In the case of appointments under paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (4), and (8) of subsection (a), such appointments shall be made upon the recommendation of the Under Secretary for Health.''.

(b) OTHER DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY POSITIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services of the Department, the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits of the Department, the Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Assistance of the Department, and the Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations of the Department shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize the establishment of any new position within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) APPLICATION.—Subsection (b) and the amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to appointments made on and after the date of the enactment of this Act.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mrs. FISCHER, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 1164. A bill to protect consumers from deceptive practices with respect to online booking of hotel reservations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1164

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Stop Online Booking Scams Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Internet has become an important channel of commerce in the United States, accounting for billions of dollars in retail sales every year.

(2) Hotel reservation transactions can be easily made online and online commerce has created a marketplace where consumers can shop for hotels, flights, car rentals, and other travel-related services and products across thousands of brands on a single platform.

(3) Consumers should be able to clearly identify the company with which they are transacting business online.

(4) Actions by third-party sellers that misappropriate brand identity, trademark, or other marketing content are harmful to consumers.

(5) Platforms offered by online travel agencies provide consumers with a valuable tool for comparative shopping for hotels and should not be mistaken for the unlawful third-party actors that commit such misappropriation.

(6) The misleading and deceptive sales tactics companies use against consumers booking hotel rooms online have resulted in the loss of sensitive financial and personal information, financial harm, and other damages for consumers.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) consumers benefit from the ability to shop for travel-related services and products on the innovative platforms offered by online travel agencies;

(2) sellers on the Internet should—

(A) provide consumers with clear, accurate information; and

(B) have an opportunity to compete fairly with one another; and

(3) the Federal Trade Commission should revise the Commission's Internet site to make it easier for consumers and businesses to report complaints of deceptive practices with respect to online booking of hotel reservations.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) AFFILIATION CONTRACT.—The term ''affiliation contract'' means, with respect to a hotel, a contract with the owner of the hotel, the entity that manages the hotel, or the franchisor of the hotel to provide online hotel reservation services for the hotel.

(2) COMMISSION.—The term ''Commission'' means the Federal Trade Commission.

(3) EXHIBITION ORGANIZER OR MEETING PLANNER.—The term ''exhibition organizer or meeting planner'' means the person responsible for all aspects of planning, promoting, and producing a meeting, conference, event, or exhibition, including overseeing and arranging all hotel reservation plans and contracts for the meeting, conference, event, or exhibition.

(4) OFFICIAL HOUSING BUREAU.—The term ''official housing bureau'' means the organization designated by an exhibition organizer or meeting planner to provide hotel reservation services for meetings, conferences, events, or exhibitions.

(5) PARTY DIRECTLY AFFILIATED.—The term ''party directly affiliated'' means, with respect to a hotel, a person who has entered into an affiliation contract with the hotel.

(6) THIRD-PARTY ONLINE HOTEL RESERVATION SELLER.—The term ''third-party online hotel reservation seller'' means any person that—

(A) sells any good or service with respect to a hotel in a transaction effected on the Internet; and

(B) is not—

(i) a party directly affiliated with the hotel; or

(ii) an exhibition organizer or meeting planner or the official housing bureau for a meeting, conference, event, or exhibition held at the hotel.

SEC. 4. REQUIREMENTS FOR THIRD-PARTY ONLINE HOTEL RESERVATION SELLERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—It shall be unlawful for a third-party online hotel reservation seller to charge or attempt to charge any consumer's credit card, debit card, bank account, or other financial account for any good or service sold in a transaction effected on the Internet with respect to a hotel unless the third-party online hotel reservation seller—

(1) clearly and conspicuously discloses to the consumer all material terms of the transaction, including—

(A) before the conclusion of the transaction—

(i) a description of the good or service being offered; and

(ii) the cost of such good or service; and

(B) in a manner that is continuously visible to the consumer throughout the transaction process, that the person—

(i) is a third-party online hotel reservation seller; and

(ii) is not—

(I) affiliated with the owner of the hotel or the entity that provides the hotel services or accommodations; or

(II) an exhibition organizer or meeting planner or the official housing bureau for a meeting, conference, event, or exhibition held at the hotel; or

(2) includes prominent and continuous disclosure of the brand identity of the third-party online hotel reservation seller throughout the transaction process, whether online or over the phone.

(b) ENFORCEMENT BY COMMISSION.—

(1) UNFAIR OR DECEPTIVE ACTS OR PRACTICES.—A violation of subsection (a) by a person subject to such subsection shall be treated as a violation of a rule defining an unfair or deceptive act or practice prescribed under section 18(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 57a(a)(1)(B)).

(2) POWERS OF COMMISSION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall enforce this section in the same manner, by the same means, and with the same jurisdiction, powers, and duties as though all applicable terms and provisions of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.) were incorporated into and made a part of this Act.

(B) PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES.—Any person who violates this section shall be subject to the penalties and entitled to the privileges and immunities provided in the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.).

(C) RULEMAKING.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may promulgate such rules as the Commission considers appropriate to enforce this section.

(ii) PROCEDURES.—The Commission shall carry out any rulemaking under clause (i) in accordance with section 553 of title 5, United States Code.

(c) ENFORCEMENT BY STATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In any case in which the attorney general of a State has reason to believe that an interest of the residents of the State has been or is being threatened or adversely affected by the engagement of any person subject to subsection (a) in a practice that violates such subsection, the attorney general of the State may, as parens patriae, bring a civil action on behalf of the residents of the State in an appropriate district court of the United States to obtain appropriate relief.

(2) RIGHTS OF FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION.—

(A) NOTICE TO FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (iii), the attorney general of a State shall notify the Commission in writing that the attorney general intends to bring a civil action under paragraph (1) before initiating any civil action against a person subject to subsection (a).

(ii) CONTENTS.—The notification required under clause (i) with respect to a civil action shall include a copy of the complaint to be filed to initiate the civil action.

(iii) EXCEPTION.—If it is not feasible for the attorney general of a State to provide the notification required by clause (i) before initiating a civil action under paragraph (1), the attorney general shall notify the Commission immediately upon instituting the civil action.

(B) INTERVENTION BY FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION.—The Commission may—

(i) intervene in any civil action brought by the attorney general of a State under paragraph (1); and

(ii) upon intervening—

(I) be heard on all matters arising in the civil action; and

(II) file petitions for appeal of a decision in the civil action.

(3) INVESTIGATORY POWERS.—Nothing in this subsection may be construed to prevent the attorney general of a State from exercising the powers conferred on the attorney general by the laws of the State—

(A) to conduct investigations;

(B) to administer oaths or affirmations; or

(C) to compel the attendance of witnesses or the production of documentary or other evidence.

(4) STATE COORDINATION WITH FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION.—If the Commission institutes a civil action or an administrative action with respect to a violation of subsection (a), the attorney general of a State shall coordinate with the Commission before bringing a civil action under paragraph (1) against any defendant named in the complaint of the Commission for the violation with respect to which the Commission instituted such action.

(5) VENUE; SERVICE OF PROCESS.—

(A) VENUE.—Any action brought under paragraph (1) may be brought in—

(i) the district court of the United States that meets applicable requirements relating to venue under section 1391 of title 28, United States Code; or

(ii) another court of competent jurisdiction.

(B) SERVICE OF PROCESS.—In an action brought under paragraph (1), process may be served in any district in which the defendant—

(i) is an inhabitant; or

(ii) may be found.

(6) ACTIONS BY OTHER STATE OFFICIALS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In addition to civil actions brought by attorneys general under paragraph (1), any other officer of a State who is authorized by the State to do so may bring a civil action under paragraph (1), subject to the same requirements and limitations that apply under this subsection to civil actions brought by attorneys general.

(B) SAVINGS PROVISION.—Nothing in this subsection may be construed to prohibit an authorized official of a State from initiating or continuing any proceeding in a court of the State for a violation of any civil or criminal law of the State.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, the travel and tourism industry is a pillar of Montana's economy. Our wealth of public lands, first-class fishing, hiking and skiing, and our breathtaking natural landscapes make Montana a special place for people to visit. Last year alone, visitors to Montana spent $3.46 billion in our state. And Montana is not alone. The travel and tourism industry plays a significant role in the United States economy as well, contributing over $503 billion to the U.S. GDP just last year.

With advancements in technology and the increased use of online marketplaces, travelers have the ability to do more research, plan trips, and book reservations online. Online platforms allow customers to compare thousands of brands in one place and as a result the number of hotel reservations made online has surged over the past several years, many of which are on legitimate third-party websites. However, as the ease and number of online bookings has increased, so has the number of online booking scams.

Illegitimate reservation sellers pose as hotel websites, leading consumers to believe they are booking directly with the hotel, when in fact they are booking with an unrelated third party. Transactions on these sites can result in additional hidden fees, loss of expected loyalty points, or even confirmation of reservations that were never made. One study found that as many as fifteen million bookings a year are affected by fraudulent websites. In Montana, you expect to get what you pay for. When you book a hotel online only to find out you are not on the list when you arrive, you not only lose your money, but you lose the positive experience tourism awards.

That is why I am proud to introduce the Stop Online Booking Scams Act of 2017 along with my colleagues Senators NELSON, FISCHER, and KLOBUCHAR. This bill requires third-party sites to disclose that they are not affiliated with the hotel, providing clarity and transparency to consumers booking online. It also empowers State attorneys general to pursue cases on behalf of consumers who have been scammed. Providing clear disclosures that reveal the true identity of websites will give confidence to the millions of consumers who make reservations online every year. I ask my colleagues who have not yet done so to join me in cosponsoring this much-needed legislation. Thank you, Mr. President.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. KING, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 1169. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with an option to provide medical assistance to individuals between

the ages of 22 and 64 for inpatient services to treat substance use disorders at certain facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1169

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Medicaid Coverage for Addiction Recovery Expansion Act''.

SEC. 2. STATE OPTION TO PROVIDE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR RESIDENTIAL ADDICTION TREATMENT FACILITY SERVICES; MODIFICATION OF THE IMD EXCLUSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1905 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(16)—

(A) by striking ''and, (B)'' and inserting '', (B)''; and

(B) by inserting '', and (C) effective January 1, 2019, residential addiction treatment facility services (as defined in subsection (h)(3)) for individuals over 21 years of age and under 65 years of age, if offered as part of a full continuum of evidence-based treatment services provided under the State plan, including residential, outpatient, and community-based care, for individuals with substance use disorders'' before the semicolon; and

(2) in subsection (h)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''paragraph (16) of subsection (a)'' and inserting ''subsection (a)(16)(A)''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3)(A) For purposes of subsection (a)(16)(C), the term 'residential addiction treatment facility services' means, subject to subparagraph (B), inpatient services provided—

''(i) to an individual for the purpose of treating a substance use disorder that are furnished to an individual for not more than 2 consecutive periods of 30 consecutive days, provided that upon completion of the first 30-day period, the individual is assessed and determined to have progressed through the clinical continuum of care, in accordance with criteria established by the Secretary, in consultation with the American Society of Addiction Medicine, and requires continued medically necessary treatment and social support services to promote recovery, stable transition to ongoing treatment, and discharge; and

''(ii) in a facility that is accredited for the treatment of substance use disorders by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, the Council on Accreditation, or any other accrediting agency that the Secretary deems appropriate as necessary to ensure nationwide applicability, including qualified national organizations and State-level accrediting agencies.

''(B) The State agency responsible for administering the State plan under this title shall establish procedures to ensure that, with respect to any facility providing residential addiction treatment facility services in a fiscal year, the average monthly number of beds used by the facility to provide such services during such year is not more than 40.

''(C) The provision of medical assistance for residential addiction treatment facility services to an individual shall not prohibit Federal financial participation for medical assistance for items or services that are provided to the individual in or away from the residential addiction treatment facility during any 30-day period in which the individual is receiving residential addiction treatment facility services.

''(D) A woman who is eligible for medical assistance on the basis of being pregnant and who is furnished residential addiction treatment facility services during any 30-day period may remain eligible for, and continue to be furnished with, such services for additional 30-day periods without regard to any eligibility limit that would otherwise apply to the woman as a result of her pregnancy ending, subject to assessment by the facility and a determination based on medical necessity related to substance use disorder and the impact of substance use disorder on birth outcomes.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to items and services furnished on or after January 1, 2019.

SEC. 3. GRANT PROGRAM TO EXPAND YOUTH ADDICTION TREATMENT FACILITIES UNDER MEDICAID AND CHIP.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a program under which the Secretary shall award grants to States for the purpose of expanding the infrastructure and treatment capabilities, including augmenting equipment and bed capacity, of eligible youth addiction treatment facilities that provide addiction treatment services to Medicaid or CHIP beneficiaries who have not attained the age of 21 and are in communities with high numbers of medically underserved populations of at-risk youth.

(2) USE OF FUNDS.—Grant funds awarded under this section may be used to expand the infrastructure and treatment capabilities of an existing facility (including through construction) but shall not be used for the construction of any new facility or for the provision of medical assistance or child health assistance under Medicaid or CHIP.

(3) TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION; DURATION.—

(A) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall award grants under the grant program.

(B) DURATION.—The Secretary shall award grants under the grant program for a period not to exceed 5 years.

(b) APPLICATION.—A State seeking to participate in the grant program shall submit to the Secretary, at such time and in such manner as the Secretary shall require, an application that includes—

(1) detailed information on the types of additional infrastructure and treatment capacity of eligible youth addiction treatment facilities that the State proposes to fund under the grant program;

(2) a description of the communities in which the eligible youth addiction treatment facilities funded under the grant program operate;

(3) an assurance that the eligible youth addiction treatment facilities that the State proposes to fund under the grant program shall give priority to providing addiction treatment services to Medicaid or CHIP beneficiaries who have not attained the age of 21 and are in communities with high numbers of medically underserved populations of at-risk youth; and

(4) such additional information and assurances as the Secretary shall require.

(c) RURAL AREAS.—Not less than 15 percent of the amount of a grant awarded to a State under this section shall be used for making payments to eligible youth addiction treatment facilities that are located in rural areas or that target the provision of addiction treatment services to Medicaid or CHIP beneficiaries who have not attained the age of 21 and reside in rural areas.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

(1) ADDICTION TREATMENT SERVICES.—The term ''addiction treatment services'' means services provided to an individual for the purpose of treating a substance use disorder.

(2) CHIP.—The term ''CHIP'' means the State children's health insurance program established under title XXI of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397aa et seq.).

(3) ELIGIBLE YOUTH ADDICTION TREATMENT FACILITY.—The term ''eligible youth addiction treatment facility'' means a facility that is a participating provider under the State Medicaid or CHIP programs for purposes of providing medical assistance or child health assistance to Medicaid or CHIP beneficiaries for youth addiction treatment services on an inpatient or outpatient basis (or both).

(4) MEDICAID.—The term ''Medicaid'' means the medical assistance program established under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.).

