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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Father of love, whose presence and power is revealed to the hearts that long for Your guidance, we thank You for the gift of this day. May we use this borrowed time for Your glory.

As our lawmakers strive to honor You, may they work with commendable zeal, knowing that life's evening is coming when their labor will be done. Lord, give them the wisdom to keep Your words in their hearts, providing them with a lamp for their feet and a light for their paths.

Continue to be our strength and shield. May we think of You consistently and trust You constantly.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 7, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable RAND PAUL, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. PAUL thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 1628

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1628) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2017.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

SANCTIONS LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, Senators today will have an opportunity to advance important bipartisan Iran sanctions legislation. As we consider this bill, we anticipate that amendments addressing Russia sanctions are likely to be offered. I am encouraged that the chairmen of the Foreign Relations and Banking Committees, Senator CORKER and Senator CRAPO, have already been in discussions with their respective ranking

members to work toward a bipartisan agreement. I support that effort, and I will have more to say about the underlying legislation tomorrow.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on one other matter, later today President Trump will visit Cincinnati to discuss the importance of our Nation's inland waterways. Kentucky is home to over 1,900 miles of navigable inland waterways, which, in addition to adding majestic beauty to my State, are also vital to thousands of jobs in the Commonwealth.

In recent years, over 95 million tons of cargo and agricultural products have been transported across these water trade routes. Our many levees, docks, and dams represent crucial infrastructure that play an important role in our regional and national economy.

I am proud of the work Congress has done in the past to protect our Nation's waterways, like passing the Water Resources Development Act by a bipartisan majority last year in order to support infrastructure, enhance commerce, and maintain American ecosystems.

As President Trump continues to release his plans for our Nation's infrastructure, I look forward to working with the administration and colleagues in the Senate to protect and improve the many roads, bridges, airports, and waterways that serve people and jobs all across our country.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 722 occur at 1:45 p.m. today, and if cloture is invoked, time postcloture count as if invoked at 10:30 a.m.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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



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S3301

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

SANCTIONS LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first on Iran and Russia: This week we will be considering bipartisan legislation to impose sanctions on Iran for its ballistic missile testing, for its human rights abuses, and for its overt support of terrorism. I support this and look forward to a vote on the measure. It is important we do it.

I also understand that the majority leader will consent to an amendment vote alongside that bill on bipartisan Russia sanctions legislation. There is a broad bipartisan consensus for moving forward on tough sanctions against Russia. Russia defied the sovereignty of the Ukraine with the annexation of Crimea. It has been accused of human rights abuses including propping up the brutal Assad regime in Syria, and of course the intelligence community has confirmed that Russia interfered with our democracy.

I appreciate that the majority leader has committed to having a vote on Russia sanctions, and I thank so many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for pushing this issue. It is the right thing to do, and I appreciate them doing it.

I strongly believe that Russia's sanctions legislation needs to do three important things. First, we must codify existing sanctions on Russia; second, we need to give Congress a chance to review any decision by this administration before sanctions are lifted; and, third, we need to impose tough, new sanctions on Russia for its attack on our democracy.

Two pieces of legislation, one posted by the two lead sponsors, Senators McCAIN and CARDIN, the other by Senators GRAHAM and CARDIN—both bipartisan and both, I believe, with at least 10 cosponsors from each side of the aisle—do these things. What we have suggested to the leader is that we put those two bills together and combine them, tweak them a little bit, and move forward. We await the answer from the majority leader on our proposal.

It is certainly our responsibility and the responsibility of this Congress to vote on the tough Russia sanctions bill

as a response to Russia's persistent violations of international norms and agreements.

If we do nothing on Russia or if we have a weak bill, we will not accomplish that goal, and Mr. Putin will continue to do everything he is doing. We know sanctions have bite with Russia. If the Russians see that this Congress, in a bipartisan way, is resolute and strong, it will make a difference, and I hope we move forward.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, there are many subjects in this very quickly changing world in which we live. The next subject is infrastructure.

Today, President Trump will continue his infrastructure week in talking about inland waterways. I would like to repeat that Democrats welcome a discussion about these issues. Democrats have argued in favor of a large infrastructure package to address our crumbling roads and bridges, our levees, our dams, our ports, and our locks for a long time. While we disagreed with President Trump on a great many things during the campaign, I think many of my colleagues thought that when Mr. Trump was elected, we could find some common ground on the topic of infrastructure.

Needless to say, so far, the President's actions on infrastructure have been a disappointment. In 6 months, the President has not given any real details about his infrastructure plan. The most he has done is endorse an off-the-shelf plan to privatize air traffic control. In fact, he actually cut infrastructure spending in his budget by over \$200 billion. Now, during what they have termed "infrastructure week," the White House has only proposed to privatize much of our infrastructure.

Today, I expect more of the same—bold promises, few details. What details we do hear will likely be about how large financiers should decide where and how to build American infrastructure. That has never happened before. The approach will not address the very broad infrastructure needs we have. Financiers will not pay to finance infrastructure projects from which they cannot make a buck. It is their right to seek a profit—that is what businesses do and are supposed to do—but there is no such thing as a free lunch. They are going to need to get recompense when they lay out money. That kind of approach will not fix our water sewer systems. It will not expand rural broadband. It will not fix our energy grid. It will do one thing—lead to Trump tolls from one end of America to the other.

After the election, we stood ready to work with the President on a real bill, provided it would not be just tax breaks for private financiers or roll back labor and environmental protections. We even wrote a detailed blueprint on how to spend \$1 trillion. That

was the President's number. It would create 13 to 15 million jobs. It would rebuild our infrastructure—large parts of it—from one end of America to the other. It would not leave out rural areas that will never benefit from any kind of private financing, as Senators BARRASSO and MORAN have made clear.

We sent it to the White House and never heard a peep. I have talked to the President several times on the phone and said that I want to work with him on infrastructure—no response. Now we have their plan without any consultation from Democrats. Even with talk that they should do this on reconciliation, there has been no Democratic support or votes or input. Just as their doing things by reconciliation is tying the Republican Party in knots on healthcare, it does not bode too well for them on tax reform. It will mess up infrastructure as well.

So I hope the President drops his go-at-it-alone infrastructure push and instead decides to sit down and talk to Democrats about the issue. We agree wholeheartedly on the problem and its magnitude. Let's sit down and start talking about what solutions actually make sense. Let's not have a few financiers who whisper into the President's ear determine our infrastructure policy—because it will be a flop.

TRUMP CARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, Mr. President, on another matter: healthcare.

Yesterday, the insurer Anthem pulled out of exchanges in Ohio, citing the administration's decision to hold cost-sharing reduction payments hostage as the reason for its exit. Anthem joins a growing list of health insurers that have chosen to leave the 2018 marketplace or considered raising their rates as a result of the uncertainty the President and Republicans are causing—deliberately, in my judgment—in our healthcare system.

The President and Republicans blame ObamaCare for insurers leaving the marketplace. It is simply not true. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said it is the "substantial uncertainty about enforcement of the individual mandate and about future payments of the cost-sharing subsidies" that have led insurers to withdraw from the current marketplace. AHIP, which is hardly a Democratic group—it is the largest trade group of insurers and is completely nonpartisan—said the uncertainty about cost-sharing payments was "the single most destabilizing factor in the individual market."

The Affordable Care Act is not falling under its own weight. It is being sabotaged deliberately by President Trump and Republicans who have been whipping up all of this uncertainty to gain political advantage, to say: "I told you so." They are hurting millions of people. That is really wrong.

After downplaying weeks of expectations in moving forward, yesterday our

Republican colleagues said they expect to have a repeal bill passed by June 30. That is 23 days from today. From all reports, the efforts by Republican Senators to craft a different TrumpCare will be based on many of the provisions in the House bill—a bill that would remove the guarantee of coverage for preexisting conditions, raise rates on some older Americans by as much as 800 percent, and decimate Medicaid, which so helps rural folks, folks with a family member in a nursing home, and those suffering from opioid abuse. It would also leave 23 million more Americans without health insurance.

I remind all of my colleagues on the other side that drafting a Senate Republican healthcare bill that is based on a House bill is putting lipstick on a pig. TrumpCare is fundamentally flawed, has been rejected overwhelmingly by the American people of all political stripes, and will devastate our healthcare system in order to finance massive tax breaks for the wealthiest of Americans. There is no amount of window dressing that can fix up a flawed concept.

I say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that even if the proposal is 10 or 20 percent better than the House bill, it ain't close to being good enough for the American people. Republicans ought to drop the repeal. Choose to work with Democrats to actually improve our healthcare system, not to sabotage it.

BORDER WALL

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, Mr. President, a word on the President's latest idea for a border wall with Mexico. After the idea of a border wall was roundly rejected in the last omnibus by Members of both parties and after no Republican from a border State area would support the border wall, the President just cannot seem to let it go. Yesterday, it was reported that he actually pitched the idea of a 40- or 50-foot-tall border wall with solar panels. Never mind that he still has not come up with a plan on how to build the wall, where to build it—on our side or the Rio Grande side—or how to get the land on the border from the private citizens who own it. Never mind that a border wall would be incredibly expensive and ineffective in actually preventing illegal border crossings. Never mind that Mexico still wouldn't be paying for the border wall or its solar panels.

The President is still pushing this medieval proposal—now with an absurd twist. Just like painting stripes on a pony doesn't make a zebra, solar panels on a wall no one wants doesn't make it any more attractive. If the President thinks his new idea will catch on in Congress, well, I have a 50-foot-tall wall made of solar panels I will sell to you.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

COUNTERING IRAN'S DESTABILIZING ACTIVITIES ACT OF 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 722, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 110, S. 722, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to Iran in relation to Iran's ballistic missile program, support for acts of international terrorism, and violations of human rights, and for other purposes.

Mr. SCHUMER. 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. CARPER. 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. CARPER. Mr. President, I understand that we had originally scheduled for, in about 1 minute, a vote on cloture on the new Iran sanctions bill. I understand that the cloture vote has been delayed until early this afternoon.