(5) MEDICAID OR CHIP BENEFICIARY.—The term ''Medicaid or CHIP beneficiary'' means an individual who is enrolled in the State Medicaid plan, the State child health plan under CHIP, or under a waiver of either such plan.

(6) MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS.—The term ''medically underserved populations'' has the meaning given that term in section 330(b)(3) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(b)(3)).

(7) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated $50,000,000 to carry out the provisions of this section. Funds appropriated under this subsection shall remain available until expended.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 167—RELATING TO THE RECOGNITION OF JERUSALEM AS THE CAPITAL OF ISRAEL AND THE RELOCATION OF THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY TO JERUSALEM

Mr. HELLER (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. CRUZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 167

Whereas each sovereign nation, under international law and custom, may designate its own capital;

Whereas, since 1950, the city of Jerusalem has been the capital of the State of Israel;

Whereas the city of Jerusalem is the seat of Israel's President, Parliament, Supreme Court, and the site of numerous government ministries and social and cultural institutions;

Whereas the city of Jerusalem is the spiritual center of Judaism and is also considered a holy city by members of other religious faiths;

Whereas Jerusalem must remain an undivided city in which the rights of every ethnic and religious group are protected as they have been by Israel since 1967;

Whereas, this year, we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem and reaffirm the congressional sentiment that Jerusalem must remain an undivided city;

Whereas every citizen of Israel should have the right to reside anywhere in the undivided city of Jerusalem;

Whereas the President and the Secretary of State should publicly affirm as a matter of United States policy that Jerusalem must remain the undivided capital of the State of Israel;

Whereas the President should immediately implement the provisions of the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Public Law 104–45) and begin the process of relocating the United States Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem;

Whereas United States officials should refrain from any actions that contradict United States law on this subject; and

Whereas any official document of the United States Government which lists countries and their capital cities should identify Jerusalem as the capital of Israel: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) it should be the policy of the United States to recognize Jerusalem as the undivided capital of the State of Israel both de jure and de facto; and

(2) the United States Embassy should be relocated to Jerusalem.

SENATE RESOLUTION 168—SUPPORTING RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND ENCOURAGING INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE IN ETHIOPIA

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. COONS, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. WARNER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 168

Whereas the first pillar of the 2012 United States Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa is to strengthen democratic institutions, and the United States Agency for International Development Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Strategy states that strong democratic institutions, respect for human rights, and participatory, accountable governance are crucial elements for improving people's lives in a sustainable way;

Whereas the third pillar of the 2012 United States Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa is to advance peace and security, including supporting security sector reform;

Whereas democratic space in Ethiopia has steadily diminished since the general elections of 2005;

Whereas elections were held in 2015 in which the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front and its affiliates claimed 100 percent of parliamentary seats;

Whereas the 2016 Department of State Human Rights Report on Ethiopia cited serious human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, killings, rape, and torture committed by security forces as well as increased restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of association, politically motivated trials, harassment, intimidation, and arrest of opposition members and journalists;

Whereas the Government of Ethiopia has repeatedly abused laws such as the 2009 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation to limit press freedom, silence independent journalists, and persecute members of the political opposition;

Whereas laws such as the 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation have been used to restrict the operation of civil society and nongovernmental organizations in Ethiopia across a range of purposes, particularly those investigating alleged violations of human rights by governmental authorities;

Whereas the case of the ''Zone 9 Bloggers'', whose arrest and detention in 2014 and subsequent trials on terrorism charges brought international attention to the restrictions on press freedom in Ethiopia, is indicative of the coercive environment in which journalists continue to operate;

Whereas the arrest, detention, and demeaning treatment of hundreds of dissidents, including leaders of legally registered opposition parties such as Bekele Gerba, arrested in December 2015, and Merera Gudina, arrested in November 2016, of the Oromo Federalist Congress, Yonatan Tesfaye Regassa, arrested in December 2015, of the Semayawi Party (the Blue Party), and the arrest and sentencing of Okello Akway Ochalla, former governor of the Gambella region, are indicative of repressive political conditions that prevail in the country;

Whereas the Ethiopian Human Rights Council reported last year at least 102 protestor deaths from November 2015 to February 2016 across 9 administrative zones, Human Rights Watch reports that Ethiopian security forces have killed at least 500 peaceful protestors, and Amnesty International reported that more than 800 protesters have been killed since November 2015 and that number is likely higher;

Whereas, on October 9, 2016, the Government of Ethiopia imposed a far-reaching, six-month State of Emergency that restricted a broad range of actions, including blocking mobile Internet access and social media communications, undermining freedoms of association, expression, and peaceful assembly, which led to the arrest of over 26,000 persons, and which was extended by four months on March 30, 2017;

Whereas, on October 10, 2016, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and the United Nations Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances and on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions publicly called on the Government of Ethiopia to allow an international commission of inquiry to investigate the protests and the violence used against peaceful demonstrators;

Whereas former detainees report torture, lack of rations, and other forms of serious abuse in detention facilities;

Whereas state-sponsored violence against citizens exercising their rights to peaceful assembly in Oromia and elsewhere in the country, and the abuse of laws to stifle journalistic and political freedoms, stand in direct contrast to democratic principles and in violation of Ethiopia's constitution;

Whereas serious abuses have been and continue to be committed in the Somali regional state by Ethiopian federal and regional security forces, some of which may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity;

Whereas to date, the Government of Ethiopia has held no one accountable for any of the aforementioned abuses; and

Whereas, during President Barack Obama's historic visit to Addis Ababa in July 2015, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn expressed his government's commitment to deepen the democratic process and work towards the respect of human rights and improving governance, and noted the need to step up efforts to strengthen institutions, but the Government of Ethiopia has failed to take concrete actions to follow through with this commitment: Now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns—

(A) killings of peaceful protesters and excessive use of force by Ethiopian security forces;

(B) arrest and detention of journalists, students, activists and political leaders who exercise their constitutional rights to freedom of assembly and expression through peaceful protests; and

(C) abuse of the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation to stifle political and civil dissent and journalistic freedoms;

(2) urges protesters in Ethiopia to refrain from violence, and to refrain from encouraging or accepting any and all violence in demonstrations;

(3) calls on the Government of Ethiopia to—

(A) fully lift the state of emergency;

(B) end the practice of excessive force by security forces;

(C) grant the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and United Nations Special Rapporteurs full access to conduct a comprehensive independent examination of the state of human rights in Ethiopia;

(D) conduct a full, credible, and transparent investigation into the killings and instances of excessive use of force that took place as a result of protests in the Oromia and Amhara regions and hold security forces accountable for wrongdoing through public proceedings, and to publicly release the findings through a written report;

(E) release all dissidents, members of the political opposition, activists, and journalists who have been jailed, including those arrested for reporting about the protests, for exercising constitutional rights;

(F) respect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and guarantee freedom of the press and mass media in keeping with Articles 30 and 29 of the Ethiopian constitution;

(G) engage in open and transparent consultations relative to its development strategy, especially those strategies that could result in people's displacement from land, offering those displaced from their land the right to seek remedy or redress in courts and providing a transparent means to access justice for those displaced; and

(H) repeal proclamations that—

(i) can be used as a political tool to harass individuals or organizations that engage in peaceful political dissent or advocate for greater political freedoms; or

(ii) prohibit or otherwise limit funding for civil society organizations working on, supporting, or advocating for respect for constitutional rights, the rule of law, and protection of human rights;

(4) calls on the Secretary of State to share with Congress the results of a review of security assistance to Ethiopia in light of these developments and to improve transparency with respect to the purposes of such assistance to the people of Ethiopia;

(5) calls on the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to immediately lead efforts to develop a comprehensive strategy to support improved democracy and governance in Ethiopia;

(6) calls on the Secretary of State, in conjunction with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, to improve oversight and accountability of United States assistance to Ethiopia pursuant to expectations established in the President's 2012 Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa;

(7) calls on the President to apply appropriate sanctions on foreign persons or entities responsible for extrajudicial killings,

torture, or other gross violations of internationally recognized human rights committed against any nationals in Ethiopia as provided for in the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (subtitle F of title XII of Public Law 114–328); and

(8) stands by the people of Ethiopia, and supports their peaceful efforts to increase democratic space and to exercise the rights guaranteed by the Ethiopian constitution.

SENATE RESOLUTION 169—CONGRATULATING FERMI NATIONAL ACCELERATOR LABORATORY ON 50 YEARS OF GROUNDBREAKING DISCOVERIES

Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

S. RES. 169

Whereas, in 2017, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (referred to in this preamble as ''Fermilab'') celebrates the 50th anniversary of the date on which the first employees of Fermilab started work in Illinois, June 15, 1967;

Whereas Femilab drives scientific discovery by building and operating world-leading particle accelerator and detector facilities, performing pioneering research with national and global partners, and developing new technologies for science that support the industrial competitiveness of the United States;

Whereas Fermilab provides research facilities for 4,500 scientists from 50 countries;

Whereas research at Fermilab led to the discovery of the 3 building blocks of the universe, the bottom quark in 1977, the top quark in 1995, and the tau neutrino in 2000;

Whereas superconducting magnets developed at Fermilab led to the advancement of magnetic resonance imaging medical diagnostics;

Whereas Fermilab contributed critical components, computing capabilities, and scientific expertise to the 2012 discovery of the Higgs boson in Geneva, Switzerland;

Whereas Fermilab continues to lead scientific discoveries, including planning construction for the Long-Baseline Neutrino Facility to power the Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment; and

Whereas Fermilab demonstrates its strong commitment to developing a diverse workforce for the future in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics through educational programs that bring more than 15,000 K–12 students to visit Fermilab each year: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory on the semicentennial of the Laboratory; and

(2) wishes the Laboratory success in continuing to help the people of the United States understand the mysteries of matter, energy, space, and time.

SENATE RESOLUTION 170—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. HEINRICH, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 170

Whereas the national network of laboratories and engineering centers that are owned and operated by the United States Armed Forces (referred to in this preamble as the ''defense laboratories'') should be commended for the unique role that the defense laboratories have played 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 and operated by the United States Armed Forces (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.

SENATE RESOLUTION 171—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM WEEK AND HONORING THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM TO THE UNITED STATES

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. HELLER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 171

Whereas National Travel and Tourism Week was established in 1983 through the enactment of the Joint Resolution entitled ''Joint Resolution to designate the week beginning May 27, 1984, as 'National Tourism Week' '', approved November 29, 1983 (Public Law 98–178; 97 Stat. 1126), which recognized the value of travel and tourism;

Whereas National Travel and Tourism Week is celebrated across the United States from May 7 through May 13, 2017;

Whereas more than 400 celebrations throughout the United States are scheduled in honor of National Travel and Tourism Week;

Whereas 1 out of every 9 jobs in the United States depends on travel and tourism and the travel and tourism industry supports 15,300,000 jobs in the United States;

Whereas the travel and tourism industry employs individuals in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and all the territories of the United States;

Whereas international travel to the United States—

(1) is the single largest export industry in the United States; and

(2) generates a trade surplus balance of approximately $87,000,000,000;

Whereas the travel and tourism industry, Congress, and the President have worked to streamline the visa process and make the United States welcoming to visitors from other countries;

Whereas travel and tourism provide significant economic benefits to the United States by generating nearly $2,300,000,000,000 in annual economic output;

Whereas leisure travel allows individuals to experience the rich cultural heritage and educational opportunities of the United States and its communities; and

Whereas the immense value of travel and tourism cannot be overstated: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Travel and Tourism Week;

(2) commends the travel and tourism industry for its important contributions to the United States; and

(3) commends the employees of the travel and tourism industry for their important contributions to the United States.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I have 10 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Special Committee on Aging is authorized to meet during the session

of the Senate on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Aging With Community: Building Connections that Last a Lifetime.''

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at 10 a.m. in Room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at 10 a.m. in Room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Improving America's Transportation Infrastructure: The Road Forward.''

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at 2 p.m., to hold a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at 10 a.m. for a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, in Room 628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a business meeting.

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, in Room 628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct an oversight hearing on ''High Risk, No Reward: GAO's High Risk List for Indian Programs.''

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. in SR–418, to conduct a hearing on pending legislation.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND

The Subcommittee on Airland of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at 3:30 p.m., in open session, to receive testimony on United States Military Small Arms Requirements.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

The Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at 2 p.m., in open session, to receive testimony on Military Space Organization, Policy, and Programs.

SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF MAY 18, 2017, AS ''DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE LABORATORY DAY''

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 170, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 170) 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.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 170) was agreed to.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM WEEK

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 171, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 171) supporting the goals and ideals of National Travel and Tourism Week and honoring the valuable contributions of travel and tourism to the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 171) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2017

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, May 18; 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 Brand nomination, with the time until 12 noon equally divided in the usual form; further, that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the postcloture time on the Brand nomination expire at 12 noon tomorrow; finally, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:56 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 18, 2017, at 10 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, on roll call vote No. 258, I would have voted Yea on the motion to suspend the rules and pass, as amended, H.R. 1616, Strengthening State and Local Cyber Crime Fighting Act of 2017.

LEE COUNTY MOSQUITO CONTROL

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an important leader in our southwest Florida community.

T. Wayne Gale serves our community as Executive Director of the Lee County Mosquito Control District (LCMCD), one of the largest mosquito control districts in the United States, with a budget of $23 million. LCMCD monitors threats posed by these insects and controls populations to reduce mosquito-borne diseases. Additionally, Mr. Gale serves as President of the American Mosquito Control Association.

This is a very important role as mosquito season approaches, given the threat of Zika in Florida. This dangerous mosquito-borne virus can have devastating effects on infected individuals and presents a severe risk for expectant mothers. The LCMCD is proactive in spreading awareness to our community to make sure citizens are informed about how best to prevent infections, and is one of the most advanced mosquito control districts in the country.

We are thankful for dedicated leaders such as Mr. Gale in our community, and appreciate his leadership in the mosquito control industry.

RECOGNIZING THE PASSING OF MR. JAMES GREGORY ''GREG'' LEWIS OF REEDVILLE, VIRGINIA

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the passing of Mr. James Gregory ''Greg'' Lewis of Reedville, Virginia on March 30th, 2017. Greg is survived by his wife, Donna Garber Lewis; two daughters, Kelly Lewis Minor, of Reedville, Virginia, and Amanda Lewis Stalnaker of Tappahannock; two brothers, Evans Lewis (Faye) and Larry Lewis (Janet); two sisters, Barbara Lewis Schools and Janice Lewis Zumot, and four much-loved grandchildren, Corrie Minor, Cameron Minor, Jaxen Stalnaker and Brent Stalnaker and many nieces and nephews.

Greg graduated from Rappahannock High School in 1970 and from Smithdeal Business College in Richmond. He served the Virginia Army National Guard for six years. Greg established Little River Seafood in 1983 as an oyster and crab picking facility. With a strong entrepreneurial spirit, Greg grew the operations into an importer and distributer of his crabmeat and products and, eventually, included value-added products as well. Greg proudly served on the Richmond County School Board for 15 years. He was a Deacon and Trustee of Bethany Baptist Church in Callao, Virginia and was a member of The Gideons International. Greg also served as a member on the Virginia Seafood Council.