This comes on the heels of an announcement of very sad news from Iran. I would certainly be among the first to note that some of the people in Iran, the Revolutionary Guard and some of their leadership, support terrorism. They wish ill for us and for our country.

That same country had elections about 2 weeks ago, and the results of those elections were surprising, even for me, but encouraging. The results of the election found that President Rouhani, one of the leaders of reform and one of the modern elements within that country, was reelected by a resounding majority—close to 60 percent of the vote. Although the Supreme Leader thought it would be a one-on-one race for the Presidency, in spite of that, Rouhani was reelected, and we congratulate him. There were a number of municipal elections across the country, most prominently in Tehran where the hard-line mayor of Tehran has been ousted, and moderate forces seem to have made real, encouraging progress from my perspective and I think the perspective of most Americans.

One of the things the Iranians do, which is troubling to me and I think to

others in this country, is continue to test ballistic missiles in what we believe is in violation of the United Nations' decision. Iranians are not violating the agreement that was entered into among five nations, including the United States and Iran, roughly 2 years ago in Iran's nuclear joint agreement. They are not violating that, but they are violating other U.N. sanctions.

So this revised sanctions bill, which was scheduled to be debated today and maybe voted on later this week—at least the start of the debate on whether they are going to proceed to the bill—has been delayed until this afternoon. I urge us to consider delaying further action on this Iran sanctions measure today or this week.

The term “adding insult to injury” comes to mind. I try to use the Golden Rule to figure out what I should do and how I should behave as a human being, and I think maybe we ought to consider the Golden Rule in this case as well. Iran is not necessarily our close friend. They are not our close ally. I think the potential is there for having a much better relationship as a young generation of Iranians grows up and eventually assumes the leadership of their country.

It is a country of 80 million people, over half of them under the age of 25. They had a revolution in 1979 and captured our Embassy. They held our people for a year or more until after the 1980 Presidential election. Our relations with Iran have been difficult since that time but more encouraging of late—again, a young country of 80 million people, more than half under the age of 25.

The younger generation there wants to have a good relationship with the rest of the world, a better relationship with the rest of the world, and certainly a better relationship with us. I have talked with a number of American leaders, including senior American leaders, who have been to Iran in recent years and were surprised by the warm welcome they received.

It reminds me very much of the warm welcome I received leading a congressional delegation to Vietnam in August of 1991 to find out what happened to thousands of MIAs. We were expecting to be met by suspicion and hostility, and we were warmly embraced at that time. Six of us—Democratic and Republican Congressmen—were there to present to the leadership of Vietnam on behalf of the George Herbert Walker Bush administration a roadmap to normalize relations if they would do a number of things to enable us to find out what happened to thousands of our MIAs. We presented that proposal. John Kerry and JOHN MCCAIN worked very hard on the Senate side and at the same time in Southeast Asia as well. We ended up with normalized relations within a few years of our visit. One of the members of my delegation, Pete Peterson, became our first U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam.

I mention that today because of the hostility we felt toward Vietnam for

many years during the war and after the war and the suspicion that they were holding thousands of our MIAs as POWs, which turned out not to be true. But our efforts, along with those of Senator MCCAIN, Senator Kerry, and others, ended up providing information about the missing and the closure we hoped for hundreds of families of Americans who had lost their loved ones in Vietnam and never recovered their remains—although some of their remains were recovered and returned to the families.

I mention it today because a year ago in Vietnam, with President Obama and Secretary Kerry, and at a time when the Vietnamese were announcing they were going to buy billions of dollars' worth of our Boeing aircraft—we are their top trading partner, and they were going to be an integral part of the Trans-Pacific Partnership that we negotiated, along with other nations. Sadly, that has gone away. I think one of the biggest mistakes of this Congress and the last was to let the trans-pacific trade partnership die. But Vietnam was a key member of that.

It is kind of ironic to me that a nation with whom we fought in a war, where the names of 55,000 who died are at the Vietnam Memorial—not even 2 miles from where I am standing right now—yet, since the 1970s we have let bygones be bygones and have a much better relationship with Vietnam. They are still Communist, and they are still a one-party system, but they have high regard toward Americans.

Rather remarkably, we learned last April when we were there that they had two surveys done of the Vietnamese people this last year. One survey found that 85 percent of the people surveyed had favorable opinions of the United States, more than any other nation in the world. In the second survey, we learned that about 95 percent of the Vietnamese people had favorable opinions of the United States, more than any other nation on Earth.

Again, we are their top trading partner these days, and they are buying a lot of the products we manufacture and sell. If that relationship can change, I think there is reason to hope our relationship with Iran can change.

We have our pages here. If it were left to the generation the age of our pages or maybe their parents, it would be a brandnew day in Iran. But change is happening there.

The question is, on the heels of this attack by ISIS, with whom we have bitter differences and a hotly contested armed conflict—for us to somehow, on the heels of two attacks by ISIS in Iran, one on the Parliament and the other apparently on the mausoleum for the former Ayatollah, where a dozen or more people have been killed, 40-something wounded—does it make sense for us to take up the Iran sanctions bill today? I don't think so.

My reading of the Golden Rule, treating other people the way we want to be treated, would suggest this might not

be the right day to do this—next week, maybe; today, no. I call on our leadership to hit the pause button. There is not a need to rush on this.

The Iran sanctions bill, which is coming to us today, is a much more thoughtful approach than was originally contemplated by the Foreign Relations Committee. They have done a very nice job of improving what I thought was a badly flawed earlier effort. But this might be a good day to hit the pause button. Instead of rubbing salt into a wound, let's wait a few days and consider what to do. If we were in their shoes, I think we would appreciate that gesture. If we were in their shoes, I think the idea of their taking this kind of action or step against us on a day that we have been attacked by ISIS would not be well received. It would be badly received. So I think we ought to treat them the same way.

I think that is pretty much it. I appreciate the chance to come to the floor and say a few words. I call on leadership to delay this vote on cloture and to delay the vote on the underlying bill until next week. When we do the underlying bill on Iran sanctions, let's couple it with something that includes some of the very thoughtful work going on with respect to Russia, which really is creating mischief in this country—not just with elections but otherwise as well—and maybe do a package that includes both together. That might make a lot more sense, and the timing would be a lot better.

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. SANDERS. 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. SANDERS. Mr. President, I am strongly supportive of adding sanctions against Russia to the bill that is scheduled to come up this afternoon. As I think we all know, Russia actively worked to influence our 2016 Presidential election and continues to try to destabilize democracies around the world, including our own, and that is unacceptable.

At the same time, I have serious concerns about the sanctions on Iran contained in this bill. As we have heard from former Obama administration officials, including Secretary Kerry and Ambassador Sherman, these measures could undermine the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the very important nuclear agreement signed in 2015 between the United States, our P5+1 partners, and Iran. But above and beyond that, let us be aware and cognizant that earlier today, the people of Iran suffered a horrific terror attack in their capital, Tehran, in which 12 people were killed and many more were injured. The Islamic State has claimed credit for this attack.

At a time when tensions are extremely high in that part of the world, our goal must be to find ways to bring people together to reduce tensions rather than to exacerbate this very painful and dangerous situation. Let us also remember that the leaders of Iran immediately expressed condolences for the September 11 attacks against the United States and that hundreds of Iranians held a candlelight vigil.

It seems to me to be the right thing to do—on a day when Iran has been attacked by ISIS, by terrorism, now is not the time to go forward with legislation calling for sanctions against Iran. I would respectfully request that we delay our vote on this bill until next week. Let us tell the people of Iran that while we have serious disagreements with them on a number of issues, that today, when they are mourning, when they are dealing with the shock of a terrorist attack, today is not the day to go forward with this piece of legislation.

With that, 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. 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.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I come to the floor very briefly to make what, I hope, is a reasonable recommendation to my colleagues on both sides.

We are due to vote later today on moving forward on a piece of legislation that I support. Last week, we voted out of the Foreign Relations Committee a new sanctions bill against the Iranian regime for its continued movement toward a ballistic missile program that, ultimately, could threaten the security of the Middle East and could threaten the security of our sacred ally in the region, Israel. It also speaks to Iran's continued problematic human rights record and its support for terrorism in the region.

We should move forward on this piece of legislation, but I would recommend that we not do so today. There is reason to have this debate, but given the terrorist attack that occurred in Iran, given the fact that today we know that there are 12 dead and 40 wounded in 2 very coordinated attacks, my worry is that, literally, at the moment of grieving in Iran, this resolution would look as directed not at the regime, as it is, but at the Iranian people. It would seem intemperate and, ultimately, do more damage than good.

This is an important resolution to debate. We can find the time to get this done, but given the unfortunate timing—obviously, not intentional in our moving this forward this week—given the attacks that just occurred and for which ISIS has claimed responsibility, I would hope that we could find a way

to move this to another time. I think it is really important because, ultimately, it is in the United States' national security interest for the Iranian people to get their way, who are, broadly speaking, Western-oriented and who, broadly speaking, want a democratic, internationalist future.

In everything we do, we need to make it clear that we have deep disagreements with the Iranian regime—its rhetoric toward Israel, its inflaming of tensions, its funding of proxy wars in the region—and that our beef is not with the people of Iran. From time to time, that is a difficult distinction to make, but it is a very important distinction to make. By choosing to postpone this debate and this vote to another time, I think we will send an important message to the Iranian people that we want to give them the time to grieve and that we want to give them the time to understand the scope of this attack.

I do not think it comes at much of a cost or loss to us. It is important to remember that when we were attacked on September 11, there were vigils held throughout Iran. The regime itself was not sponsoring those, but the Iranian people did stand up and, in substantial numbers, displayed a common cause with the people of this country—again, another sign that this disagreement is not with the people of Iran but with the regime.