I had the pleasure of knowing Greg for many years and know his service to this nation and dedication to his community and church have impacted countless lives. Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in recognizing the life and honoring the memory of James Gregory ''Greg'' Lewis.

HONORING DR. JOHN S. OSTROWSKI

HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. John S. Ostrowski, a retired Navy Captain who will celebrate his 75th Birthday on May 28th. He has lived a life of service to his country, and has produced a legacy of continued service to our Nation through his family as a result of his example, inspiration and guidance.

As an officer in the United States Navy, Captain Ostrowski served his country honorably for 26 years as a dentist, with tours of duty on ship, ashore at various Naval Hospitals, and overseas in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He pioneered the use of dental implants in the U.S. Navy, and in the latter phase of his career, taught a new generation of Navy Dentists to prepare them for service to their fellow Sailors and Marines. Following his Navy career, Dr. Ostrowski opened his own private practice in Annapolis Maryland, which he successfully operated for over 25 years, providing services for the patients in his community. He was often known to provide his dental services for free to those in need—an expression of the importance he has consistently placed on charity and compassion to others.

Dr. Ostrowski and his wife Maeve raised five children—four sons and one daughter. His oldest son is a 28-year active duty Marine pilot who has achieved the rank of Colonel and served in Iraq, Haiti, Okinawa, and on multiple shipboard deployments. His second son joined the Navy, also as a pilot, attained the rank of Commander and commanded a squadron in Oceana Virginia before tragically losing a battle with cancer. His 3rd son is an automobile mechanic who has owned and operated a successful auto repair business in Annapolis for the past 20 years. His fourth child, his daughter, has been a successful school teacher, principal and executive school administrator. She has recently pursued her entrepreneurial interests and founded a small business as a nutrition specialist and coach. Finally, his youngest son is a successful executive and partner in a financial services company.

His legacy has extended to his grandchildren, of which he has 21, with number 22 on the way this fall. Included in this number are 3 Naval Academy Midshipmen and a scholarship student at Temple University. High school baseball, softball, football and lacrosse athletes, student government representatives, gymnasts, and cheerleaders are counted among his other grandchildren.

On behalf of the State of Maryland, the County of Anne Arundel, and our constituents, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude for Dr. Ostrowski's commitment to public service and inestimable contributions as a father, grandfather, dentist, Naval Officer, mentor, counselor, and advisor. Not only has he led an exemplary life of service, charity, and industry, but he has inculcated those same qualities into his children and grandchildren, thus perpetuating the highest ideals of service and citizenship in subsequent generations of Naval officers and his family. As he celebrates his milestone 75th birthday, I congratulate him on a life well lived and look forward to his continuing contributions to our communities, and wish him, his wife Maeve, his children and his grandchildren all the best in his years ahead.

IN HONOR OF THE YEARGIN FAMILY'S ACHIEVEMENT

HON. DAVID KUSTOFF

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jay and Alice Anne Yeargin of Weakley County, Tennessee. The Yeargin's were named runner-ups in the Achievement contest at this year's Annual Meeting of the American Farm Bureau Federation in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Yeargins farm approximately 5,000 acres where they raise corn, soybeans, wheat, and cattle. They also host groups on their farm each year, including the Tennessee Governor's School for the Agricultural Sciences, to share the story of agriculture. The Achievement Award recognizes young farmers and ranchers who have excelled in their farming or ranching operations and exhibited superior leadership abilities.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have such a family as a member of our community and want to recognize them for their service to West Tennessee and to the agriculture industry.

HONORING THE 2016–2017 GRADUATES OF THE CONGRESSIONAL YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my fellow colleagues to join me in commending the 2016–2017 Congressional Youth Advisory Council. This year, 47 Collin County students from public and private schools in grades 9 through 12 made a significant impact in their community, their country, and their Congress by participating in CYAC. Through the CYAC program, these students volunteered their talent, expertise, and time to engage on issues that are important to their generation.

I continue to be inspired by the high-caliber students who partake in my CYAC program, and this year was no exception. We had a diverse group of students who already participate in a multitude of activities including student government, community service, honor societies, athletics, fine arts, and language clubs. It was exciting to see them apply their experiences and interests to CYAC. They were always excited to share their ideas about how to create a lasting and sustainable future for our country, and it was encouraging to see their determination, knowledge, and willingness to help those around them. Throughout the past school year, the students met to discuss issues that affect our everyday lives. They then applied their knowledge to various homework assignments and group activities.

Our first meeting focused on Homeland Security—a hot topic of great interest for many CYAC students. They heard from special guests District Attorney Greg Willis, new Collin County Sheriff Jim Skinner, and FBI Special Agent in Charge Tom Petrowski. The students learned about national security at the local level and how Americans' security is a team effort between local, state, and federal leaders. The meeting concluded with a tour of the Collin County Detention Center.

Their second meeting began with the Congressional Veterans Commendation Ceremony. At this event, they learned about local veterans' inspiring stories and helped honor these veterans' unique legacies of service. Following the ceremony, students met with my Chief of Staff and Legislative Director for an insider's view on what it's like to work in the halls of Congress. The students' first semester closed with Captain Sam Brown sharing his testimony of military and civilian service. He also encouraged them to tackle obstacles and embrace taking on leadership roles.

The CYAC students kicked off the spring semester with a Mock Congress. During this event, students learned firsthand the legislative process and how Congress operates. Each student was assigned to a committee with jurisdiction over bills that they were able to amend, debate, and ultimately vote on. Lastly, the students gave back to their hometowns by completing CYAC in the Community—service projects where they volunteered their time to community service work. Altogether, our CYAC students donated over 185 community service hours to Collin County.

I thank each member of the Congressional Youth Advisory Council for making this year a success. They are the voices of the future, and I'm proud of them for all that they've achieved. God bless them and God bless America. I salute them.

Kayla Adams, Shambhavi Badi, Shree Balaji, Brooklyn Baum, Joshua Brock, Reagan Cantrell, Allison Chang, Brandon Chen, Catherine Chen, Zachary Clonch, Emily Crone, Matthew Daley, Niruti Dhoble, Austin Dwiggins, Sam Fanatico, Nicholas Garcia, Sreeragini Ghantasala, Emma Guerra, Luke Harrell, Alice Hou, Timothy Interrante, Austin Katzer, Ruxton Kelly, Abby Kistner, Tatiana Laporte, Olivia Larson, Nicholas Le.

I-Jung Lin, David Lorenz, Jonathan Lu, Rahul Naik, Swetha Pamidimukkala, Padmashree Pandy, Purvee Patel, Jackson Pierce, David Qian, Ben Randoing, Elizabeth Reed, Emiko Rinkliff, Jakob Shackleton, Cameron Stapleton, Parker Stevens, Nicolas Teachenor, Sai Vogirala, Scott Walker, Emily Ward, Trent Yarbrough.

HONORING PRESIDENT TSAI ING-WEN'S 1ST ANNIVERSARY IN OFFICE

HON. SCOTT DesJARLAIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, since President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan assumed office one year ago, she has continued to bolster the robust and beneficial relationship between the United States and Taiwan.

President Tsai has repeatedly stated over the past year her commitment to the status quo across the Taiwan Strait. To help Taiwan support this goal, we must ensure that its legitimate defense requirements are adequately addressed. This is an ironclad commitment that is unequivocally articulated in the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances. In fact, in March of this year, two of our upgraded *Oliver Hazard Perry*-class frigates were delivered to Taiwan, highlighting our existing strong military and security ties.

Looking forward, we are confident that the U.S. and Taiwan will build on our already solid foundation and continue to foster our bilateral relations across a wide ranging number of fields. I look forward to hearing the Trump Administration's plans for deepening this relationship in the years ahead.

I congratulate President Tsai on her first anniversary as the President of Taiwan, and look forward to even closer U.S.-Taiwan cooperation under her leadership in the years to come.

CONGRATULATING THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the National Association of Home Builders on its 75th Anniversary.

Founded in 1942, NAHB represents the interests of the nation's home building industry and helps create a business environment that facilitates home building, enables more Americans to achieve homeownership, and provides rental housing at all price points.

As an organization, NAHB is much more than builders and remodelers. Its membership includes building trades professionals, architects and designers, developers, and representatives of countless industries that provide goods and services in support of the residential construction industry. This includes engineering, insurance, financial services, building product supply, transportation and many others.

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 NAHB and its members, and they have made great strides in achieving that goal. During NAHB's 75 years, the total number of housing units in the United States has more than tripled, growing from about 35 million to almost 136 million.

The nation's standard of living has also increased significantly as a result of the hard work of NAHB members, who build roughly 80 percent of the new homes constructed in the U.S. each year. A look back shows how far we have come since 1942, when more than 30 percent of the nation's homes had no running water or flush toilets, almost 40 percent had no bathtub or shower, 18 percent needed major repairs, almost 60 percent lacked central heat, and 20 percent of occupied units were overcrowded. Now, virtually all homes have complete plumbing systems and central heating, and many fewer homes are considered overcrowded or in need of major repairs.

NAHB members were instrumental in these significant advances in the quality of the nation's housing and the resulting improvement in the quality of life and standard of living in our country. Through the decades, those same members have also been at the forefront of innovation, helping to make the nation's homes significantly more resource efficient and sustainable.

Equally important, NAHB members are vital to the social fabric of their local communities and are actively involved in a multitude of civic and philanthropic endeavors. America's home builders are also essential to the nation's economic health. Home building accounts for roughly 16 percent of the total U.S. economy.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor and congratulate NAHB on the organization's 75th Anniversary. I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in acknowledging the important role that the residential construction industry has played over the last 75 years in the nation's economy and the lives of its citizens.

And I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking the National Association of Home Builders and its members for serving the nation through their ongoing commitment to building the nation's homes and communities and in urging them to remain steadfast in their efforts to meet the housing needs of all American families.

HONORING BREALAND PENDLETON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable student,

Brealand Pendleton. Brealand Pendleton is the daughter of Mr. Christopher and Aubrey Pendleton of Terry, MS. She is one of four siblings: Chris, Braydon and Aubrey Pendleton. Currently, Brealand is a Senior of Terry High School where she will be graduating 6th out of a class of 320.

Brealand Pendleton is a very outgoing young lady that has served in several capacities in her school. Brealand has been a member of the Band, Flag Team (Senior Captain), Tennis Team (Senior Captain), Beta Club (Senior Secretary), National Honor Society (Junior Treasury, Senior Vice-President), Interact Club (Senior Secretary) and the National Society of High School Scholars. Brealand has over 40 hours of community service which varies from local school participation, helping at the Food Network, serving at Stewpot, working with the school blood drive, contributor to the Angel Tree and other various community projects.

Brealand will continue her education at Xavier University in Louisiana, where she will major in Biochemistry. Brealand is a shining example for Terry High School and her community as she works to make it a better place.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing a remarkable student, leader and community volunteer, Ms. Brealand Pendleton, for her hard work and dedication at Terry High School and throughout the communities of Mississippi.

RECOGNIZING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 75th anniversary of the evacuation and incarceration of Japanese-Americans during World War II, recognized today as the Day of Remembrance. Thousands of Japanese-Americans gather on this day to mark the solemn occasion of one of the darkest moments of American history.

On February 19, 1942 President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, following the attack on Pearl Harbor. The order allowed for forced removal and internment of anyone of Japanese descent, many of whom were American citizens and legal permanent residents. A total of 120,000 Japanese-Americans were imprisoned between 1942 and 1946. All those held were never charged with any crime, their only ''crime'' having been their cultural heritage. Innocent families were forcefully stripped of their home, jobs and livelihoods. Families were given ten days to dispose of their property and possessions, only allowed to bring what they were able to carry.

My district included two of the sixteen temporary detention centers, located at the Fresno and Merced Fairgrounds Most of the 5,344 held at the Fresno ''Assembly'' Detention Center were there for six months before being transferred to concentration camps in Arkansas. Over 4,600 people were held in the Merced ''Assembly'' Center during the spring and summer of 1942, before eventually being taken by train to a concentration camp in Colorado.

Achieving peace today requires recognizing the dark parts of our history and honoring the memory of those who were affected. Through the hard work of community members, today both the Fresno Fairgrounds and Merced Fairgrounds are home to memorials dedicated to the victims. Both sites feature plaques with the names of those who were imprisoned and stories depicting their harrowing experiences. In Fresno, the Fresno County Historical Museum features a permanent display entitled ''Japanese in the San Joaquin Valley'', highlighting those who have made significant contributions to our Valley.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives join me in recognizing the 75th anniversary of the evacuation and incarceration of thousands of innocent Japanese-Americans. It is both fitting and appropriate that we mark this solemn day and pay tribute to the thousands of Japanese-Americans that were imprisoned and their families, who today are staples not only in my district, but across the United States.

MAJOR GENERAL WILMOT

HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Major General David Wilmot on his retirement from the United States Army, and to thank him for his dedicated service to the United States of America.

During Major General Wilmot's many years of service in the Army, including his most recent assignment as the Deputy Surgeon General for the Army National Guard, Assistant Surgeon General for Quality and Safety, and Deputy Chief of Staff, Quality and Safety, Office of the Surgeon General of the Army, he has proved a top leader in medical readiness, shaping readiness, health care, and personnel issues for the Army National Guard.

In our current time of needed growth and development of the United States Armed Forces, medical readiness and personal is more necessary than ever, to ensure our warfighters are properly equipped for the job our country sends them to do. Major General Wilmot's experience has truly been a service to this country, and those who fight for its freedom.

Congratulations to Major General Wilmot on his retirement.

HONORING JOHN EVANS

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. John Evans upon the occasion of being awarded General Manager of the Year for a large property by the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA). Mr. Evans is the general manager of the Silverado Resort in Napa, California.

Mr. Evans was raised in Marysville, Washington, where his first job was working as a paperboy with two routes. He earned his Bachelor of Applied Science in Organizational Management from Friends University, after which he got his first start in the hospitality business at the age of twenty-four when his mentor, Jerry Smith, guided him in managing a small lodge. Before accepting his current position at the Silverado Resort in 2010, Mr. Evans worked as the interim general manager of the historic Seaview Hotel near Atlantic City, New Jersey and as the general manager of the Ritz-Carlton Resort in Half Moon Bay, California.

The AHLA awards their Stars of the Industry Awards to individuals who perform at the highest level of excellence, demonstrating superior leadership, dedication, and a passion for service. Mr. Evans exemplifies all of these traits. He successfully led his team through and out of the recent recession. Mr. Evans lists family values, integrity, and generosity as characteristics of leaders he strives to emulate. With over thirty-two years of experience leading teams and managing hospitality properties, Mr. Evans has been awarded the Six Sigma green belt and is recognized as first-level sommelier.