Despite my having some reservations about this piece of legislation—I do not endorse it wholeheartedly, but I am a supporter of it and will vote for it when it comes to the floor of the Senate—I would hope that the leadership on both sides of the aisle might find a path so as to give the people of Iran some grieving space, to make sure that we are not sending the wrong message with this vote this afternoon, and to find some time later this summer to take up a very, very important issue.

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. MENENDEZ. 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.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise today in strong support of the Countering Iran's Destabilizing Activities Act of 2017, but first I would like to offer my strongest condemnation of the terrorist attack allegedly carried out by ISIS this morning in Tehran, which claimed the lives of 12 people. Attacks on civilians in any corner of the world must be strongly condemned by the United States, and I offer my condolences to the people of Iran and the families who lost loved ones in this latest act of terror.

If anything, these events remind us that the entire Middle East is increas-

ingly under siege, and the United States and the entire international community must unite to confront terrorism and extremism in all of its forms. That means holding governments that continue to foment, fund, and encourage terrorism accountable.

While the people of Iran suffered a heinous attack today, the unfortunate reality is that the violence, volatility, and profound human suffering that imperils the Middle East are all too often linked back to the Government of Iran. Across the region, this regime continues to pursue policies that threaten the national security interests of the United States. It continues to support terrorism and exert influence through the growing power of proxy actors throughout the Levant and Yemen. Even as it continues to supply terrorists across the region with money, weapons, and resources, the people of Iran continue to suffer under an oppressive regime with absolutely no respect for basic human rights.

We all know the United States faces a multitude of threats at home and abroad, from Russia's cyber attack on our elections, to North Korea's continued belligerence, to new questions about America's leadership in the world. But even as Congress rightly remains focused on these challenges, we must not lose sight of Iran's ongoing, ever-growing efforts to exert more control, more power, and more influence throughout the Middle East. Whether we are talking about an adversary like Russia or Iran or an international challenge like climate change or the refugee crisis, we cannot let issues of such importance to our future be obscured by partisan politics, derailed by divisive tweets, or lost amid the revelations of our relentless 24-hour news cycle.

I have always believed politics must stop at the water's edge, and I know many of my colleagues share that principle. That is why there is such broad bipartisan support for the Countering Iran's Destabilizing Activities Act. I am pleased to have worked with Senators CORKER, CARDIN, and a number of other colleagues on legislation that has earned the support of nearly 60 cosponsors. We crafted this legislation by listening to an array of different voices with experience addressing Iran's destabilizing influence.

But let me be clear. This bill is not—is not—about Iran's nuclear program. This bill is not about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. With the regime's tentacles reaching across the region—from its support of a Shia proxy network in Iraq, to its growing influence in Afghanistan, to its continued sponsorship of terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas—we need a strategic approach, one that energizes our partners in the region and recognizes their capacity to counter Iran's behavior. That is exactly what the Countering Iran's Destabilizing Activities Act does.

Our legislation calls on the President of the United States to develop a re-

gional strategy to counter Iran's asymmetric and conventional threats across the Middle East. We know that Iran, for example, continues to develop sophisticated ballistic missile technologies. They aren't exactly hiding it. Just a few weeks ago, a semi-official news service for the Iranian Revolutionary Guard announced it had built a third underground facility dedicated to ballistic missiles. Iran continues to test launch missiles, some of which may be capable of reaching Europe or Israel—both critical allies of the United States. In fact, some of the missiles launched earlier this year had the words "Israel must be wiped off the Earth" etched on their sides. That is why S. 722 requires the President to impose sanctions on any person who knowingly engages and materially contributes in support of Iran's ballistic missiles program.

Some argue that imposing new sanctions on Iran violates the spirit of the JCPOA, but I would argue that actively building underground ballistic missile facilities does little to promote good will or the spirit of the JCPOA in the region.

Beyond its missile program, Iran remains actively engaged in importing and exporting small and conventional arms to terrorist proxies around the world and bad actors like North Korea. In January of this year, the outgoing United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, expressed concern that Iran might have violated an arms embargo by supplying weapons and missiles to Hezbollah. Yet, not all of Iran's violations make high-profile news. We know Iran has ramped up its supply of weapons to the Houthi rebels in Yemen and other proxies throughout the region. That is why this legislation imposes sanctions on any individual who knowingly engages in activity that materially contributes to the supply, sale, or transfer of arms as defined and established by U.N. standards.

Finally, when it comes to human rights, some try to paint a pretty picture of reform in Iran, but a closer look reveals chilling and deplorable human rights abuses. According to Human Rights Watch, by October of last year, Iran had executed more than 250 people—that is 1 person sent to death every day—and many were executed for nonviolent drug offenses. That is why our legislation expands the scope of violations eligible for sanctions, including those behind the extrajudicial killings of journalists and activists who seek to expose the oppression of the Iranian people.

Finally, this bill calls for a comprehensive report on Americans who suffer at the hands of the Iranian regime, including those who have been unjustly detained and those who have remained missing in Iran for more than a decade.

In short, this bill is a carefully crafted response to Iran's ongoing aggression in the Middle East.

Let me turn to a provision that continues to be misrepresented, and that

involves the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. The IRGC is officially responsible for Iran's internal security, with a ground force of about 100,000, but like many other quasi-military-political entities in undemocratic countries throughout the world, the IRGC holds enormous influence in Iran's economy and public affairs. On paper, the IRGC Quds Force is the lead supporter of Iran's terrorist networks around the world, and the United States has designated it as such, but the reality is, the IRGC exercises tremendous economic and political power throughout Iran. It pulls the regime's levers to fund and support terrorists in the Middle East and beyond. That is why our bill specifically calls for terrorism-related sanctions on the IRGC, but it does not—let me repeat—it does not, as some have claimed, label the IRGC a foreign terrorist organization. We heard the concerns of our military and intelligence community. Let me repeat. This bill does not label the IRGC as a foreign terrorist organization. What it does do is require the President to acknowledge the role the IRGC plays in supporting terrorism globally.

I know some of my colleagues have expressed concerns as well about whether this bill gives a green light to the administration's decidedly confrontational approach to Iran, but that is precisely why Congress must step up and define our strategy in the Middle East. We need to look at the big picture here. As the United States and our partners work to build democratic governance structures—promote tolerance across the region and protect civilians and refugees living under siege—Iran remains aligned with Russia and Syria, actively working to undermine U.S. security interests. Indeed, Putin, Assad, and the Ayatollah continue to take advantage of the strife that imperils the region. Meanwhile, the world continues to struggle with extremism, with mass migration, and with the largest humanitarian crisis since World War II.

With this administration unable to articulate a clear vision for American leadership in the world, the time is ripe for Congress to assert its influence in our foreign policy, to provide guidance and expertise, and to develop a framework for securing our interests in the Middle East.

Now is not the time for Congress to turn a blind eye to Iran's hostile behavior. Now is the time for all of us to demand nothing less than vigorous oversight, constant vigilance, and strict enforcement of our entire arsenal of diplomatic tools, including sanctions on Iran. That is our effort—outside of the nuclear proposal—to make it very clear that you cannot get a green light to do all of these things just because you signed on to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. I think it is important for us to send this message, and when the appropriate time comes for this vote, I urge my colleagues to support the measure.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, for a number of years, we have been debating healthcare in this country. Clearly, our healthcare system had problems 8 years ago when they started to do healthcare reform. I saw that as a doctor practicing in Casper, WY.

Well, then Washington Democrats tried their solution. It is a solution that passed, and it is known as ObamaCare. Republicans said that it wouldn't work and have been proven right, ObamaCare is too costly. It is collapsing. It is interesting because yesterday, as we were having our policy lunch meetings—Republicans and Democrats—word came out that another one of the ObamaCare exchange companies, Anthem, this time in Ohio, was pulling out, leaving about 18 counties, if not more in Ohio, without anybody to sell insurance on the ObamaCare exchange.

ObamaCare actually hasn't solved the problems of America's healthcare system. In many ways, it has made matters worse. That is why the law has never really had the support of the American people and continues to be unpopular today. It is why more than 19 million people actually chose not to sign up for ObamaCare coverage at all, even in spite of financial incentives to do so and a fine or a tax if you didn't sign up. So they either paid the fine or they got an exemption.

The Democrats, when they come to the floor to talk about healthcare, refuse to talk about those 19 million people who have just said: We want nothing to do with ObamaCare. We are not going to sign up. Give us an exemption. Let us out.

They want to talk about people whom they actually have covered by pushing them into a broken Medicaid system, and that is about what has happened here. This expansion through the healthcare law and expanding Medicaid put many people into a broken healthcare system called Medicaid. It wasn't working well before ObamaCare, and it has gotten worse. The numbers out there, in terms of physicians taking care of patients, are about one-third—one out of three doctors will not take new Medicaid patients, so it is not a system that is working. It is not a solution, but Democrats put more people into that.

For people who didn't end up in Medicaid and who paid their premiums, those premiums have gone up significantly. They have doubled in most States, I think, across the board—up about 107 percent over the last 4 years.

Thus, the statistics that have come out from the Department of Health and Human Services recently are the statistics the Obama administration, as it left office, didn't want the American people to see—that rates have doubled across the country and, in some States, much, much higher than that.

In my home State of Wyoming, they were up actually higher than the national average has been. People are paying more and more. There were two companies, at one point, that were selling insurance on the ObamaCare exchange, both losing money. One lost so much that they are no longer in business. The other is still losing money and still selling on the exchange, but you wonder how long they will stay. Or will they do the sort of thing that Anthem had to do in Ohio and the sorts of things we have seen in the Presiding Officer's home State of Iowa and we have seen in Nebraska and we have seen across the board? Some Democrats say: This is a one-term correction; give it time. But it doesn't seem that it is going to be working that way.

There was an article in the paper here, in Washington's Roll Call, and the headline was—this was last week—“Insurers Seek Increases for Obamacare Premiums in Early Filings.” This is for next year. The article talks about how the insurance companies are starting to say how much they are going to need to charge people next year, which is much higher than it is this year. They are talking about an average increase of about 30 percent.

The average premium in the ObamaCare market in Wyoming right now is already more than \$7,000 a year for a family. So how much more can people take? That is why I continue to come to the floor and talk about what is the problem with the healthcare law—healthcare and the system. People under ObamaCare have seen their deductibles go up, their copays go up, and the choices that they have go down. This is the real problem when we talk about ObamaCare.

Then, of course, the other thing is taxes. There are at least 15 new or higher taxes under ObamaCare. So people aren't just paying higher premiums; they are paying higher taxes, which were supposed to help with the premiums, but it doesn't seem to be doing so for people all across the country.

The Congressional Budget Office has looked at this, and it said that Americans are going to pay more than \$28 billion over the next 10 years on just one tax on prescription drugs. Well, if we are trying to lower the cost of drugs and trying to lower the cost of care, putting a tax like this, as ObamaCare did on prescription drugs, just adds to the problem.

It has raised taxes all across the board. I don't want to go through each and every one of the taxes, but suffice it to say that when President Obama said he would put this program into place and it wouldn't cost a single

dime, he forgot the trillion dollars in new taxes that he added onto the backs of hard-working Americans. So we have had higher taxes, we have had higher premiums, we have had higher out-of-pocket costs from people—this huge tax burden.

What has happened is that we need to do a reform. The House has passed reform, and now in the Senate we are working on passing our own healthcare reform bill. We have been meeting three times a week up to over 5 hours a week for the last month and a half, going through piece by piece of all the different components of the healthcare law, trying to address the issues that are facing the American people, trying to lower the taxes that top the list of what we hear about at home in terms of trying to help people because they are paying more taxes, trying to work to deal with premiums.

I am really encouraged by the debate we have been having. I think we have been taking good steps in trying to address the issues the American public is seeing in terms of higher premiums and fewer choices.

I would like to work with the Democrats to solve these problems in a bipartisan way, to talk about how people can actually get healthcare in this country. But what have the Democrats done in response? Well, it is interesting because they want to go to a single-payer healthcare system. Some may deny it, but a majority of the Democrats in the House have cosponsored legislation to go to a single-payer healthcare plan. It is modeled, in some ways, after what you are seeing in California.

The California State Senate last week passed a bill, which seems to be the drift and the direction and maybe even the tip of the sphere of the Democratic Party efforts. It said: We want single-payer healthcare in California.

I served in the Wyoming State Senate, and I know the Presiding Officer served in the State legislative body in her home State of Iowa. We do a fiscal note. We say: What is this going to cost? Is it a good idea? Can we afford it? What are the costs going to be? And the cost for what they proposed in California is \$400 billion. Can they afford it? What is the total budget of the State of California? What is their general fund for the year? It is only \$190 billion. So what they are proposing for healthcare alone is over twice what the entire general fund for the entire State of California is. Yet, it passed. It was a party-line vote in the State of California in the State senate, but that is now the position that they are working to do.

So it is hard to get cooperation from somebody to work on dealing with a healthcare plan when their plan is to go with more government, more spending, pledging money they don't have. When I looked at it in California, I said: If they want to do this, they will have to, No. 1, cut spending on other things. When you think about where

general funding goes, it is for teachers, law enforcement, public safety, and firefighters. But they would also have to raise taxes significantly to get the money for what they want to promise everybody in this single-payer healthcare plan.

I am interested in working in a bipartisan way with people, but it is hard to get cooperation from people when their solution is more government, higher taxes, and less freedom. We need a solution, and that is what we are working on. I am very happy to say that it has been discussed at length in our conference. We had another good meeting about it yesterday, along with the Vice President, focusing on eliminating taxes, getting rid of the mandate that says that people must buy a government-approved product, giving people additional choices, and giving the States flexibility to make a number of these decisions.

I am from a State where agriculture plays a significant role, as is the Presiding Officer. I will be at our Wyoming stock growers' meeting on Friday when I am back home in the State. I was there a couple of years ago after ObamaCare passed, talking to people who had insurance that worked for them and worked for their families, but they lost it, not because they couldn't afford to pay for what they had but because what President Obama and the Democrats forced through in Congress said it wasn't good enough for them.

Under the mandate, as to what my friends and neighbors and folks around Wyoming have been saying was good enough for them and they could afford, President Obama said it wasn't good enough for them. Who is the better judge of what is good for a family in Iowa or Wyoming—President Obama and the Democrats or the family there in Iowa or Wyoming who is making the decision about what works best for them and their families? I am sure I am going to hear more about it at the stock growers' meeting on Friday, when I hear from families who say: What we had worked, but lost it because it wasn't allowed to be sold anymore. The President said it wasn't good enough for me. One woman said to me: Tell the President that I can make the decisions for myself. I don't need his help—referring to President Obama.

So we will continue to work toward the goal of making sure that we have people who can get the insurance and care they need from a doctor they choose at lower costs. That is what we needed with healthcare reform. That is what we didn't get with ObamaCare. We got higher costs and fewer choices. Across the board right now, it looks like in 7 out of 10 counties in this country, people are down to one or two choices—hardly a market. In many places it is a monopoly now. After the news that came out yesterday from Anthem in Ohio and some of the news that we see from Iowa and neighboring Nebraska, we are going to find that many places will find themselves with

no options available. Even with the subsidies that the Democrats had promised to help deal with the high premiums they have caused, there may be nobody to sell the insurance even when the subsidies are available.

So I come to the floor, as I do just about every week, to talk about the situation with the Obama healthcare law, the challenges the American people face, and our commitment to help provide relief and rescue the American people from what has happened to them under President Obama's healthcare law.

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

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, the most important words in our Constitution are the first three—"We the People"—written in a beautiful script and written in a font size so that one can see it from across the room. They set out the mission statement for our Constitution, for our vision of government—not government of, by, and for the privileged and the powerful but government of, by, and for the people, as President Lincoln so eloquently summarized.

It is our responsibility as elected officials to look out for decisions that serve this mission of government of, by, and for the people, to fight in times of trouble for policies that provide a ladder of opportunity and a foundation for families to thrive. But at this very moment, a secret group of 13 Senators is devising a healthcare plan with the intention of bringing it to this floor with no public debate, no committee meeting, and no public notice. They want to just bring it to the floor, have a few hours of debate, and put it forward, even though it will affect millions of Americans. It probably will hurt millions of Americans, but the secret 13 want to craft this policy. And why in secret? Because they are plotting a plan that will hurt so many people, they don't want the public involved in the process. They don't want to hear from the citizens from rural America or urban America who are so concerned about the TrumpCare bill—the bill that will immediately destroy healthcare for 14 million Americans; the bill that will immediately undermine the solvency and success of our rural healthcare clinics and our rural hospitals; the bill that breaks every promise the President put forward on healthcare.

It breaks the promise that every person will be covered, breaks the promise that people with preexisting connections will get the same price as everyone else, breaks the promise that the

policies will be even better, higher quality. Instead, it guts the essential benefits. It breaks the promise that the insurance will be at a lower cost. In fact, for someone roughly 64 years of age earning about \$26,500, their healthcare bill would go from \$140 a month to \$1,200 a month—a sum that is clearly impossible to pay on an annual income of \$26,500. That is why it is being done in secret—because it involves broken promise after broken promise, destroying healthcare in every town and hamlet across America.

That is quite a contrast to the way ObamaCare was forged. ObamaCare had a yearlong debate. It proceeded to be in committee markup—that means with amendments being offered—in the HELP Committee for about 5 weeks, with television cameras rolling and 150 Republican amendments accepted during that process. Then the Finance Committee had its turn, and it had a very long markup, and it had dozens and dozens, if not 100 or more, Republican amendments adopted. The debate was all over the country. It was in the newspapers. It was in every forum. It was right there, square center, nothing hidden. But this is quite different. The majority leader today has started the rule XIV process, specifically intending to bypass those Senate committees and bring the TrumpCare bill to the Senate floor, completely bypassing government of, by, and for the people.

This is unacceptable. I think my colleagues know it is unacceptable, but they are hoping to do it so quickly and so fast that they will have a minimum of criticism across the country. There should be a maximum amount of criticism on the floor of the Senate. Every Senator who believes that this democracy—this democratic Republic—is one in which we do the people's work should see the light of day. The debate should see the light of day in the forging of the bill, as well as the final debate here on the floor.

We know another reason this bill—this replacement or addition or modification of the House bill—is being crafted in secret. That is because the very premise of it is to give a massive tax break to the wealthiest Americans, another promise broken in which Trump said that this would not be done. But there it is, TrumpCare out of the House, \$600 billion given away to the richest Americans while devastating healthcare for working Americans.

Has no one noticed that we have an incredible gap in income in this country, with massive numbers of people earning very little and a few at the top earning massive amounts? Has no one noticed that we have a huge wealth gap in this Nation, with those at the bottom having few, if any, savings and those at the top having billions upon billions? If we have noticed, then we should care that that is not a foundation for families to thrive. Indeed, it is something that is only made much worse in a bill that takes away the

foundation of healthcare—essentially, the quality of life for families across America—and, in turn, takes the savings and gives it to the wealthiest families.

There is a reason to hide this bill. There are a lot of reasons to hide this bill. But it is undemocratic to have this secret group developing this bill with an intention to bring it to the floor without a committee hearing, without public exposure.

Folks back home are very worried, and I would like to share a few of their stories.

Lynda of Talent, OR, who survived her battle with stomach cancer, thanks to the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion—Lynda's friend wrote to share her story. Lynda was a self-employed plumber, working hard to get her business off the ground, but she was diagnosed with stage IV stomach cancer. Lynda couldn't afford insurance, and she and her husband couldn't afford to pay for treatment out of pocket because they were already paying off enormous debt from care her husband had received.

So what did Lynda do? She ignored the symptoms. She tried to go about her life as best as she could. As her friend wrote, "She would have died rather than take on more debt that she was not sure she could pay." But that changed with the Affordable Care Act the day Lynda found out she would receive coverage under the Oregon Health Plan—Oregon's Medicaid expansion.