Mr. Evans also displayed the same leadership and organizational aptitude in his service on the board of Hands and Hearts for Children, an auxiliary of the Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. John Evans deserves to be recognized as the General Manager of the Year today by virtue of his leadership, commitment, and passion for service. I am proud to have such a man working and living in our community. It is therefore fitting and proper that we honor them here today.

RECOGNIZING PRESIDENT TSAI ING-WEN OF TAIWAN

HON. HENRY C. ''HANK'' JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Saturday, May 20 marks the one-year anniversary of the inauguration of President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan. President Tsai's election was not only historic, in that she is the first woman to be elected to that high office, but as the third peaceful election transferring power from one political party to another. It also demonstrates the maturity of Taiwan's democracy—a system where the will of the people is respected and followed.

The relationship between Taiwan and the United States is one of shared values, and is cemented by the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, a creation of the Congress, and the Six Assurances of 1982 by President Ronald Reagan. It is supported by countless freedom-loving Americans, many of whom are members of Taiwanese-American communities all over the United States.

While our two countries have much to celebrate on this occasion, old challenges are resurfacing where Taiwan's participation as a constructive member of the global community is concerned. This is most recently manifest in the withholding of the invitation to the World Health Assembly that begins on May 22. Taiwan's 23 million people have much to offer the other peoples of the globe, and in a time of unique challenges, the best minds and talents

everywhere in the world should have a part in creating our solutions. We in the Congress, who have been supportive of Taiwan's participation countless times in the past, must make ourselves heard again on this matter.

On this occasion, I wish President Tsai every success as her administration continues to unfold, and I want her—as well as her fellow citizens—to know that we stand with them.

HONORING TY'RIANNE PERRY

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ty'Rianne Perry.

Ty'Rianne has played a big part in community service and helping out her peers. She has participated in the breast cancer awareness walk. Ty'Rianne volunteers at the Boys and Girls Club once a month. She also tutors and mentors young children. She volunteers at the Golden Living Nursing Home where she plays games and reads stories to the patients.

Ty'Rianne's outspoken nature serves her as she advocates for the voiceless children and citizens who cannot speak up for themselves.

Ty'Rianne participates in a Blood Drive twice a year, as she loves helping others in all capacities. Because of her activism and philanthropy, Ty'Rianne was able to attend the Chick-fil-A Leader Academy. She was also selected to attend Camp John Hay; a program for selected teenagers who volunteered at Boys and Girls Club.

Ty'Rianne has walked in the MLK March many times. She encourages everyone to make a difference in their community and get up and help out.

Mr. Speaker please help us to congratulate Ms. Ty'Rianne Perry for making a difference in her community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM MARINO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to attend votes on May 16, 2017 due to travel delays. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: YEA for rollcall vote 258.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINERS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO VICTORY IN WORLD WAR II

HON. MIKE KELLY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the United States Merchant Mariners and their vital contributions to the victory of the Allies in World War II. This year, 72 years after our victory in that war, is a fitting time to recognize the contributions of our merchant mariners to the war effort.

There were more than 250,000 men serving in the Merchant Marine during WWII, all volunteers. They had the distinction of being the only non-segregated service. The Merchant Marine was critical to the mission of our military service members around the world during the war.

Many of the important contributions of the Merchant Marine are not well known, including the fact that they had the highest rate of casualties in the Armed Services. More than 700 merchant ships were sunk and more than 8,000 U.S. merchant mariners were killed during the war. The losses suffered are even more remarkable given that the U.S. Merchant Marine was not considered a military branch and was composed of volunteers classified by the government as civilians. Every invasion during the war involved the Merchant Marine. They suffered tremendous casualties during the Battle of the Atlantic, the Murmansk Run, D-Day, and as an integral part of every island invasion in the Pacific Theater. As we come close to Memorial Day, it is fitting to pause and remember their heroism and sacrifice.

The United States built nearly 6,000 merchant vessels and naval auxiliaries in 16 shipyards with over 650,000 workers. This was an economic and military feat of enormous scale. As part of a government effort to encourage more American participation in the war effort, ships were named after famous American counties and cities. 150 colleges and universities also had victory class merchant ships named for them. Many of these institutions of higher education supported important military training programs on their campuses. I am proud that 13 of these victory class ships were named for institutions in Pennsylvania, including three in the third district: Allegheny College, Grove City College, and Westminster College.

I am sure all my colleagues join me in taking great pride in the history of the United States Merchant Marine and the special place in our nation's history associated with their ships and the men who sailed them. They have helped preserve our freedom and they deserve our gratitude.

RECOGNIZING PATTY SIMONIAN IN CELEBRATION OF HER 75TH BIRTHDAY

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Mrs. Patty Simonian's 75th birthday. Patty is a beloved mother, grandmother, godmother and friend to many.

Patty Simonian was born in Merced, California to John and Mary Costa. She attended Central Union High School, where she met her high school sweetheart, Peter Simonian. They would be married on August 26, 1961.

In 1971, Pete and Patty decided to go into farming for themselves, forming P. Simonian Farms. The third generation family-run farm was passed down from Patty's grandfather. Patty is proud to be one of few female organic growers in California. She was quoted as saying, ". . . I'm outside working, irrigating and doing everything that's necessary on the ranch, with the help of my children".

Patty is the proud mother of three children Talbert, Nanette and Peter John. She is also blessed with five grandchildren, Matthew, Jerad, Kylie, Kassidy and Caydin.

Patty is a loving and generous mother to her children and was very active in their lives when they were in school. She is now playing a similar role with her beloved grandchildren. Patty's family is the greatest source of love and pride in her life.

Patty and her husband Peter were active members of the Cabrillo Club, a Portuguese civic club that is dedicated to civic progress of Californians of Portuguese descent. Patty currently serves as the President of the Fresno chapter, a position her husband also held from 1997 through 2000.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to note that Patty's 75th birthday is an especially significant occasion, as Patty is my first cousin. In keeping with the Portuguese Catholic tradition, she is also my godmother.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Patty Simonian as she celebrates her 75th birthday. I ask that you join me in wishing her and her family continued health and happiness.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIALIST CALEB MICHAEL COLLINS

HON. CEDRIC L. RICHMOND

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of United States Army Specialist Caleb Michael Collins, a New Orleans, Louisiana native, who passed away on July 25, 2015, at the tender age of 22.

Specialist Collins was a graduate of St. Augustine High School class of 2011, and a former member of the Marching 100 at the historic all-male Catholic high school in the 7th Ward of New Orleans.

In July 2015, stationed in Honolulu, Hawaii, Specialist Collins distinguished himself by disregarding his personal safety by jumping off of a 25 foot ledge into the ocean to save a fellow soldier who had been swept off the Halona Blowhole ledge by a wave. Through his courageous actions, Specialist Collins made the ultimate sacrifice. His actions are in keeping with the finest traditions of military heroism and reflect distinct credit upon himself, 25th Composite Truck Company, 524th Sustainment Support Battalion, 25th Sustainment Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and the United States Army.

Specialist Collins has been awarded the Soldier's Medal. The Soldier's Medal is awarded to an individual whom while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States, is recognized by heroism not concerning direct encounter with an enemy. The Soldier's Medal is the highest military peacetime award for bravery.

Specialist Collins' legacy will forever be a part of the city and his dedication to service embodies the spirit of New Orleans. Specialist Collins' survivors include his parents, Ernest L. and Dawn Moore Collins and sisters Chelsi Marie and Briana Monique Collins.

Mr. Speaker, Specialist Caleb Michael Collins was a tremendously positive young man,

always with a word of encouragement for his family and friends. I celebrate the life and legacy of Specialist Collins, and my thoughts and prayers are with his family.

HONORING YAZOO CITY ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a group of women who has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication and a desire to serve their community, Yazoo City Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. The Yazoo City Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. has served the Yazoo County community and the State of Mississippi through informational meetings, social and civic engagement.

The Yazoo City Alumnae Chapter was granted their 30th chartering in the state of Mississippi on February 2, 1997. Francine Wallace and Edwina Fox, in 1995, had the idea to create a chapter in Yazoo and placed an article in the local newspaper. Other Delta's in the area quickly responded, desiring to continue the mission to which they had pledged themselves in their college years and together they worked with the state leadership, the southern Region Manager and the national Headquarters to achieve this objective. Not being swayed, it took several attempts to acquire the approvals to establish the Yazoo City Alumnae Chapter. The Yazoo City Deltas traveled to the State Cluster to share their desire to focus on the high rate of teenage pregnancies in Yazoo County as it was the highest rate in the state of Mississippi. Relating their dedication to fighting this devastating trend, the Southern Region Manager, on their second attempt approved the chartering of the Yazoo City Alumnae Chapter. On February 2, 1997 at the St. Stephen United Methodist Church 12 members, Mary Ann Brewer, Teresa Bonner, Diane Delaware, Zellee Delaware, Sandra Younger, Tamara Dodd, Edwina Gordon-Fox, Marilyn Hathorne, Gloria Elayne Owens, Francine Wallace, the late Juanita Scott-Washington and Mary Joshua Young stood and committed to carry out the public service mission of their beloved sisterhood throughout Yazoo County. Thus, this was the beginning of the Yazoo City Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Yazoo City Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. for its dedication to serving others and giving back to the community.

HONORING THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN VINTNERS ASSOCIATION

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Mexican-American Vintners Association (MAVA), whose members include many of the hard-working, entrepreneurial families and individuals who serve as a backbone to the wine community in my district.

The Mexican-American Vintners Association was revived in May 2010 with the mission to recognize Napa and Sonoma Wine produced by Mexican-American Vintners, advocate for quality standards, promote the contributions of Mexican-Americans to the wine community, and to educate and preserve traditions for future vintners. In the words of Member Hugo Maldonado, MAVA "are not just in the vineyards anymore, they're a force to be reckoned with."

Many members of MAVA have traveled to Washington, DC this week, including Ceja Vineyards, Mi Sueño Winery, Maldonado Family Vineyards, and the Robledo Family Winery. They are here, not only to support the mission of the Smithsonian Institution, but also to further educate Congress about their vital contributions to our economy and community. Their stories of immigration, sacrifice and determination are what make America great.

In addition to supporting their current members, the Mexican-American Vintners Association works to support future vintners by providing scholarships to deserving students. By helping those who will follow them, the Vintners are preserving the traditions of making and selling quality wine which they have worked hard to build.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of our Mexican-American Vintners. Their organization preserves and promotes a great tradition of hard work and resilience in our community. It is therefore fitting and proper that we honor them here today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, on May 16, 2017, I was not present to vote on H.R. 1616, the Strengthening State and Local Cyber Crime Fighting Act due to a family medical emergency. Had I been present for roll call No. 258, I would have voted YEA.

COL STEVEN OWENS

HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Colonel Steven Owens on his retirement from the United States Army, and to thank him for his dedicated service to the United States of America.

Colonel Owens' many years of service include a deployment as the ARNG Medical Advisor for the Multi-National Corps—Iraq Surgeon's Office, Baghdad, Iraq, where he was hand-selected to be 1st Corps Surgeon's Liaison with the Iraqi Ground Forces Command Surgeon and Medical Trainer for COIN.

I have had the pleasure of serving under Colonel Owens, in his assignment as Deputy Director for Reserve Affairs and Sr. ARNG Advisor at the Office of the Surgeon General at the Defense Health Headquarters, and have greatly appreciated his leadership and expertise.

Congratulations to Colonel Owens, to his wife Lonna, on a new chapter, and I thank him for his mentorship and friendship.

RECOGNIZING HAROLD HAGER

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a constituent, Harold Hager, who is celebrating his 100th birthday today.

Mr. Hager has dedicated his life to serving our country and local community. During World War II, he served in the United States Navy as a gunner on the USS *Taconic*. After the war, Mr. Hager returned home and worked for many years as a melding technician and foreman at Corning Glass Works. In 1972, after our area was devastated by Hurricane Agnes, Mr. Hager delivered urgently needed food and supplies to his neighbors in Elmira, New York.

Mr. Hager has served as a volunteer with the Steuben County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program since February 2012. He was previously assigned to the Painted Post Food Pantry and he currently serves at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Corning, New York. Mr. Hager has accumulated more than 4,500 lifetime service hours and, in 2016, he averaged 84 hours per month. He is truly an inspiration.

I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Harold Hager's 100th birthday and recognizing his life-long commitment to service.

HONORING JANA LEIGH CLANTON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, the late Ms. Jana Leigh Clanton. Jana was born January 24, 1996 in Flowood, Mississippi.

Jana confessed Christ at an early age and joined Mt. Able Missionary Baptist Church under the leadership of Rev. Willie A. Travis, Sr., where she was a faithful steward, serving as a clerical volunteer to the church secretarial staff and a member of the Mt. Able Anointed Believers Praise Dance Ministry.

Jana was a Presidential Scholar at Tougaloo College, where she majored in English with an emphasis in Pre-Law and was a student leader, serving as a member of the Student Government Association, a member of Alpha Lambda Delta honor society and member of the Tougaloo Ambassadors for Meritorious Scholars (T.A.M.S.), student recruitment association.

Jana graduated with honors from Madison Central High School in May 2014, most recently became licensed as a Certified Pharmacy Technician, and accepted a position at

CVS Pharmacy. Though she loved science, Jana's dream was to become the first African American Female U.S. Supreme Court Justice.

To her family, Jana was affectionately known as "Jana Pooh Pooh". She will always be remembered for her willingness to help others and for her passion for reading. Jana always lived life on her own terms and never met a stranger.

She leaves to mourn her death, her loving and devoted parents, Minister Johnny L. and Vicky L. Clanton, Sr.; her adoring and loving siblings, Waikinya J. S. and Johnny L. Clanton, Jr.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Jana Leigh Clanton.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF KEN FUGELSANG

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Mr. Ken Fugelsang. Ken was a world-renowned enologist and professor emeritus of enology at California State University, Fresno. For more than four decades Ken shaped the wine and grape industry by expertly training students in the art of winemaking. His impact on his students and the industry will be felt for generations to come.

Kenneth Claire Fugelsang was born on December 13, 1946 in Fresno, California to Ardith and Paul Fugelsang. He attended Central High School, Fresno City College, and graduated with a degree in Biology from California State University, Fresno in 1969. He would go on to earn his master's degree in 1972.

Ken joined the Fresno State enology faculty in 1971. He and his colleagues were instrumental in the founding of the University's winery in 1997. This was the first winery licensed to produce, bottle and sell wine on a university campus in the United States. Ken trained some of the most skilled wine makers in the nation. He and his students won state, national and international awards in over 600 competitions.

During his tenure, Ken was noted for his research. He was awarded more than 50 grants and published more than 150 technical papers, 18 books and countless academic journal articles.

Ken's legacy will truly be on the impact he had on his students. He was known as a teacher, mentor and friend to many. Ken positively influenced the lives of many students with his commitment to their education and professional development.