Now there is good news to share. Lynda received treatment. She has been cancer-free for almost a year, and her friend describes this as "nothing short of a miracle." ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act, delivered a miracle to an individual who was planning just to die rather than get treatment and then could get treatment, thanks to Medicaid expansion, and is now in remission.

TrumpCare is being reworked in secret by 13 of my colleagues out of public sight. It wants to strip away that expansion of Medicaid, wants to rip away the chance for people like Lynda to receive lifesaving care.

Yvonne from Elmira, OR, sent a note to us about the high-risk pools that Republicans want to institute under TrumpCare. She says:

Before the ACA existed, I was in our state's high risk pool because no company would insure me because I had Asthma and had an ovary removed because of cysts.

The \$1500 deductible and \$550 per month was hard to pay and then it only covered 70%.

When I was severely injured in an accident and required reconstructive surgery I ended up bankrupt.

But then, 2 years ago, she qualified for the Oregon Health Plan. Now Yvonne has her medical needs covered at an affordable price and can't be denied coverage or charged a higher premium because of her preexisting conditions. Yvonne, like so many others, would suffer under the Republican plan

to strip away the protection for pre-existing conditions. She has had an accident, she has had an ovary removed, she has had asthma. It would be extraordinarily difficult for her to get insurance without the protection of everyone being in the same healthcare pool together. If she could get insurance—which is not at all clear—it would be at sky-high, unaffordable prices.

Bernard from Portland wrote to us. He said that an important thing that often gets lost in this whole debate over the future of the Affordable Care Act is the support it gives for Americans to innovate.

In 2011, Bernard in Portland chose to leave his job and pursue his passion of becoming a freelance artist. Here is what he said, in his words:

With my departure, I left behind the security of medical coverage. For two years, I was not covered by medical insurance, and fortunately nothing happened, but that is a gamble nobody should have to take. And it's a gamble that I could take being under 40 years old, and in relatively good health.

A person should not have to stay in a job they may not even like, and could be better filled by someone else, just for fear of not having medical coverage.

He is right. One of the powerful things that has occurred under ObamaCare is that individuals worked for firms and wanted to become entrepreneurs but were afraid to do so because of the loss of healthcare coverage, but now, either through the expansion of Medicaid or through the exchanges, they can acquire insurance without being part of a large company. That has unleashed entrepreneurship across the country. People are pursuing their dreams and contributing to the economy in all kinds of ways because they can now access healthcare without being part of a company that provides healthcare.

Eventually, Bernard was able to afford a basic coverage plan. But it didn't provide much, and it cost a significant portion of his income, but it all changed with the ACA.

An October 2016 survey of American small businesses and a January 2017 followup survey found that one-third of 5,400 small business owners interviewed had the confidence to start their own businesses because they had access to healthcare through the ACA. According to the Department of Labor, between 2013 when the ACA went into effect and the end of 2015, the number of self-employed Americans increased by 3.5 percent.

These are just different ways of noting what we hear about all the time—people launching their entrepreneurial efforts, launching their companies because of the confidence they have that they can get healthcare. That is the powerful unleashing of creativity. It is an economic engine. It is a small business driver.

Lisa from Phoenix also wrote to share her powerful story. Lisa's daughter suffers from cerebral palsy and epilepsy, so Lisa has stayed home and

cared for her for the last 15 years while her husband worked. Now, thanks to ACA's Medicaid expansion, her family has been able to hire in-home help and it has been transformative.

Lisa's daughter has become more connected to the community, gained new skills and independence, is contributing to household chores, and has shown a great deal more vitality and engagement since the family was able to get some assistance. It has gotten to the point where Lisa can start thinking about her own needs a bit more. In fact, for the first time in quite a while, she is considering taking on a job outside her home to help provide more income.

The ACA isn't just saving lives in emergency health situations or by addressing diseases. It is improving the quality of life for millions of American families like Lisa's.

I will share one more constituent story today. It is hard to pick just one more because there are so many stories coming in each and every day. As we continue to talk about the assault on the health and peace of mind of millions of Americans, I will be coming back to the floor to share those stories coming in from other Oregonians. But this last story comes from Warren in Tigard, OR.

Warren and his wife Joyce have been happily married for over 60 years, but in the last few years, Joyce has been suffering from Alzheimer's. Joyce's disease has progressed very far. Among other things, she has lost her mobility, much of her cognition, and she is wheelchair bound. Her condition has progressed so far that Warren and the home caregivers who were helping him care for his wife just couldn't meet the need requirements any longer, so they admitted Joyce to a nearby adult care facility, where she is now secure, stable, and comfortable. But, as we know, the kind of care Joyce is receiving is expensive. Warren writes:

This care costs \$4,000 per month. Our long-term care insurance is currently covering most of this cost, but only about 4 months' worth of insurance coverage remains. So we will have to obtain Medicaid coverage for her continued care.

But proposed changes to the Affordable Care Act could jeopardize this coverage. I have not anticipated this disastrous change, but fear it would be a tragedy for both of us.

Yes, it would be a tragedy for Warren and for Joyce to have TrumpCare pass and dismantle Medicaid and dismantle the exchanges. It would be a tragedy for so many others in similar situations across the country.

Many people don't realize that Medicaid helps pay for nursing home care for more than half of the nursing home residents—residents like Joyce. But here is TrumpCare, planning to cut \$380 billion in direct Medicaid spending. It is basically: Well, too bad Warren and too bad Joyce. We want to save some money so we can give big tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans.

I must say, there is not a lot of caring in that perspective. It embodies a

principle, but is it really the principle we want in the United States of America—the principle that the goal of the majority party is to take away from those who have little to give more to those who have most? Is that really the principle my Republican colleagues want to embrace on the floor of the Senate?

Is that really the principle the secret 13 with their secret meetings out of public sight to develop a new version of TrumpCare want to embrace? I would suggest that is simply wrong. It is wrong from the point of view of providing an opportunity for all Americans to thrive. It is wrong from a moral point of view to pull healthcare—and the peace of mind that comes with healthcare—out of the hands of struggling Americans and working Americans across our country.

Finally, I want to address one more issue. We heard earlier today that Anthem is pulling out of Ohio. Why are they pulling out? Because of President Trump. Why is that connected? Because he refuses to confirm that his administration will make the cost-sharing reduction payments that have been part of the Affordable Care Act. Those payments reduce the premiums. Those payments proceed also to reduce the level of deductibles so you get more care sooner. So insurance companies don't know whether to raise their insurance policy a little or a tremendous amount, and that instability means they simply can't price their policies.

In addition, my Republican colleagues have assaulted the risk quarters, or reinsurance programs, that make it possible for an insurance company to go into a new market and know that if they get a disproportionate share of sick patients, they will get compensated for that risk and that result. So that reinsurance is essential for more companies to be in a particular market.

Moreover, the administration proceeded to not spend the money on advertising in the last stage of signups and reduced the number of people who were in the markets. So that is another assault on the stability of health insurance in America. This is a deliberate, straight-out effort to undermine healthcare in America to the disadvantage of millions of Americans. It is being done by the President without any action even happening on TrumpCare here in the Senate. It is wrong. It is hurting a lot of people, and the President should stop.

With that, I conclude my comments. Thank you, Mr. President.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask permission to speak under leadership time for a brief moment.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you, Mr. President.

With respect to the pending vote on the Iran sanctions bill, I want to be very clear. Democrats will vote to advance this bill to the floor because most of us support the bill but also because we expect an amendment process that will follow for a vote on a strong package of Russia sanctions. I have talked to the Republican leader about this. He is amenable to that.

Our Republican colleagues should realize it will be very difficult to gather Democratic support for final passage of this bill until we deal with Russia sanctions. We feel strongly that we need a tough, effective package of Russia sanctions to move alongside the Iran sanctions. We are currently negotiating to that end. I have faith that the majority leader and I, along with Chairman CORKER, Chairman CRAPO, Ranking Member CARDIN, and Ranking Member BROWN, will be able to agree on a way forward that allows for a final vote on Iran sanctions alongside a strong and effective package of Russia sanctions.

With that, I yield the floor.

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 legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 110, S. 722, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to Iran in relation to Iran's ballistic missile program, support for acts of international terrorism, and violations of human rights, and for other purposes.

Todd Young, Joni Ernst, Bill Cassidy, Ron Johnson, Tom Cotton, Orrin G. Hatch, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, Mitch McConnell, Richard Burr, Luther Strange, James M. Inhofe, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, John Cornyn, Bob Corker, John Barrasso.

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 motion to proceed to S. 722, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to Iran in relation to Iran's ballistic missile program, support for acts of international terrorism, and violations of human rights, and for other purposes, 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 Texas (Mr. CRUZ).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 91, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 140 Leg.]

YEAS—91

Alexander	Gardner	Nelson
Baldwin	Graham	Perdue
Barrasso	Grassley	Peters
Bennet	Harris	Portman
Blumenthal	Hassan	Reed
Blunt	Hatch	Risch
Booker	Heinrich	Roberts
Boozman	Heitkamp	Rounds
Brown	Heller	Rubio
Burr	Hirono	Sasse
Cantwell	Hoeben	Schatz
Capito	Inhofe	Schumer
Cardin	Isakson	Scott
Casey	Johnson	Scott
Cassidy	Kaine	Shaheen
Cochran	Kennedy	Shelby
Collins	King	Stabenow
Coons	Klobuchar	Strange
Corker	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Manchin	Tillis
Crapo	Markey	Toomey
Daines	McCain	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Duckworth	McConnell	Warren
Enzi	Menendez	Whitehouse
Ernst	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Murkowski	Wyden
Flake	Murphy	Young
Franken	Murray	

NAYS—8

Carper	Gillibrand	Sanders
Durbin	Merkley	Udall
Feinstein	Paul	

NOT VOTING—1

Cruz

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 91, the nays are 8.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

CHANGE OF VOTE

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, on rollcall vote No. 140, I voted yea. It was my intention to vote nay. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to change my vote since it will not affect the outcome of the vote.

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

(The foregoing tally has been changed to reflect the above order.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues to speak about the need to ensure that the policies that we make in this Chamber work for and support rural America.

Senators STABENOW, HEITKAMP, and I are all from the Midwest—the heartland. We represent the people who are truly in the middle of this country—the middle of the country economically, politically—and who are often middle-income people who need representatives who are focused on what matters to them.

Each year I visit all 87 counties in my State, and I hear a lot. I hear about dads who can't be sure their sons or daughters will have the support they need to take over the family farm when the time comes, small business owners who can't get a broadband connection, moms who can't figure out how to pay for their kids' prescriptions when the costs go up, and manufacturers who can't find workers to fill jobs.

Rural America has been left behind. The poverty rate in their areas for kids is higher than it is in urban areas. Businesses may not invest when they can't get reliable internet access or they can't get the right people to support their operation. Housing is hard to come by.

We should be focused on supporting our farmers and ensuring that people can raise a family in a small town and have the healthcare they need. We should be making sure that high-quality education is attainable and that job training options are available and affordable. We should be able to provide every person in this country with a clear path to a good job.

Unfortunately, from the administration we have seen a disconnect between rhetoric and policy. We have seen a budget that hits the heartland with 21 percent cuts in the Department of Agriculture—cuts to grant programs that support rural homeownership, provide clean drinking water and wastewater systems, and promote access to critical services such as rural hospitals. It eliminates rural business programs that help create hundreds of thousands of jobs. If enacted, these cuts would have a damaging impact on rural communities throughout the country.

Rural communities help our country get ahead. They are the backbone of our country. We need to work to find common ground on these issues, and we need a budget that helps and not hurts the heartland.

I see my colleague from Michigan, Senator STABENOW, is here as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I want to first thank my friend and colleague, the senior Senator from Minnesota, Ms. KLOBUCHAR. She is a very important part of our Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee. She provides tremendous leadership. We both come from great "M" States. So it is always great to have an opportunity to be part of sharing remarks on such an important topic. I am also pleased to state that Senator HEITKAMP will be joining us today, as well, from another very important rural State.

Michigan small towns and rural communities embody much of our State's way of life and drive our economy forward. I grew up in one of those small towns, in Clare, in Northern Michigan. I believe that towns like mine should be celebrated and strengthened. We want young people to go to college and feel that there is a future to come home to, either back to the farm or the small business or participating in the community or maybe working at the local hospital, but being part of continuing this important way of life.

People in our communities deserve every opportunity to be able to raise their families with well-paying jobs and a high quality of life, like everyone in every part of Michigan and all across the country wants to have, but

many rural areas and many small towns face unique challenges in developing and maintaining infrastructure.

Broadband. We now need to make sure that the farm at the end of the road is connected with high-speed internet. At one point in our country's history, it was the telephone. It was electric poles and being able to connect the farm at the end of the road to the rest of the community. Now it is high-speed broadband, and it is critically important that that happen.

Providing high-quality health services and education. My mother was a nurse—the director of nursing—at the small hospital in Clare for many, many years. So I know how important not only healthcare was and making sure there were doctors in our town but also making sure there were jobs, because one of the top employers in our community was the hospital. That remains true today.

When the Trump administration released its budget proposal at the end of the month, frankly, I was shocked to see the kinds of disinvestments and sharp cuts that would hurt small towns like Clare and rural communities all across Michigan and all across the country. No matter which part you look at, President Trump's budget is bad for rural Michigan, and it is bad for rural America.

First, the budget calls for a 21-percent cut to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which is our second largest industry. One out of four jobs in Michigan is connected to agriculture and the food economy. In the President's budget, it was decided that the third largest cut to any Federal agency would be in the Department of Agriculture. This will dramatically reduce and eliminate very key rural development services.

The budget would zero out funding for water and sewer infrastructure projects, which is amazing to me. I can drive from one end of Michigan to the other and see communities in which rural development has made all the difference in supporting the ability to have clean water and water and sewer systems, as well as other important infrastructure. This program has improved nearly 6,000 rural water systems, including many in Michigan. There is an extremely high demand for upgrading water and sewer systems across the country. Right now, the USDA has a backlog of nearly 1,000 applications from small towns that need to improve their water systems.

President Trump's answer, as part of his infrastructure package, is to say that this will come from not supporting rural communities ourselves but leaving it up to Wall Street investors or, maybe, foreign countries to invest in our water systems, like Saudi Arabia or China. The fact is that Wall Street investors are not investing in rural communities. I would argue that that is not a good strategy anyway. We know that, when you depend on that kind of a strategy—foreign country investor or Wall Street investor efforts—

those investments are not being done in small towns like the one in which I grew up. Towns with populations of a few hundred people cannot afford the high interest rates—or the toll roads, by the way—that come with a lot of the projects in this kind of approach.

The budget also undermines rural jobs and businesses in communities in which unemployment is already too high. The USDA's small business loans are eliminated under the President's budget. Again, I can go from community to community around Michigan and see wonderful small businesses operating with the support of rural development loans. These are programs that have saved almost 800,000 jobs and have helped finance more than 107,000 businesses in the last 8 years alone.

This proposal that the White House put out also jeopardizes what I talked about earlier, which is rural broadband, or high-speed internet, for communities in order to access education, rural healthcare, and telemedicine, as well as addressing issues like resources to curb the opioid epidemic. Last year, the FCC found that 39 percent of rural Americans—that is, roughly, 23 million people—lack access to high-speed internet service. This is astounding to me when we look at this as a challenge that we have in 2017.

President Trump's budget also targets the farm bill directly for \$231 billion in cuts. We work together on a strategy for a 5-year economic development plan. We do it on a bipartisan basis. It will be time to bring that up again next year. That 5-year process gives certainty to our farmers and communities and those interested and committed to conservation and bioenergy and all of the other provisions in the farm bill. To see—outside of this 5-year period and our bipartisan process—the Trump administration come in and target these funds for a cut of \$231 billion, again, is shocking to me. If that were to pass, it would be impossible for us to write the next farm bill next year.

Cutting crop insurance by \$29 billion would take away critical support for farmers right at a time of low commodity prices. We moved from subsidies to risk management in crop insurance in the last bill, saving taxpayer dollars. We made a commitment to farmers purchasing insurance, where they are writing a check for the insurance bill instead of getting a subsidy during good times, but you have the insurance if there is a weather event, if commodity prices are low, if there is another challenge like we are seeing today for our farmers.

Our farmers also need export opportunities in order to sell their products, which are in high demand around the world. We have to be able to sell agricultural products. The budget eliminates important market-access programs to help our farmers sell. Simply put, cuts to these programs mean lower economic growth, less development, less opportunity, and a lower quality of

life in small towns in Michigan and all across rural America.

Our small towns and rural communities deserve better, and we are standing here today as advocates and voices for them. We know, as farm prices are down nearly 50 percent from their highs just a few years ago and producers are struggling to make ends meet, that these are challenging times, and we need to understand that. We need to write a farm bill and focus on those areas to support our farmers and growers. We know there are those like our dairy farmers, in particular, who are in challenging times, and we need to make sure we are addressing their concerns as well.

Rural America is the economic backbone of the country. Somebody has to grow something, and somebody has to make something. Otherwise, you do not have an economy. That is what happens in rural Michigan and rural America. Yet we also know that too many communities are still struggling to recover from the great recession.

From my perspective, I join with the 500 groups from every part of agriculture, the food economy, nutrition, and conservation groups—everyone involved in the food economy—in saying that we cannot afford additional cuts to agriculture, rural communities, and other parts of the farm bill that support our ongoing economy.

It is critically important that we stand with those in every small town in Michigan and across our country in saying that we understand and are partners with you in making sure that, when you work hard, you have the quality of life for yourself and your family that you deserve, and we are going to do our part to make sure that support is there.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, while I join Senator STABENOW in her remarks, I want to thank her for her tremendous leadership on the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee and for working across the aisle with Chairman ROBERTS. The two of them, I have no doubt, will be able to come to an agreement and keep working on getting an even stronger farm bill. It took some Herculean efforts to get the last farm bill done, and it would not have happened without her. I appreciate what she said about the importance of the farm bill and the USDA.

I would also add another important pillar of strong rural economics, and that is job training.

Starting with high school, I think we all have to come to grips with the fact that not every kid wants to get a 4-year degree. In fact, we have so many openings across this country—millions of job openings—whether it be on a plant floor, whether it be as a plumber or as a welder, that can be obtained with a 1-year or a 2-year degree. My own sister did not graduate from high

school. She went on, years later, and got her GED, and then she went on to get a 2-year degree. After that, she got 2 more years of training and became an accountant. There is not just one path in America.

Part of this is investing in STEM—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—and doing it early so that kids get a jump start on the jobs of tomorrow. By the way, this is not just your Ph.D.s and Silicon Valley jobs. This also includes blue-collar jobs. I call it blue STEM. There is a shortage, as I said, of welders and auto mechanics, and those can be good-paying jobs. We need to talk about them with dignity, and we have to realize that this is where the openings are.

The other piece of this, in addition to training kids in high school, is to make sure we have apprenticeship programs available. This year, a report came out in my State that 68 percent of Minnesota manufacturers found it was difficult for them to find workers with the right skills and experience. That is up from 40 percent in 2010.

I see that Senator HEITKAMP is here. As they are starting to add some more jobs in the oil patch in North Dakota, it is going to become even harder to find Minnesotans to fill some of our jobs because some of them like to go over to North Dakota.

Senator COLLINS and I have introduced a bill called the American Apprenticeship Act, which would expand tuition assistance for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. The President has talked about workforce development as being a priority. Yet we have seen a cut of 15 percent in Department of Education grants for career and technical education, as well as a 36-percent cut to Labor Department funding for training and employment services.