Ken is survived by his wife of 45 years Ann, his son Jeffrey, his brother Paul and sister-in-law Cheryl.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the life and service of Ken Fugelsang, whose passion and service to the enology field has left a monumental impact on the lives of those he worked with. I join Fresno State and Ken's family in honoring his life. He will be truly missed.

HONORING THE BAY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

HON. NEAL P. DUNN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Sheriff Tommy Ford and the Bay County Sheriff's Office for their service and for holding a memorial for those who lost their lives in the line of duty.

The brave men and women of law enforcement put their lives at risk every day. They run into danger so that others can escape it, and they are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to protect their communities.

In 2016, our country lost 145 law enforcement officers in the line of duty, and so far this year, 50 law enforcement officers have died on the job. We owe these officers and their families a debt of gratitude we can never fully repay.

Leah and I are eternally grateful to the Bay County Sheriff's Office, and indeed, all who wear the badge, for what they do to keep us safe, and to honor their brothers and sisters who have fallen.

RECOGNIZING THE COLORADO KOREAN CHORUS

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Colorado Korean Chorus' 12th Annual Concert. This year the Colorado Korean Chorus is highlighting "The New Sound of Music" with performances by local and national contemporary artists. The Colorado Korean Chorus celebrates the diversity of our community and brings us together through the uniting force of music.

It is wonderful to watch and listen to the members of the Colorado Korean Chorus who find such obvious joy and spirit in singing and providing entertainment. The moving and beautiful music provides a window into the heart and soul of our Korean community, and further serves to bring the people of Colorado together; connecting the many cultures found across the state through the power of music.

The Colorado Korean Chorus continues to be a proud cultural tradition in the State of Colorado. I want to congratulate the President Eunjoo Song, Vice President Soonhee Kolrud, Director Taehyun Kim, and all the members of the Colorado Korean Chorus on 12 wonderful years and wish them success in the years to come.

HONORING THE ROBLEDO FAMILY WINERY

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Robledo Family Winery, owned and operated by Reynaldo Robledo in Sonoma, California. Incredible fortitude and ambition led Reynaldo and his family to the successes they see in their grape harvests and production of their delicately crafted wines.

In 1968, at the age of 16, Reynaldo migrated from Michoacán, Mexico to build a better life. He learned viticulture techniques and good business practices by working hard in the vineyards of Northern California, eventually settling in Sonoma County. Reynaldo and Maria have taught their nine children their same work ethic by raising them to understand the regions, grapes and people which make wine from our community exceptional.

Hard work and sacrifice led Reynaldo and his family to establish two companies, encompassing more than 350 acres in Napa, Sonoma, and Lake Counties. The Winery's focus on perfecting each stage of the winemaking process, "from vine to bottle," ensures that their hard work will result in a quality product. The story of the Robledo Family Winery is uniquely American, and I am proud that their success is possible in our community.

Robledo Family Winery is part of the Mexican-American Vintners Association (MAYA), whose members traveled to Washington, D.C. this week as part of a group of Mexican-American vintners, not only to support the mission of the Smithsonian Institution, but also to further educate Congress about their vital contributions to our economy and community. Their stories of immigration, sacrifice and determination are what make America great.

Mr. Speaker, Robledo Family Winery is a successful business and is producing extraordinary wines. I am proud to have such a business in our community. It is therefore fitting and proper that we honor them here today.

HONORING KASPRINA MOTON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable student, Ms. Kasprina Moton.

Ms. Moton attends Xavier University's School of Pharmacy; with a plan to return to Mississippi to provide care and support for the under-served and minorities who cannot afford their medical treatments and medications. She has participated in various activities throughout the state of Mississippi. She is a 2006 graduate of Gentry High School and finished in 10 percent of her class. She graduated from Jackson State University with Bachelors of Science in Chemistry and a 3.7 GPA. She graduated from Ole Miss Medical Center Pharmacy Tech program in the top 5 percent of her class. She placed first in Miss. NOBeChe of Jackson, Mississippi. And, she also won the Leadership scholarship of the Boys and Girls club in Jackson, Mississippi.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Kasprina Moton for her dedication to serving others and giving back to the community.

CONGRATULATING THE BASKING RIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ON ITS 300 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

HON. LEONARD LANCE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, on June 10, 2017, the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church will celebrate its 300th Anniversary. I am proud to join the more than 760 members of the congregation, the clergy and church leaders in celebrating this very special occasion.

The Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church was founded in 1717 by a small group of Scotch-Irish farmers. At 1 East Oak Street, the same location where services are still held today, those settlers erected a log house of worship that became the cornerstone of the community in Basking Ridge, New Jersey for generations. Until 1837 the church was the only organization that promoted religious life in the area.

The Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church's theme for its 300th Anniversary year is ''Sharing God's Love for 300 years'' and the members of this great faith community are certainly living out that mission. Locally, the Church works with organizations like God's Co-op Pantry, Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity, the Interfaith Hospitality Network and Community in Crisis. Internationally, Basking Ridge Presbyterian supports missionaries in the Ukraine, Haiti and Indonesia as well as relief organizations Hogar de Cristo in Ecuador and Peaceworks in Nicaragua. These charitable efforts are shining examples of the great deal of good that comes from faith based organizations throughout all of the United States.

As the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church celebrates this important milestone, I congratulate Pastor Reverend Dennis Jones and Associate Pastor Dr. Maureen Paterson for their dedicated efforts.

As the Church continues to carry on the traditions of the Gospels and spread the good news, I wish it the best in celebrating the next 300 years.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to congratulate the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church in Basking Ridge, New Jersey in celebrating 300 years of service to the community. I am proud to share this important milestone with my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives and with the American people.

IN RECOGNITION OF UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY FLOTILLA 014–02–02

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with the officers, staff and members of United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 014–02–02 as they celebrate 75 years of continuous service to the United States Coast Guard (USCG) at USCG Station Sandy Hook in Highlands, New Jersey.

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 014–02–02, ''The Sandy Hook Flotilla,'' is a unit of the Division 2, First Coast Guard District, Southern Region, serving Sandy Hook as well as the Navesink and Shrewsbury rivers. Authorized to assist and support USCG non-military and non-law enforcement missions, the volunteers of the flotilla provide valuable reinforcement to the USCG. In addition to participating in marine patrols and search and rescue missions, the auxiliary offers boating safety educational programs, performs vessel inspections, provides emergency medical services and assists with special events in the New York Harbor and surrounding areas.

The members of the Sandy Hook Flotilla are trained on USCG standards and live by the motto Semper Paratus (Always Ready). Its rapid response and proficient assistance has been recognized over the years with several awards, including Best Flotilla in the USA, Admiral's Operational Award, President's Unit Citation and Secretary's Outstanding Unit Award.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 014–02–02 on its 75 years of continuous service and thanking its members for their service to the United States Coast Guard and the community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF RETIRED FRESNO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE ARMANDO RODRIGUEZ

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to the life of Judge Armando Rodriguez. Judge Rodriguez was an influential and honorable servant to the San Joaquin Valley. He was known for being a mentor to many, never hesitating to give his time to others. The San Joaquin Valley will be forever indebted to Judge Rodriguez for his tireless efforts on behalf of the community.

Armando Rodriguez was born on October 31, 1929 to Jorge and Carmen Rodriguez. He was ninth of twelve children. His parents immigrated from Mexico, first settling in Merced, later moving to Fresno. After graduating from Edison High School, Armando married his high school sweetheart Betty Raya in 1950. During the Korean War, Judge Rodriguez served in the United States Air Force as a Morse code radio operator. Following the war, he attended Fresno State and then law school in San Francisco on the GI Bill.

Judge Rodriguez began his law career working with the Alameda County Legal Aid Society and then with the California Rural Legal Assistance in Madera before moving onto a private practice in Fresno. In 1972, he became the first Latino elected onto the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. Then in 1975, Governor Jerry Brown appointed Judge Rodriguez to the Municipal Court, making him the first Hispanic judge to serve on the Fresno Municipal Court. Three years later he was elected as the first Hispanic judge to serve on the Fresno County Superior Court.

As a strong advocate for education and the arts, Judge Rodriguez and his wife Betty, continually worked to make advances in the community. In honor of his wife's passing, he created a memorial scholarship fund to aid local college students. In addition, he and his wife were two of the founders of Arte Americas. To support the cultural arts, he contributed generous donations, engaged in community service, and personally refinanced the building's mortgage.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Judge Armando Rodriguez, whose generosity and unending dedication to the community will be greatly missed. Judge Rodriguez's memory will live on through the contributions he made to our Valley. It is my honor to join his family and many friends in celebrating his impactful life, which will never be forgotten.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for roll call vote 258 on Tuesday, May 16, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted ''Yea'' on roll call vote 258.

HONORING JALEXIS EVANS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable student, Ms. Jalexis Evans.

Jalexis is the daughter of the Latoya Lee and Samuel Evans and the granddaughter of Shirley Evans and the late Glenda Nelson. She is a native of Mound Bayou, Mississippi where she attended John F. Kennedy Memorial High School before being accepted into the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science in Columbus, Mississippi. While attending John F. Kennedy she was class president, the founder of the mentorship program, ''Girl Talk'', and a cheerleader. In her spare time, she volunteers in her community with organizations such as St. Gabriel's Mercy Center, New Life Church, and local nursing homes.

One of the greatest impacts she believes she has made is with the mentoring program she initiated, Girl Talk. Girl Talk was created solely to help empower, encourage, and equip young girls in the community. Their community activism includes nursing homes visits, Christmas with kindergartners, and hosting a tea party for young ladies in middle school to teach proper etiquette.

Jalexis also spends time playing piano and guitar. During her tenure at John F. Kennedy she played the trumpet in the marching band.

A passion of Jalexis is caring for the youth in her community. Though she believes involvement in the community is crucial, she also believes her education will take her far. She works diligently to ensure that her future goals are within her grasp. Attending the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science has granted her many more opportunities to do so. At this school, she receives the best education possible for high schoolers in the

Magnolia state while enriching her knowledge on cultural diversity. Jalexis aspires to enroll into Tulane University and attend the Tulane Accelerated Physician Training Program and earn her medical degree. She plans to become a pediatric oncologist after attending medical school. She's yearned to be a doctor since the young age of three. Her love for children pushed her towards the field of pediatrics and her grandmother's fight with cancer led to her interest and passion for oncology. It also instilled within her a strong determination to find a cure for cancer.

She pursues success in her everyday life by continuing to be an example and role model to her sisters SaMaria, Cilyse, and London.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Jalexis Evans for her educational achievements and dedication to other youths.

COL DAMON MATHIS

HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Colonel Damon Mathis on his retirement from the United States Army, and to thank him for his dedicated service to the United States of America.

A recipient of the Expert Field Medical Badge, the Parachutist Badge, the Air Assault Badge, the British Parachutist Badge, the Army Staff Badge, and a member of the Order of Military Medical Merit, Colonel Mathis is a proven leader in military health.

I've had the pleasure to serve with Colonel Mathis, in his assignment as Director of Reserve Affairs in the Office of the Surgeon General, and have greatly appreciated his leadership and expertise.

Congratulations to Colonel Mathis, and to his wife Jane, on a new chapter, and thank him for his mentorship and friendship.

RECOGNIZING CITRUS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Citrus County Sheriff Mike Prendergast and the law enforcement officers who keep Citrus County safe every single day.

This week marks the annual observance of Police Week. Though we set aside one week a year to honor law enforcement, I encourage all Americans to join me not only this week, but every day, in recognizing the honor, courage, and commitment of America's law enforcement.

Our law enforcement are heroes in the community. They keep us safe, and are willing to put their lives on the line every day in the course of their duties. It is impossible to fully express our gratitude or adequately recognize the professionalism of the men and women who voluntarily put their lives on the line for our safety and security. It is with deep respect that we pause today to honor the memory of the heroes who gave the last full measure of devotion and made the ultimate sacrifice.

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to Citrus County Sheriff Mike Prendergast and the law enforcement officers who bravely and selflessly serve Citrus County. It is an honor to recognize them and all men and women in law enforcement.

HONORING THE CEJA FAMILY

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Ceja family, Pablo, Juanita, Amelia, Pedro, Armando and Dalia who own and operate Ceja Vineyards in Napa, California. Passion and dedication led the Ceja family to the successes they see in their grape harvests and production of premium Carneros wines.

The dream to build Ceja Vineyards began in a small village in Mexico, where Pablo Ceja's family lived while he worked in the Brasero Program in ''el norte.'' While working in California, Pablo came to understand what many people in our community have learned: in the Napa Valley, hard work and sacrifice in a fair system will result in great successes.

Pablo promised his family that he would bring them to a place ''surrounded by vineyards growing the finest, sweetest grapes, where hard work is plentiful for those that are strong.'' In 1967, Pablo, Juanita and their six children left Mexico and settled in St. Helena, where they found work in the growing number of local wineries. In 1983, the Ceja family came together to purchase 15 acres and plant their own grapes. By 1988, the second and third generations of the family were celebrating their first harvest on ''Ceja land.'' The family founded Ceja Vineyards, Inc. in 1999 and today own 113 producing acres.

The Ceja family understands the needs and realities of their workers. They provide a pesticide-free environment and treat their workers like family. Many of Ceja Vineyards workers are loyal to the company and stay on season after season. Their story is remarkable. The Ceja family traveled to Washington, D.C. this week as part of a group of Mexican-American vintners, not only to support the mission of the Smithsonian Institution, but also to further educate Congress about their vital contributions to our economy and community. Their stories of immigration, sacrifice and determination are what make America great.

Mr. Speaker, the Ceja family has built a successful business and are producing extraordinary wines. I am proud to have such a family working and living in our community. It is therefore fitting and proper that we honor them here today.

DIPG AWARENESS DAY

HON. STEPHEN KNIGHT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to a terrible and almost uniformly fatal form of pediatric cancer, Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma, or DIPG.

DIPG is a tumor, located in the brain stem, that almost exclusively affects children and for which no treatment exists.

As any parent knows, there is no worse feeling in the world than learning your child has been diagnosed with something fatal and there is nothing they can do about it.

Today, May 17, is a special day for advocates who are working hard around the world to raise awareness for resources and research to combat the disease.

Earlier this year, two research groups, from Northwestern University and the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, published separate studies with groundbreaking insights into the genetic mutation that occurs in 80 percent of DIPG cases. The next set of research will test therapeutic strategies to treat the mutation.

Congresswoman JACKIE SPEIER and I introduced H. Res. 69, to formally recognize DIPG Awareness Day in the House of Representatives.

I'd like to thank Congresswoman SPEIER and the 18 other Members who are helping promote DIPG awareness, the researchers who are investigating cures and treatments, and the families and friends of DIPG victims who are working to search for a cure.

HONORING LYNN MAURICE STINSON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lynn Maurice Stinson, who is a chairman, leader, and educator.

Lynn Maurice Stinson was born in Grenada, MS in 1947 to Minnie Louise Stinson and Sam Metcalf. He was raised by his maternal grandparents, Willie B. and Susie Stinson. His early education was at Grenada Colored School and Willia Wilson Elementary in Grenada. Stinson graduated from Carrie Dotson High School in Grenada, MS in 1966.