As I noted before, there is this disconnect between the rhetoric we hear and what we are reading in the black and white of this budget. I know there are people on both sides of the aisle here, including the Senator from North Dakota, who want to work on bridging that difference and getting a good budget done that really helps rural America.

I see Senator HEITKAMP is here, and I thank her for coming. Senator HEITKAMP serves on the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee. She was an integral part of the last farm bill and will be an integral part of this as well as in really understanding the economics within a rural State.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I thank my good friend the Senator from Minnesota. She just exists to the east of me. We share a common border, but we also share a common belief that Washington is not devoid of ideas. Somehow, it has just lost the capacity to bring those ideas to fruition. As my great friend the Senator from Minnesota can attest, there are hundreds—

and probably thousands—of great ideas for small business, for workers, for improving the economic conditions of people in this country that are here, ready for debate, and ready for passage.

What is not a formula for success for America is the budget. The President's budget would devastate rural communities. I am not given to hyperbole, and I am not given to exaggeration, but the absolute, bare fact is that this budget will decimate economic opportunity not only for American agriculture but for economic opportunity and security for rural communities.

When we think about North Dakota, it is hard to imagine a State that most of the people in this country would imagine more equated with rural America. I tease AMY many times when I tell her: Oh, it is coming up from the Cities, because our big opportunity to travel and to see the sites of the big city really is Minneapolis and St. Paul. But a lot of Minnesota—a lot of western Minnesota in particular, the area that I know about—is engaged in agriculture, and we share a common border, but we share a common purpose.

I wanted to start off by saying that in North Dakota, we understand the value of rural communities. We understand the value of investing in agriculture and infrastructure and how important those things are to boosting our local economy. We see the direct impacts of it on our families, businesses, and towns.

Most of us—me included—come from towns of fewer than 100 people. In fact, I am proud to say that growing up, there were nine people in my family, and my family was one-tenth of the population of the small town I lived in. We are proud of that. We are proud of our rural roots, and we are proud that from those life experiences growing up, we learned a lot about compromise, we learned a lot about work ethic, and we learned a lot about the importance of community and working together.

We also learned a lot about the importance of investment. Without critical investment, our rural communities are at risk, and I think that could have dramatic and drastic ramifications for our State, our counties, our families, and our neighbors. Instead of lifting up rural communities, the Presidential budget pushes us down.

Rural communities and the jobs there—including agriculture—are vital to many of the families I know but really families across the country. There are over 30,000 farmers and ranchers in North Dakota who lead the country in producing spring wheat, durum, sunflowers, canola, dry edible beans, flax, honey, and many more specialty crops and grain crops. These farmers feed North Dakota, our country, and the world.

In 2015, agriculture contributed more than \$9.1 billion to my State's economy. That may not seem like a lot when we are talking about California, but that is a huge amount when we are talking about North Dakota.

About one-third of North Dakota's jobs are directly tied to agriculture. There are implement dealers, veterinarians, agriculture retailers, and many more who are closely associated with agribusiness. There are countless other jobs that support these rural communities, such as teachers, firefighters, police officers, and more.

Since the election, there has been a great deal of talk in Washington about rural America. I think rural America reared up its head in this past election and said "We are not to be forgotten" and they believed they had secured an advocate in Washington in this current administration, only to be basically told otherwise by a Presidential budget.

So what does the budget mean, and why should we pay attention to it? I think the first thing we need to know about a budget is that it is about priorities. It is really a values document. Unfortunately, the President's budget shows that the administration doesn't value North Dakota or really, in fact, rural America. In fact, it targets both.

Today I want to talk a little bit more specifically about how devastating this budget would be for rural communities across my State and across the country.

This budget would slash USDA's budget by over 21 percent, cutting \$231 billion from funding from the farm bill over the next decade. It would specifically cut \$29 billion—\$29 billion—from crop insurance over the next decade. This is crop insurance our farmers rely on, especially at a time of challenging weather and low commodity prices. Crop insurance helps prevent family farms from going under when disaster strikes. Without an affordable crop insurance program, a drought or a flood could wipe out the wealth of an entire family and basically bankrupt a family farm.

When ranchers and farmers do well, North Dakota does well, and so will all the rest of the country. To challenge these farmers with a crop insurance program that will be nonexistent is to take away the opportunity for food security in this country—food security that is so closely linked and important to national security.

By drastically reducing field staff, the President's budget also prevents USDA from achieving its mission to support rural communities. The budget calls for reducing staffing levels at USDA by 5,200 employees. Nearly 2,500 of those employees are with the Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, and Natural Resources. What does that mean? The Farm Service Agency's caseloads have increased in North Dakota, and the current hiring ban has hampered efforts to administer the farm programs—those efforts which are critical to farmers as they make their business decisions.

I can't tell my colleagues the number of times farmers across my State have come up to me and said how grateful they are that the Farm Service Agency

is available in their county and available to them to provide advice and much needed documentation on their decisionmaking on how they are going to implement the farm program.

In fact, I tease those farmers a little bit, because they always say: You know, that Farm Service gal—usually a woman who has been with the Agency over decades and knows that farm as well as that farmer, and when that farmer walks through the door to get that advice and to get that number, they know that not only do they have a friend sitting across the table from them—probably a neighbor—they also have an advocate sitting across the table. We don't want to lose that connection to this vital service, the Farm Service Agency, by making this about picking up the phone and pressing buttons and talking to someone who would barely even understand or even know North Dakota or the county the farmer is in. So at a time when farmers and ranchers are already experiencing low commodity prices, these cuts to the Farm Service Agency would limit the ability of that Agency to provide timely, accurate, and useful services to our family farmers and our ranchers.

The budget would create huge challenges for rural healthcare. On top of the \$800-plus billion taken out of the Medicaid Program by the Republican healthcare bill, this budget would also cut \$610 billion from Medicaid by reducing it to a block grant program.

Medicaid is a lifesaving, cost-effective program that enables more than 90,000 seniors, individuals and children with disabilities, and low-income families to get affordable, quality care.

I want my colleagues to think about the enormous challenge of delivering healthcare in a sparsely populated area. One of the challenges my rural healthcare providers have not had in the last many years since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act is uncompensated care. But when we go back to uncompensated care, on top of operating on razor-thin margins, we are now going to say that not only are you operating on razor-thin margins, but you are not going to have your bills paid, making it impossible for you to meet payroll and impossible for you to continue to provide these resources.

So we have real challenges in rural healthcare as a result of this budget and the Republican proposal.

The President's budget also cuts nearly \$400 million in Federal funds for substance abuse prevention and behavioral health workforce training programs at the same time that every part of this country—particularly rural parts of our country—is facing opioid abuse. In North Dakota alone, fatalities from opioid abuse have grown 125 percent.

I met just yesterday with the North Dakota Medical Association, which told me that every day this week in Fargo, ND, there has been a death as a

result of overdoses. It is hard to imagine that is happening in our rural communities in places like North Dakota, but it is.

I talked to a healthcare provider in Dickinson, ND, who told me that while his average percentage of Medicaid recipients in his hospital is about 15 to 20 percent, as it relates to opioids and behavior and mental health, it is well over 60, bordering on 70 percent. So the population, without Medicaid dollars, would not be able to get important rehabilitation and treatment services.

Last week, I also visited one of our rural airports that are dependent on the Essential Air Service. That is absolutely critical to maintaining air service in Jamestown, in Devil's Lake, and now in Dickinson, which has gone back to Essential Air Service after years of not needing that support because of the growth in the Bakken oilfield.

Last week, while talking to the folks in Dickinson, they told me there are 475 jobs which are dependent on the airport, which helped generate \$76.6 million for the area in 2015. The Dickinson Airport would receive about \$4.2 million in assistance from the Essential Air Service each year, but when we look at how that investment pays off in terms of dividends, it seems like a small price to pay.

It would eliminate funding to protect water programs and infrastructure in rural areas which have improved water and wastewater systems for more than 40 North Dakota towns, Tribal reservations, and water districts since 2010.

This budget would also eliminate the Community Development Block Grant Program, which helped the State of North Dakota improve housing conditions for low- and moderate-income families with \$4.9 million in investments in 2016.

It would eliminate the Economic Development Administration, which has provided over \$34 million in investments since 2009 to local economic development organizations in North Dakota, particularly those in rural towns.

The list goes on and on and on. We haven't talked about the reduction in services for export markets. We haven't talked about research reductions at USDA and what that would mean. We haven't talked about eliminating trade assistance. All of these things have huge consequences for large pieces of the United States of America.

What I would say to the administration is that rural America expects better. Rural America thought they were going to get better than this. Rural America has enough challenges. We have volatile commodity prices, healthcare shortages, declining populations, and I will tell my colleagues that today in North Dakota, there is a potential disaster from drought. The President's budget would not only not help rural America thrive, it would only make matters worse.

Rather than taking an ax to proven, successful programs that strengthen

our rural communities, we need strong investments in rural communities, jobs, and families, that help support North Dakota's future.

With this budget, the administration's priorities are clear for everyone to see. It is now Congress's job to set spending priorities and fund programs in rural America to a level so that we know rural America can not only survive but can thrive.

North Dakota needs and deserves a strong voice at the table. I will make sure that we tell the story of all of these programs, that we tell the story of how critically important these programs are to maintaining our opportunity to produce food in our country but also to raise our children in rural settings. It is beyond belief to me that we are in this situation given the level of support that rural America provided to this administration and to this President during the last election.

We know we can do better, and we will do better. We know we can't waste money. We know we have to deploy these valuable resources in ways that actually produce results. I can show my colleagues result after result after result and the importance of providing these services so that rural communities can thrive.