Stinson's desire to continue his education led him to enroll in Coahoma Community College in Clarksdale, MS where he earned an Associate of Arts degree. Stinson then attended Jackson State University in Jackson, MS where he earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Education. Stinson returned back to his home area and began his career in education at Stone Street Elementary in Greenwood, MS. His first position was teaching the integrated study of the Social Sciences and humanities to promote civic competence to 7th and 8th grade students. Stinson's passion was to help each student reach their full potential. He always reminded his students to dream big and work even harder.

A few years later, Stinson transferred to Threadgill Elementary in Greenwood, MS where he taught Social Studies. He later transferred to Greenwood Middle School and eventually retired in 2003 with 30 years of service. Stinson has been a strong supporter of education and those committed to working in the field of education. He is a past president of the Mississippi Association of Educators (MAE) in Greenwood, MS. Stinson also used his skills to help adults in his hometown, Grenada, by teaching GED night classes for several years.

In Stinson early years, he was a participant in the Civil Rights Movement as the community worked to secure equal rights for all citizens. The reality of past conditions and his firsthand knowledge of the effort to open doors to African Americans has driven Stinson to continue his service to the community after his retirement.

Stinson presently holds the position of Election Commissioner for the City of Grenada. He has served in this position since 2005 with a top priority of assuring that the election process in Grenada is fair to all, and with the highest level of integrity. Stinson also serves on the Board of Trustees for Holmes Community College where he is the chairperson of the Insurance Committee.

Stinson is a proud member of the 100 Black Men of Grenada, Inc., where he serves as the chairman of the Education Committee. Stinson is involved in supporting youth and young adults as they strive to prepare themselves for their future and the workforce.

Stinson is a dedicated member of Belle Flower Missionary Baptist Church in Grenada, MS, and has served many years on the deacon board. He also serves as chairman of finance for the Grenada Baptist District Association Men's Department.

When he is not volunteering and participating in church activities, he enjoys traveling and playing golf.

He has been married to Queen Brooks Stinson for 43 years. They have one daughter, Monica Stinson, who resides in Brandon, MS.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Lynn M. Stinson, a Chairman, Leader and Educator for his dedication to serving others and giving back to the African American community.

HONORING EMILE HADDAD FOR RECEIVING THE ELLIS ISLAND MEDAL OF HONOR

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Emile Haddad for receiving the Ellis Island Medal of Honor from the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations. Recipients of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor are individuals who embody American ideals such as patriotism, diversity, and tolerance. Receiving such an honor is well deserved by a man who embraces American principles while upholding his traditions of ethnic heritage.

Mr. Haddad was born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon prior to the beginning of the civil war. In his early years, Mr. Haddad attended American University in Beirut, where he studied to become a civil engineer. As a young professional in a country of instability, Mr. Haddad made a courageous decision to flee his homeland to start a new life in the United States of America. On March 3, 1986, Mr. Haddad and his now wife Dina, along with other family members, made their way to Ventura, California to join his younger brother and begin a new life.

Beginning as a construction worker, and after multiple jobs, Mr. Haddad developed a passion for homebuilding and land-development. With an established career and now Chairman and CEO of Five Point Holdings LLC, the largest builder of mixed-used, master-planned communities in California, Mr. Haddad has helped redefine the unique global vision of twenty-first century communities for thousands of Californians.

Mr. Haddad's inspiration for his work stems from his fundamental importance on a strong family unit. Married and a proud father of two now adult children, the communities Mr. Haddad builds reflect his vision for helping people live, work, play, and connect with one another. Additionally, his visions drive his commitment to education, which is why he serves on the advisory and leadership boards of four major institutions of higher learning: The University of California, Irvine, University of California, Berkeley, Claremont Graduate University, and the University of Southern California. To further his impact, Mr. Haddad's charitable giving also reflects his beliefs in giving back to the community. Over the years, he has received multiple personal honors, notably the Father-of-the-Year award from the American Diabetes Association and the Man of Character award from the Boy Scouts of America. Mr. Haddad continues to leave an influential mark as he remembers his journey to America and the path he has taken towards success.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the lifelong achievements of Mr. Haddad. I congratulate Mr. Emile Haddad for this great achievement and ask that you join me in wishing him and his family continued prosperity.

CONGRATULATIONS TO WINTECH

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate WinTech, Inc., on receiving the Missouri impact! Award for Continuous Improvement in Manufacturing Excellence from Missouri Enterprise.

WinTech, located in Monett, Missouri, is an employee owned company founded in 1991. This company specializes in making some of the most cost-effective windows around. As someone who represents this part of Missouri, I couldn't be more proud to have this business in Missouri's 7th Congressional District.

The Missouri impact! Award is an award given to businesses that have gone above and beyond in areas that include manufacturing excellence, innovative technology development, environmental solutions and contributing to Missouri business and community/state economic development.

I am honored to recognize WinTech and its dedication to not only southwest Missouri, but the many communities throughout Missouri. On behalf of Missouri's 7th Congressional District, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating WinTech on receiving this award.

CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF JELLYSTONE PARK

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 25th Anniversary of the Jellystone Park in North Hudson, New York.

Since 1992, Jellystone has provided families from New York and beyond with excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation. Located in the beautiful Adirondack Mountains, the park allows campers to take in some of the most scenic lakes and forests that the North Country has to offer.

On behalf of New York's 21st District, I would like to wish Jellystone Park many years of continued success as they celebrate their 25th Anniversary.

HONORING BRIAN LOUGHMILLER, MAYOR OF MCKINNEY

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Brian Loughmiller, Mayor of the City of McKinney, Texas. Brian and his wife, Donna, have lived in McKinney for almost 30 years. In his professional career, Brian is the managing partner at the law firm of Loughmiller Higgins P.C., which is based in McKinney. He holds a bachelor's degree from Illinois State University and graduated from Case Western Reserve University School of Law.

Despite a busy professional career, Brian has been very active in serving the McKinney community. He is a past president of the Collin County Bar Association and has served on the McKinney Board of Adjustment, the McKinney Independent School District Community Redistricting Committee, and the McKinney Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. Brian has also devoted his time to the Sunrise Rotary Club, Relay for Life, and the American Cancer Society.

Brian was first elected to the McKinney City Council in 2002, and he served as a Council Member for six years. In 2009, Brian was elected Mayor of McKinney, and he was reelected in 2013. During his tenure, McKinney has been one of the fastest growing cities in the country. Today, it boasts a thriving population of 168,000. Most importantly, McKinney has achieved and managed its growth in a way that has earned the City national recognition for its exceptional quality of life. In 2014, Money Magazine ranked McKinney as the #1 Best Place to Live, and the City has received numerous accolades that recognize it as an outstanding community, including being one of the best places in the nation to start a family and to buy a home. Brian has also overseen the revitalization of the City's Historic Downtown, which has become a beautiful, thriving center for the community.

Having served on the City Council for 14 years, including eight years as Mayor, Brian will be stepping down in May due to term limits. While this role ends for him, he has positioned McKinney for a bright future.

It has been a pleasure to work with Brian to help make McKinney such a wonderful place to live, and his leadership in this capacity will be missed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend Brian for his tireless commitment to public service and his many distinguished accomplishments as Mayor of McKinney. I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in thanking Brian and his wife, Donna, for devoting so much of their time to the McKinney community and in wishing them happiness and continued success in the future.

HONORING KEITH M. KING

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a resourceful and ambitious young man, Mr. Keith M. King. He has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication and a desire to live a productive life.

Keith M. King was born April 20, 1959 in New Orleans, LA. He lived there for the first two years of his life, before moving to Las Vegas, Nevada with his grandparents for the next five years. At the age of seven, Mr. King joined his parents in Chicago, IL, but due to the increasing violence, they relocated to Mississippi. Mr. King was then ten years old and stayed in Mississippi with his parents until the age of twelve. He then returned back to Las Vegas, Nevada with his grandparents and resided with them for another four years. At the age of sixteen, Mr. King moved back to Mississippi with his parents because of racial riots at his school in Las Vegas.

Mr. King was halfway through the 10th grade as he continued to live in Mississippi until he graduated from the Jefferson County High School in Fayette, Mississippi. Prior to graduating from high school he joined the Army on the delay entry program on December 16, 1976 and entered the service on August 8, 1977. He completed his basic training in Fort Jackson, SC and completed his advanced individual training in Fort Benning, GA. He was stationed at Scofield Barracks in Honolulu, HI. During Mr. King's tour, he was deployed throughout the Pacific. Some of his tours were: Guam, USA, Korea, The Philippines Islands, Australia, The Big Island of Hawaii, Japan and Samoa.

On August 8, 1980, Mr. King joined the Army Reserves. His first unit was the 386th Transportation Unit in Natchez, MS. Mr. King was still with this unit when they got activated on August 27, 1990 to go to Saudi Arabia to serve in the Desert Shield/ Desert Storm War. They stayed in every state in the United States which included Panama, and overseas on numerous occasions. In 1999, Mr. King transferred to the 412th Eng. Battalion in Vicksburg, MS and in 2000 he was deployed and made his sixth and final deployment to Korea before his military career ended. In 2001, he transferred from the 412th Eng. Battalion to the 296th Trucking Company in Brookhaven, MS. On August 30, 2002, Mr. King retired from the military with over twenty-five years of military service for his country. He retired with the rank of E–7, Sergeant First Class.

Mr. King has been married to his lovely wife, Sandra Gamble-King for thirty-one years. They have three children. Their oldest daughter has one daughter, the middle son has a set of twins and their baby boy is only sixteen. They have two Godchildren who they love very much.

Mr. King has a total of twenty-three years of law enforcement experience. He started his law enforcement career in Fayette, MS with the Fayette Police Department and at Alcorn State University Police Department both at the same time. Three years later he left the Fayette Police Department and joined the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office. After working with the Sheriff's Office for six years, Mr. King decided to go back to school in 2006 to expand his career and pursue a Criminal Justice Degree, which he obtained in 2010. He graduated with a Bachelor of Art degree having a GPA of 3.5 and he's still with the Alcorn State University Police Department as a Lieutenant.

Mr. King is on the deacon's board at his church, he sings in the choir, and plays the piano for two different churches. He is an author of inspirational writings. His first published book is entitled "Crying, Through GOD'S Eyes". He has completed two more books that have not been published yet and is currently working on another one. He has a weekly column in the Fayette Chronicle, the Glory Journal and the GAD About Magazine in Fayette, MS; along with a column in the Bluff City Post in Natchez, MS.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Keith M. King for his dedication to the U.S. military, the 2nd Congressional District and serving his country and community.

HONORING ROLANDO AND LORENA HERRERA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Rolando and Lorena Herrera, who own and operate Mi Sueño Winery and Vineyards in Napa, California. Love, passion, and dedication to their craft led Rolando and Lorena to the successes they see in their grape harvests and production of Carneros, Russian River Valley, Sonoma Mountain and Napa Valley wines.

The dream to build Mi Sueño Winery began in Mexico, where Rolando's grandparents taught him to tend fruits and vegetables in the mountainous state of Michoacán and where Lorena was born. Both of their families immigrated to the Napa Valley, seeking a better life and opportunities for their children. Lorena's family taught her about tending vines and growing grapes in the vineyards and Rolando obtained an education and aspired to own his own business. When the couple met, "it seemed like fate."

In 1997, Rolando and Lorena founded Mi Sueño, which is Spanish for "My Dream," the same year that they were married. They believe that crafting truly unique wines requires careful attention to every stage of the winemaking process, from start to finish. From choosing the right plot of earth, to personally planting the vineyards and selecting the most attentive distributors, Rolando and Lorena have created a truly exceptional business and product. The White House recognized the quality of their wines by serving it at state dinners.

Rolando and Lorena traveled to Washington, D.C. this week as part of a group of Mexican-American vintners, not only to support the mission of the Smithsonian Institution, but also to further educate Congress about their vital contributions to our economy and community. Their stories of immigration, sacrifice and determination are what make America great.

Mr. Speaker, Rolando and Lorena Herrera have built a successful business and are producing extraordinary wines. I am proud to have such dedicated business owners living and working in our community. It is therefore fitting and proper that we honor them here today.

MAJOR GENERAL WILMOTH

HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Major General Margaret Wilmoth on her retirement from the United States Army, and to thank her for her dedicated service to the United States of America.

A true leader and trailblazer in her field, Major General Wilmoth served as the first nurse and female commanding general of a medical brigade with responsibility for wartime readiness of all the U.S. Army Reserve medical assets in the Southeastern United States, including Puerto Rico.

A recipient of the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, the Expert Field Medical Badge, and the '9A' Proficiency Designator in Medical-Surgical Nursing awarded by The Surgeon General of the U.S. Army, Major General Wilmoth has been a true leader and expert in the U.S. Army Reserves, and in shaping military health care.

Congratulations to Major General Wilmoth on her retirement.

IN CELEBRATION OF PASTOR LAWRENCE BINION SR. AND LADY VALARIE BINION'S 40 YEARS OF SERVICE AS SENIOR PASTOR AT WESTSIDE CHURCH OF GOD

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Pastor Lawrence Binion Sr. and his wife, Valarie Jean Metoyer Binion, as they celebrate 40 years of service as Senior Pastor and First Lady at West Side Church of God in Fresno, California. Residing in Fresno since 1977, Pastor Binion and Lady Binion have been a blessing to our Valley, and have dedicated their lives to serving others and bettering our community.

Born in Fairfield, Alabama, Pastor Binion eventually moved to Los Angeles, California where he later met his wife, Valarie. He is a graduate of Susan Miller Dorsey High School in Los Angeles, California State University, Los Angeles (UCLA) with a Bachelor's Degree in History, Fuller Theological Seminary with a Master's Degree in Divinity, and was conferred the Doctor of Divinity by the Southern California School of Ministry.

Following his education, Pastor Binion moved to Fresno, California, becoming the Senior Pastor of Westside Church of God. One year later, he married the love of his life, Valarie Jean Metoyer, who continued her education in the Central Valley. Lady Binion is a graduate of Fresno Pacific University with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management and Organization Development, and served our community as an employee of Fresno Unified School District until retiring in 2013.

Pastor Binion and Lady Binion have dedicated their lives to serving our Valley with a passion for serving the Lord and bettering the community. Pastor Binion is known for being a Pastor of Pastors, advising numerous individuals, ministries, and organizations in our city and throughout the Central Valley. He has been a member of various community organizations dedicated to improving our community, including West Fresno Ministerial Alliance, West Fresno Healthcare Coalition, City of Fresno Police Advisory Council, and the Central California Prison Fellowship, to name a few. He is also the founder and chairman of Southwest Fresno Development Corporation; an organization dedicated to promoting economic development in West Fresno.

Lady Binion has spent the last 38 years serving Westside Church alongside her husband, assisting him in ministry and serving as the Minister of Music and Worship Arts. Like her husband, she has also served with several organizations for the betterment of our community, including Bringing Broken Neighborhoods Back to Life, Feed Fresno Food Giveaways, and the West Fresno Ministerial Alliance, to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Pastor Binion and Lady Binion, whose passion, kind hearts, and selfless service have made an instrumental impact on the lives of those in our Central Valley communities. I join the community in honoring Pastor Lawrence Binion Sr. and First Lady Valarie Jean Metoyer Binion for their contributions and devotion to our community.

HONORING MRS. LOUIS SMITH

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a resourceful and ambitious mother, Mrs. Louise Smith. Mrs. Smith has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication and a desire to live a productive life.

Louise Smith was born on February 21, 1925 in Laurel, Mississippi.

Mrs. Smith married Samuel Smith on March 10, 1946 and together they had 11 children, 5 boys and 6 girls. They moved to Yazoo City, Mississippi in the 1950s. When the youngest child was enrolled in kindergarten, Mrs. Smith enrolled in beauty school and later received her license to become a hairstylist. She and her good friend, Dorothy Casey, co-owned a beauty salon in downtown Yazoo City which opened in early 1970s and remained open for over 30 years. When you stopped by to get your hair done, you not only received a great hair styling, but you also got many words of wisdom with a little gospel to lift up your spirits until the next time you came.

Mrs. Smith was once a member of Chapel Hill Baptist Church on Brickyard Hill in Yazoo City with her husband and children. There she and several other women met and formed a gospel group known as the Gospel Carolettes. Her husband sang with them as well. The Gospel Carolettes not only sang in Church but at various Christian events spreading the news of the gospel. They also sang on the radio station WAZF each Sunday morning.

Mrs. Smith left Chapel Hill Baptist Church with her husband and children to become a member of New Zion Baptist Church where her son, Rev. Willie E. Smith, is the pastor. There she, not only served as a Mother of the church, but also works with the Mission women. Mother Smith taught Sunday School and sang in the choir at New Zion.

Mrs. Smith has been a mother and/or grandmother figure to many in the church and in her neighborhood; always welcoming others into her home, which has always displayed an array of beautiful flowers in the yard and many green plants indoors for comfort, decoration and fresh air. Louise enjoys gardening and preparing dinner with vegetables from her garden on Sundays for her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and any other visitors from the community.

Mrs. Smith has pushed to be a role model not only for her children and grandchildren, but to all in her community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Louise Smith for her dedication for change and serving her community.

REMEMBERING THE USS ''STARK'' INCIDENT

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today marks the 30th Anniversary of the tragic attack on the USS *Stark* during the Iran-Iraq War. On May 17, 1987, the USS *Stark* was on patrol in the Arabian Gulf when an Iraqi aircraft fired two missiles at the frigate without warning. The attack and resulting fire killed 37 military personnel and wounded 21 others. The brave crew fought the fire throughout the night and managed to save the ship.

I would like to recognize the heroism of the service members who served on the USS *Stark*, including Mr. Luther James Padgett of Gaston, South Carolina, a member of the HSL–32 Squadron. A proud Navy man, he served his country from 1977 to 1995. I am grateful for his admirable service.

IN HONOR OF NATIONAL NURSING HOME WEEK 2017

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the House's attention to recognize the National Nursing Home Week, May 14th to 20th, and recognize our Veterans at the Community Living Center (CLC) at the Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System (CAVHCS).

The American Health Care Association established the National Nursing Home Week in 1967 and this year's theme is ''The Spirit of America.''

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing this special week and thanking all of our Veterans in Alabama.

HONORING THE WASHINGTON IRELAND PROGRAM AND CLAUDIA AND TOM CORCORAN

HON. BRENDAN F. BOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the Washington Ireland Program which works every day to support leaders committed to building a future of peace and prosperity for Northern Ireland and Ireland. For over two decades, the Washington Ireland Program has played an important role in post-conflict Ireland by bringing together young leaders from a wide range of communities and backgrounds for an outstanding leadership and skills-development program.

Specifically, I'd like to highlight the work of Claudia and Tom Corcoran who have a deep and steadfast commitment to Ireland and its young people. They believe in providing opportunities for people to experience life changing perspectives and opportunities. The Washington Ireland Program's impact today can be attributed to Claudia and Tom's early and effective advocacy. They have been involved in setting up opportunities for young people from the United States to participate in exchange programs to Ireland, in which both countries benefit from these programs to foster transatlantic relations and deeper understanding between our two countries.

Claudia's clear passion for students and background as an educator is evident through her deep involvement and leadership on the Washington Ireland Program Board of Directors. Originally from Ireland, Tom is exemplary of the American Dream. At age 13, Tom emigrated by himself to the United States from County Caven Ireland, where he was born and his siblings and parents still remain. He is now quite successful as President at Corcoran Enterprises and serves as a Senior Advisor in the Aerospace and Defense Sector at The Carlyle Group where he assists in developing strategy and identifying investments in the aerospace and defense sector.

Tom believes in America as the ''land of opportunity.'' Both Tom and Claudia are focused on paying their successes forward and creating opportunities for others who come behind them, bettering the lives of young people

from all parts of Ireland, North, South, East, and West.

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 18, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MAY 23

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine worldwide threats.
SD–G50

2:15 p.m.
Committee on Foreign Relations
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.
S–116

Select Committee on Intelligence
To receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.
SH–219

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity
To hold hearings to examine the cyber posture of the Services; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217, following the open session.
SR–222

Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
To receive a closed briefing on Navy readiness challenges, emerging threats, and the requirements underpinning the 355 ship force structure objective.
SVC–217

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Subcommittee on Space, Science, and Competitiveness
To hold hearings to examine reopening the American frontier, focusing on exploring how the Outer Space Treaty will impact American commerce and settlement in space.
SR–253

Committee on Environment and Public Works
Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety
To hold hearings to examine making implementation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ground-level ozone attainable, including S. 263, to facilitate efficient State implementation of ground-level ozone standards, and S. 452, to amend the Clean Air Act to delay the enforcement and implementation of the 2015 national ambient air quality standards for ozone.
SD–406

Committee on the Judiciary
Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration
To hold hearings to examine building America's trust through border security, focusing on progress on the southern border.
SD–226

MAY 24

Time to be announced
Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.
TBA

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
To hold hearings to examine industry perspectives on options and considerations for achieving a 355 ship Navy.
SR–232A

10 a.m.
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine border insecurity, focusing on the rise of MS–13 and other transnational criminal organizations.
SD–342

Committee on the Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Vishal J. Amin, of Michigan, to be Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator, Executive Office of the President, Stephen Elliott Boyd, of Alabama, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, and Lee Francis Cissna, of Maryland, to be Director of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security.
SD–226

10:30 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of Defense
To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Navy and Marine Corps.
SD–192

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
To hold hearings to examine Department of Energy atomic energy defense activities and programs.
SD–G50

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security
To hold hearings to examine pool safety, focusing on the tenth anniversary of the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act.
SR–253

Committee on the Judiciary
Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism
To hold hearings to examine law enforcement access to data stored across borders, focusing on facilitating cooperation and protecting rights.
SD–226

Select Committee on Intelligence
To hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters.
SH–219

MAY 25

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Army in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2018 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SD–G50

10 a.m.
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
To hold hearings to examine the Farm Economy, focusing on perspectives on rural America.
SR–328A

2 p.m.
Committee on Foreign Relations
Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy
To hold hearings to examine the United Nations Human Rights Council.
SD–419

Select Committee on Intelligence
To hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters.
SH–219

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S2973–S3021

Measures Introduced: Twenty-eight bills and five resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 1143–1170, and S. Res. 167–171. **Pages S3009–10**

Measures Reported:

S. 518, to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to provide for technical assistance for small treatment works, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 115–71)

S. 675, to amend and reauthorize certain provisions relating to Long Island Sound restoration and stewardship. (S. Rept. No. 115–72)

S. 826, to reauthorize the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and certain wildlife conservation funds, to establish prize competitions relating to the prevention of wildlife poaching and trafficking, wildlife conservation, the management of invasive species, and the protection of endangered species, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 115–73)

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''. **Pages S3008–09**

Measures Passed:

Department of Defense Laboratory Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 170, 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''. **Page S3020**

National Travel and Tourism Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 171, supporting the goals and ideals of National Travel and Tourism Week and honoring the valuable contributions of travel and tourism to the United States. **Page S3020**

Brand Nomination—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of the nomination of Rachel L. Brand, of Iowa, to be Associate Attorney General. **Pages S2974–80**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 51 yeas to 47 nays (Vote No. 130), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Pages S2979–80**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at approximately 10 a.m., on Thursday, May 18, 2017, with the time until 12 noon equally divided in the usual form; and that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the post-cloture time on the nomination expire at 12 noon. **Page S3021**

Messages from the House: **Page S3005**

Measures Referred: **Page S3005**

Executive Communications: **Pages S3005–07**

Petitions and Memorials: **Pages S3007–08**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S3010–11**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S3011–18**

Additional Statements: **Page S3005**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S3020–21**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—130) **Pages S2979–80**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 5:56 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Thursday, May 18, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S3021.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

MILITARY SPACE ORGANIZATION

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Strategic Forces concluded a hearing to examine military space organization, policy, and programs, including challenges of delayed delivery of critical space capabilities, after receiving testimony from Heather A. Wilson, Secretary of the Air Force, General David L. Goldfein, USAF, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and

General John W. Raymond, USAF, and General Samuel A. Greaves, USAF, Space and Missile Systems Center, both a Commander, both of Air Force Space Command, all of the Department of Defense; and Cristina T. Chaplain, Director, Acquisition and Sourcing Management, Government Accountability Office.

U.S. MILITARY SMALL ARMS REQUIREMENTS

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Airland concluded a hearing to examine United States military small arms requirements, after receiving testimony from Lieutenant General John M. Bednarek, USA (Ret.), former Chief, Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq; and Major General Robert H. Scales, Jr., USA (Ret.), former Commandant, U.S. Army War College.

RUNNING THE GOVERNMENT FOR LESS

Committee on the Budget: Committee concluded a hearing to examine running the government for less, after receiving testimony from Gene L. Dodaro, Comptroller General of the United States, Government Accountability Office; and Keith Hall, Director, Congressional Budget Office.

CURRENT ISSUES IN AMERICAN SPORTS

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine current issues in American sports, focusing on protecting the health and safety of American athletes, after receiving testimony from Jay C. Butler, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Chief Medical Officer, Anchorage; Shellie Pfohl, U.S. Center for SafeSport, Denver, Colorado; Scott R. Sailor, National Athletic Trainers' Association, Carrollton, Texas; Robert A. Stern, Boston University School of Medicine Alzheimer's Disease and CTE Center, Boston, Massachusetts; Lauryn Williams, United States Anti-Doping Agency, Colorado Springs, Colorado; and Maureen Deutscher, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

AMERICA'S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded a hearing to examine improving America's transportation infrastructure, after receiving testimony from Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Transportation.

NOMINATION

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Scott P. Brown, of New Hampshire, to be Ambassador to New Zealand, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Independent State of Samoa, Department of State, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senator Collins, testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

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, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

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, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

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, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 696, to amend title 5, United States Code, to appropriately limit the authority to award bonuses to Federal employees, with an amendment;

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'';

S. 1103, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department-wide guidance and to develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign;

S. 1088, to require the collection of voluntary feedback on services provided by agencies; and

S. 1099, to provide for the identification and prevention of improper payments and the identification of strategic sourcing opportunities by reviewing and analyzing the use of Federal agency charge cards.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 458, to support the education of Indian children, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 691, to extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe; and

S. 1116, to amend the Native American Business Development, Trade Promotion, and Tourism Act of 2000, the Buy Indian Act, and the Native American Programs Act of 1974 to provide industry and economic development opportunities to Indian communities, with an amendment.

HIGH RISK LIST FOR INDIAN PROGRAMS OVERSIGHT

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Government Accountability Office's high risk list for Indian programs, including actions needed to address serious weaknesses in Federal management of programs serving Indian tribes, after receiving testimony from Melissa Emrey-Arras, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, Government Accountability Office; Michael Black, Acting Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs, and Tony Dearman, Director, Bureau of Indian Education, both of the Department of the Interior; and Rear Admiral Chris Buchanan, Assistant Surgeon General, Public Health Service, Acting Director, Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services.

VETERANS AFFAIRS LEGISLATION

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine S. 23, to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to adopt and implement a standard identification protocol for use in the tracking and procurement of biological implants by the Department of Veterans Affairs, S. 112, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize per diem payments under comprehensive service programs for homeless veterans to furnish care to dependents of homeless veterans, S. 324, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans, S. 543, to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include in each contract into which the Secretary enters for necessary services authorities and mechanism for appropriate oversight, S. 591, to expand eligibility for the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to expand benefits available to participants under such program, to enhance special compensation for members of the uniformed services who require assistance in everyday life, S. 609, to amend the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001 and title 38, United States Code, to require the provision of chiropractic care and services to veterans at all Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and to expand access to such care and services, S. 681, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the benefits and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to women veterans, S. 764, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the enrollment of veterans in certain courses of education, S. 784, to provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2017, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, S. 804, to improve the provision of health care for women veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs, S. 899, to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the requirements that new Federal employees who are veterans with service-connected disabilities are provided leave for purposes of undergoing medical treatment for such disabilities apply to certain employees of the Veterans Health Administration, S. 1024, to amend title 38, United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, S. 1094, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, an original bill entitled, ''Serving our Rural Veterans Act'', and an

original bill entitled, ''Veteran Partners' Efforts to Enhance Reintegration Act'', after receiving testimony from Jennifer S. Lee, Deputy Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Health for Policy and Services, Veterans Health Administration; Louis J. Celli, Jr., The American Legion, Kayda Keleher, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Adrian M. Atizado, Disabled American Veterans, Allison Jaslow, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and J. David Cox, Sr., American Federation of Government Employees, AFL–CIO, all of Washington, D.C.

AGING WITH COMMUNITY

Special Committee on Aging: Committee concluded a hearing to examine aging with community, focusing on building connections that last a lifetime, after receiving testimony from Lindsay Goldman, The New York Academy of Medicine, Rye Brook; Meg Callaway, Piscataquis Thriving in Place Collaborative, Dover-Foxcroft, Maine; Cathy A. Bollinger, Embracing Aging York County Community Foundation, Spring Grove, Pennsylvania; and Anamarie Garces, Miami-Dade Age-Friendly Initiative, Miami, Florida.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 35 public bills, H.R.2475–2509; and 7 resolutions, H. Res.329–335 were introduced. **Pages H4309–11**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H4312–13**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 195, to amend title 44, United States Code, to restrict the distribution of free printed copies of the Federal Register to Members of Congress and other officers and employees of the United States, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–128, Part 1);

H.R. 2227, to modernize Government information technology, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–129, Part 1); and

H.R. 2266, to amend title 28 of the United States Code to authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges; and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–130). **Pages H4308–09**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Fitzpatrick to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H4227**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:54 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H4232**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Rabbi Thomas A. Louchheim, Congregation Or Chadash, Tucson, AZ. **Page H4233**

Thin Blue Line Act—Rule for Consideration: The House agreed to H. Res. 323, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 115) to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide additional aggravating factors for the imposition of the death penalty based on the status of the victim, by a recorded vote of 233 ayes to 184 noes, Roll No. 260, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 230 yeas to 189 nays, Roll No. 259. **Pages H4236–45**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2017: H.R. 2266, amended, to amend title 28 of the United States Code to authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges; **Pages H4245–48**

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act of 2017: S. 419, to require adequate reporting on the Public Safety Officers' Benefits program; **Pages H4248–51**

Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act of 2017: H.R. 984, to extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe (Agreed by unanimous consent that the ordering of the yeas and nays on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 984 be vacated to the end that the Chair put the question de novo); **Pages H4251–59, H4266**

Modernizing Government Technology Act of 2017: H.R. 2227, amended, to modernize Government information technology; **Pages H4259–66**

Federal Agency Mail Management Act of 2017: H.R. 194, to ensure the effective processing of mail by Federal agencies; **Pages H4266–67**

Federal Register Printing Savings Act of 2017: H.R. 195, to amend title 44, United States Code, to restrict the distribution of free printed copies of the

Federal Register to Members of Congress and other officers and employees of the United States;

Pages H4267–68

Federal Intern Protection Act of 2017: H.R. 653, to amend title 5, United States Code, to protect unpaid interns in the Federal Government from workplace harassment and discrimination;

Pages H4268–69

Improving Fusion Centers' Access to Information Act: H.R. 2169, amended, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to enhance information sharing in the Department of Homeland Security State, Local, and Regional Fusion Center Initiative;

Pages H4269–71

Border Enforcement Security Task Force Reauthorization Act of 2017: H.R. 2281, amended, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to reauthorize the Border Enforcement Security Task Force program within the Department of Homeland Security; **Pages H4271–73**

Removing Outdated Restrictions to Allow for Job Growth Act: H.R. 1177, to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to release on behalf of the United States the condition that certain lands conveyed to the City of Old Town, Maine, be used for a municipal airport, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 418 yeas to 1 nay, Roll No. 262; **Pages H4273–74, H4294–95**

Renaming the Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in Fargo, North Dakota, as the Edward T. Schafer Agricultural Research Center: H.R. 2154, amended, to rename the Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in Fargo, North Dakota, as the Edward T. Schafer Agricultural Research Center; **Pages H4274–75**

Combating European Anti-Semitism Act of 2017: H.R. 672, amended, to require continued and enhanced annual reporting to Congress in the Annual Report on International Religious Freedom on anti-Semitic incidents in Europe, the safety and security of European Jewish communities, and the efforts of the United States to partner with European governments, the European Union, and civil society groups, and to combat anti-Semitism; **Pages H4275–78**

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the fight against corruption in Central America: H. Res. 145, amended, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the fight against corruption in Central America; and

Pages H4278–81

Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2017: H.R. 1677, amended, to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, encourage a negotiated political settlement, and hold Syrian human rights abusers accountable for their crimes. **Pages H4281–91**

Question of Privilege: Representative Pascrell rose to a question of the privileges of the House and submitted a resolution. The Chair ruled that the resolution did not present a question of the privileges of the House. Subsequently, Representative Pascrell appealed the ruling of the chair and Representative Rothfus moved to table the appeal. Agreed to the motion to table the appeal of the ruling of the Chair by a yea-and-nay vote of 229 yeas to 188 nays with 1 answering ''present'', Roll No. 261. **Pages H4291–94**

American Law Enforcement Heroes Act of 2017: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and pass 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. **Page H4295**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H4237.

Senate Referrals: S. 419 was held at the desk. S. 583 was held at the desk. S. 867 was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. S.J. Res. 22 was held at the desk. **Page H4308**

Discharge Petition: Representative Swalwell (CA) presented to the clerk a motion to discharge the Committee on Foreign Affairs from the consideration of H.R. 356, to establish the National Commission on Foreign Interference in the 2016 Election (Discharge Petition No. 2).

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H4244, H4245, H4293, and H4294–95. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Committee Meetings

STATE OF THE RURAL ECONOMY: SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE SONNY PERDUE

Committee on Agriculture: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''State of the Rural Economy: Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue''. Testimony was heard from Sonny Perdue, Secretary, Department of Agriculture.

AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE PUBLIC WITNESS HEARING

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a

hearing entitled ''American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness Hearing''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

ADVANCES IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies held an oversight hearing entitled ''Advances in Biomedical Research''. Testimony was heard from Francis Collins, Director, National Institutes of Health.

APPROPRIATIONS—HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Legislative Branch held a budget hearing on the House of Representatives. Testimony was heard from the following officials from the House of Representatives: Karen L. Haas, Clerk; Paul D. Irving, Sergeant at Arms; and Phil Kiko, Chief Administrative Officer.

AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE PUBLIC WITNESS HEARING

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a hearing entitled ''American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness Hearing''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

THE JUDICIARY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held an oversight hearing on the Judiciary. Testimony was heard from Julia S. Gibbons, Chair, Committee on the Budget of the Judicial Conference of the United States; and James C. Duff, Director, Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

APPROPRIATIONS—ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Legislative Branch held a budget hearing entitled ''Architect of the Capitol: FY 2018 Budget''. Testimony was heard from Stephen T. Ayers, Architect of the Capitol.

INITIAL FINDINGS OF THE SECTION 809 PANEL: SETTING THE PATH FOR STREAMLINING AND IMPROVING DEFENSE ACQUISITION

Committee on Armed Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Initial Findings of the Section 809 Panel: Setting the Path for Streamlining and Improving Defense Acquisition''. Testimony was heard from the following officials from the Section 809 Panel: Deidre Lee, Chair; and Commissioners Joseph Dyer, Charlie Williams Jr., and William LaPlante.

MILITARY PERSONNEL POSTURE: FY 2018

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing entitled ''Military Personnel Posture: FY 2018''. Testimony was heard from Lieutenant General James McConville, Deputy Chief of Staff, G–1, U.S. Army; Vice Admiral Robert Burke, Chief of Naval Personnel; Lieutenant General Mark Brilakis, Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, U.S. Marine Corps; and Lieutenant General Gina Grosso, Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower, Personnel and Services, U.S. Air Force.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 2353, the ''Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act''. H.R. 2353 was ordered reported, as amended.

FUTURE OF EMERGENCY ALERTING

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Future of Emergency Alerting''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

EXAMINING INITIATIVES TO ADVANCE PUBLIC HEALTH

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled ''Examining Initiatives to Advance Public Health''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

ENERGY OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH AMERICA

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere held a hearing entitled ''Energy Opportunities in South America''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

THE BALKANS: THREATS TO PEACE AND STABILITY

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats held a hearing entitled ''The Balkans: Threats to Peace and Stability''. Testimony was heard from Hoyt Brian Yee, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Department of State; and public witnesses.

REVITALIZING U.S.-ASEAN RELATIONS

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific held a hearing entitled ''Revitalizing U.S.-ASEAN Relations''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

TRANSFORMING GPO FOR THE 21ST CENTURY AND BEYOND

Committee on House Administration: Committee on House Administration held a hearing entitled "Transforming GPO for the 21st Century and Beyond". Testimony was heard from Davita Vance-Cooks, Director, Government Publishing Office.

CHALLENGES FACING LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations held a hearing entitled "Challenges Facing Law Enforcement in the 21st Century". Testimony was heard from Jim McDonnell, Sheriff, Los Angeles County, California; Alonzo Thompson, Chief of Police, Spartanburg, South Carolina; Art Acevedo, Chief of Police, City of Houston, Texas; and a public witness.

REVIEWING RECENT STATE SUCCESSES WITH THE RIGS TO REEFS PROGRAM

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing entitled "Reviewing Recent State Successes with the Rigs to Reefs Program". Testimony was heard from Frank Rusco, Director, Natural Resources and Environment Team, Government Accountability Office; J. Dale Shively, Leader, Artificial Reef Program, Coastal Fisheries Division, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; and public witnesses.

SEEKING BETTER MANAGEMENT OF AMERICA'S OVERGROWN, FIRE-PRONE NATIONAL FORESTS

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing entitled "Seeking Better Management of America's Overgrown, Fire-Prone National Forests". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

SBA'S 7(a) LOAN PROGRAM: A DETAILED REVIEW

Committee on Small Business: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "SBA's 7(a) Loan Program: A Detailed Review". Testimony was heard from Linda Rusche, Director, Office of Credit Risk Management, Office of Capital Access, Small Business Administration; and William Manger, Associate Administrator, Office of Capital Access, Small Business Administration.

THE NEED TO REFORM FAA AND AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TO BUILD A 21ST CENTURY AVIATION SYSTEM FOR AMERICA

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "The Need to Reform FAA and Air Traffic Control to Build a 21st Century Aviation System for America". Testimony was heard from Calvin Scovel III, Inspector General, Department of Transportation; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 91, the "Building Supportive Networks for Women Veterans Act"; H.R. 467, the "VA Scheduling Accountability Act"; H.R. 1005, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans; H.R. 1162, the "No Hero Left Untreated Act"; H.R. 1329, the "Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017"; H.R. 1461, the "VET Protection Act of 2017"; H.R. 1545, the "VA Prescription Data Accountability Act 2017"; H.R. 1662, to prohibit smoking in any facility of the Veterans Health Administration; H.R. 1725, the "Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017"; H.R. 1848, the "Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017"; and H.R. 2288, the "Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017". H.R. 1461 and H.R. 1725 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 2288, H.R. 1329, H.R. 1005, H.R. 1662, H.R. 467, H.R. 1545, H.R. 1848, H.R. 91, and H.R. 1162 were ordered reported, without amendment.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Human Resources held a hearing entitled "Opportunities for Youth and Young Adults to Break the Cycle of Poverty". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

SOCIAL CAPITAL IN AMERICA

Joint Economic Committee: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the state of social capital in America today, after receiving testimony from Robert D. Putnam, Harvard Kennedy School, and Mario L. Small, Harvard University, both of Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Charles Murray, American Enterprise Institute, and Yuval Levin, The Ethics and Public Policy Center, both of Washington, D.C.

RUSSIAN MILITARY THREAT IN EUROPE

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Commission concluded a hearing to examine the growing Russian military threat in Europe, focusing on assessing and addressing the challenge, after receiving testimony from Michael Carpenter, University of Pennsylvania Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement, Steven Pifer, The Brookings Institution, and Stephen G. Rademaker, The Podesta Group, all of Washington, D.C.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Kari A. Bingen, of Virginia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary, Robert Story Karem, of the District of Columbia, and Kenneth P. Rapuano, of Virginia, both to be an Assistant Secretary, and Ryan Dean Newman, of New Mexico, to be General Counsel of the Department of the Army, all of the Department of Defense, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine domestic and international policy, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: business meeting to consider pending calendar business, 10 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of David Bernhardt, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior, 10:15 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Finance: business meeting to consider an original bill entitled, ''The Creating High-Quality Results and Outcomes Necessary to Improve Chronic (CHRONIC) Care Act of 2017'', 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of William Francis Hagerty IV, of Tennessee, to be Ambassador to Japan, Department of State, 9:30 a.m., SD–419.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 867, to provide support for law enforcement agency efforts to protect the mental health and well-being of law enforcement officers, and the nomination of Amul R. Thapar, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, 10 a.m., SD–226.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Homeland Security, oversight hearing entitled ''Coast Guard Requirements, Priorities and Future Acquisition Plans'', 8 a.m., 2007 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, hearing entitled ''Emerging Transportation Technologies'', 10 a.m., 2358–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, budget hearing on the U.S. Capitol Police, 10 a.m., HT–2 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, budget hearing on the Library of Congress, 2:30 p.m., HT–2 Capitol.

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, hearing entitled ''Amphibious Warfare in a Contested Environment'', 2 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions, hearing entitled ''Regulatory Barriers Facing Workers and Families Saving for Retirement'', 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, markup on H.R. 1222, the ''Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act of 2017''; H.R. 2410, the ''Sickle Cell Disease Research, Surveillance, Prevention, and Treatment Act of 2017''; and the ''FDA Reauthorization Act of 2017'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade, hearing entitled ''Lessons from the IMF's Bailout of Greece'', 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''U.S. Interests in Africa'', 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled ''Disappeared, Jailed, and Tortured in China: Wives Petition for Their Husbands' Freedom'', 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence, markup on the ''Transnational Criminal Organization Exploitation Threat Assessment Act''; H.R. 2453, the ''DHS Intelligence Rotational Assignment Program Act of 2017''; H.R. 2468, the ''Unifying DHS Intelligence Enterprise Act''; H.R. 2471, the ''Terrorist Release Announcements to Counter Extremist Recidivism Act''; H.R. 2454, the ''Department of Homeland Security Data Framework Act of 2017''; H.R. 2470, the ''Homeland Threat Assessment Act''; H.R. 2443, the ''Department of Homeland Security Classified Facility Inventory Act''; H.R. 2427, the ''Pathways to Improving Homeland Security at the Local Level Act''; H.R. 2433, the ''Homeland Security Assessment of Terrorist Use of Virtual Currencies Act''; and H.R. 2442, the ''Office of State and Local Law Enforcement Information Sharing Review Act'', 10 a.m., HVC–210.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency, hearing entitled ''From the Border to Disasters and Beyond: Critical Canine Contributions to the DHS Mission'', 2 p.m., HVC–210.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1973, the ''Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act of 2017''; H.R. 2473, the ''Enforcing Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2017''; H.R. 2431, the ''Michael Davis, Jr. and Danny Oliver in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act''; H.R. 2407, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, and for other purposes; and H.R. 2406, to amend section 442 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize United

States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and for other purposes, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans, hearing on H.R. 2371, to require the Administrator of the Western Area Power Administration to establish a pilot project to provide increased transparency for customers, and for other purposes; and the ''Water Rights Protection Act'', 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Federal Employee Compensation: An Update'', 9 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, hearing entitled ''Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America: Improving Water Quality Through Integrated Planning'', 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Tax Policy, hearing entitled ''How Tax Reform Will Grow Our Economy and Create Jobs'', 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Current Status of the Medicare Program, Payment Systems, and Extenders'', 2 p.m., 1100 Longworth.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Thursday, May 18

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Rachel L. Brand, of Iowa, to be Associate Attorney General, post-cloture, and vote on confirmation of the nomination at 12 noon.

Following disposition of the nomination of Rachel L. Brand, Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Terry Branstad, of Iowa, to be Ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Thursday, May 18

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Begin consideration of H.R. 1039—Probation Officer Protection Act of 2017 (Subject to a Rule). Complete consideration of H.R. 115—Thin Blue Line Act.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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