I will close with this: A little-known fact is that so many of our rural communities today are the most impoverished places in America. When people think of poverty, they think of inner city poverty, they think of other pieces of America they have seen, but we know that the rates of poverty, the rates of challenges in terms of healthcare, education—those challenges are much greater in rural America. The last thing we need to do is saddle rural America with a 500-pound rock, put it on their backs, and still expect them to thrive. This budget is a 500-pound rock on the backs of our farmers who work every day to put food on their table, but more importantly, work every day to feed America.

With that, I yield the floor and turn it back to my friend from the State of Minnesota.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I again thank Senator HEITKAMP for her understanding not just of farm policy but also the importance of keeping towns strong, manufacturing strong, and transportation strong.

I will note that the infrastructure portions of this budget are very concerning. The point has been made by others that right now, under the proposed budget, at a time when our deteriorating infrastructure is costing our economy a lot of money—not just congestion, not just potholes, but in delaying getting goods to market—unfortunately, this budget proposal would cut funding for vital transportation programs.

It will eliminate funding for the TIGER Grant Program. Currently, the

program provides \$500 million per year to help fund local transportation priorities. It eliminates funding for Essential Air Service, which helps support commercial air service to rural airports. It eliminates the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grant Program, which funds light rail, heavy rail, commuter rail, street car, and bus rapid transit projects. We can't wait any longer to make critical investments in our infrastructure.

Probably right up there with any of these infrastructure needs in rural America is broadband. Internet access is a great equalizing force for creating jobs and leveling the playing field. There is a big digital gap when it comes to rural America. I know the percentages; close to 40 percent of Americans in rural areas do not have access to high-speed broadband. It used to be that slow speed would be OK if someone were trying to email their kid in school maybe 10, 15 years ago, but this is not true anymore. Now, if you want to do your work, if you want to go to the hospital—whatever you want to do in rural America, you are going to have to have high-speed internet.

I think about the doctor in Brainerd, MN, who for so long could look at x rays in the hospital but couldn't look at them in his home. If he had some emergency and wanted to talk to someone when he got home that evening, he had to go to the McDonald's parking lot to be able to do that.

There was a student at one of our reservations who got Wi-Fi in his house, looked out the window, and all of a sudden all these kids were doing their homework in his front yard. That is just not right. Rural Americans deserve equal footing so they can launch new businesses, export their goods, or just Skype with their loved ones.

This is about the farm bill, yes, but it is also about this budget and making sure this budget works for all Americans and leaves no one behind.

Sadly, these cuts are specifically targeted at rural America. That is why we are going to fight to make sure, hopefully on a bipartisan basis with colleagues on the Republican side, we produce a budget that is fair to everyone.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

(The remarks of Mr. FLAKE pertaining to the introduction of S. 1305 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. TOOMEY). The Senator from New York.

(The remarks of Mrs. GILLIBRAND and Mr. CASSIDY pertaining to the introduction of S. 1313 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to bring two baskets of hemp products onto the floor of this body.

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

NATIONAL HEMP HISTORY WEEK

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, this is National Hemp History Week, a chance to recognize a product that has deep roots going way back in America but faces some of the most anti-farmer, anti-job, unjustifiable policies that are on the American legal books today. Because of its relation to marijuana, hemp can't legally be grown in American fields.

Now, hemp is harmless. Hemp grown for industrial use simply does not have marijuana psychoactive properties. You are going to get as high off hemp as you will off a bag of vegetables. But, still, farmers in Oregon and across the country can't legally grow it. So if America is serious about banning harmless products like hemp, just because they are related to drugs, then I have bad news for fans of poppy seed muffins.

This is the third year I have come to the floor during this time—National Hemp History Week—to talk about the importance of industrial hemp, its huge economic potential for hard-working farmers, and the indefensible ban that keeps so many American farmers from growing it. As was the case before, I am joined by Malcolm McGeary from Southern Oregon, where a lot of farmers have an interest in this, to showcase a variety of hemp products in these baskets on the floor because, despite the ban on growing hemp, you can legally import it for use in products sold in stores across the country.

What really changed my mind on this was when my wife was pregnant—we are older parents—with our third child, and we went into a Costco store. We went into a Costco store on a weekend at home in Oregon, and there were these big bags of hemp hearts, and it said: healthy, good for the blood pressure, fiber—everything that one would expect in Pennsylvania or Oregon. I know the Presiding Officer is one of the most physically fit members of the body. I see him in the gym all the time so he obviously cares a lot about nutrition. So Nancy and I were walking through Costco, and it said this giant bag of hemp hearts could be purchased there. You say to yourself: Let me see if I get this straight. The hemp comes from Canada, so the farmers must just be laughing all the way to the bank because they are making money. I get what we do is we put it in bags, and it is sold in Costco. That led me to the really intellectual concept of saying that if you can sell it at a Costco in Oregon, why can't our farmers grow it? It is not much more complicated than that.

When you are shopping for hemp products, it is not just potato sacks and rough fabric by the yard. There is

clothing, lotions and food, hemp milk, nutritional supplements—all these products Mr. McGeary has—used to make soaps, cleaners, and even deck stain. I understand Mr. McGeary may even be wearing a hemp tie. None of these products can be called 100 percent American because every bit of the hemp in these baskets had to be grown someplace else, which is essentially what I described as the Wydens toured Costco at home.

When it was imported, it wasn't an American farmer earning money off that sale. Despite the consumer demand for hemp products and the ingenuity of so many producers who find uses for it, American farmers are cut out of the hemp equation.

The ban on hemp is not anti-drug policy. I think that is what has been confusing with respect to this issue. The ban on hemp is not going to advance the cause of being against drugs. It is not anti-drug policy. It is anti-farmer policy, and it is anti-American jobs policy.

As I indicated, if you can buy it in a local supermarket, the American farmer ought to be able to grow it. Yet year after year, despite a lot of work from Members on both sides of the aisle in this body and in the House, hemp remains on the controlled substance list.

Hemp is not a drug. It is a big opportunity for our farmers. So it is long past time to end these statutory relics of history that cut American farmers out of a valuable market.

Despite the fact that hemp continues to be stigmatized by Federal laws, there is some good news and progress. The 2014 farm bill began to chip away at the Federal ban. It OK'd hemp research projects led by universities and agriculture departments in States like Oregon and Kentucky that take a smarter approach to hemp. These projects are showing significant success. Farmers are ready to grow hemp, and States' agriculture departments are ready to regulate.

The first steps, in my view, don't go far enough, and even some of these early projects remain tied up in red-tape due to the Federal ban.

In my view, the only real solution is a legislative solution. So here we have a bipartisan coalition, the kind of coalition you see in the U.S. Senate when people really look into the facts and Members decide to make common cause. We have the good fortune of having the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL of Kentucky, as one of our principal sponsors; Senator PAUL, his colleague; Senator MERKLEY; and I re-introducing the Hemp Farming Act. We pursued this for a number of years. I introduced it every Congress since 2011.

Last year, our bipartisan bill had more than a dozen Senate cosponsors. This year, the goal is to again find common ground to remove hemp from the schedule I controlled substance list, give the go-ahead to farmers across the country who are ready to grow industrial hemp, and, once again, make it a true American crop.

I hope my colleagues will join in the effort to celebrate National Hemp History Week. I hope they will use it to learn more about a very versatile crop, a safe crop, and one with really extraordinary potential to boost jobs in the economy, in our agricultural sector, and our domestic employment base.

This is commonsense legislation. Again, we have the good fortune to be led by the majority leader, the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, Mr. MCCONNELL. We will be introducing this commonsense legislation very shortly.

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

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise in support of Countering Iran's Destabilizing Activities Act of 2017. For too long, a myopic focus on the Iran deal blinded the United States to Iran's persistent campaign to destabilize the Middle East and undermine America's national security interests. Iran has been given a free pass to detain U.S. sailors in clear violation of international law, conduct ballistic missile tests in violation of the United Nations resolutions, support terrorist groups across the region, and prop up the murderous Assad regime in Syria.

It is long past time for the United States and the international community to hold Iran accountable, not just for its commitments under the nuclear deal but for its destabilizing behavior across the Middle East. This legislation begins to do just that by imposing new sanctions on Iran's ballistic missile program, applying terrorism sanctions to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, imposing sanctions on Iranians engaged in human rights abuses, and tightening enforcement on arms embargoes on the Iranian regime.

I thank the chairman and ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senators CORKER and CARDIN, for ringing this bill to the floor. They recognize that the United States must not stand idly by when hostile regimes undermine and attack our interests and that of our allies. They recognize that regimes that aid and abet crimes against humanity must be held accountable. They recognize that weakness in the face of aggression is provocative.

These are the reasons we must pass this legislation, but these are also the very same reasons this legislation must be amended to strengthen and expand sanctions against Vladimir Putin's Russia.

In just the last 3 years under Vladimir Putin, Russia has invaded Ukraine, annexed Crimea, threatened NATO allies, and intervened militarily in Syria,

leaving a trail of death, destruction, and broken promises in its wake.

Last year, Russia attacked the foundations of American democracy with a cyber and information campaign to interfere in America's 2016 election. It has been 8 months now since the U.S. intelligence community publicly concluded that the Russian Government had attempted to interfere in our last Presidential election.

On October 7, 2016, the Department of Homeland Security and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence stated that the "U.S. intelligence community is confident that the Russian government directed the recent compromises of e-mails from U.S. persons and institutions, including from U.S. political organizations." The statement concluded that "only Russia's senior-most officials could have authorized these activities."

On January 6, 2017, the U.S. intelligence community went even further, concluding:

Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the United States presidential election. Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the United States democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency.

The intelligence community "did not make an assessment of the impact that Russian activities had on the outcome of the 2016 election," but they did warn that "Moscow will apply lessons learned from its Putin-ordered campaign aimed at the U.S. Presidential election to future influence efforts worldwide, including against U.S. allies and their election processes."

Since January, months of congressional hearings, testimony, and investigative work have reinforced these conclusions: that Russia deliberately interfered in our recent election with cyber attacks and a disinformation campaign designed to weaken America and undermine faith in our democracy and our values.

Vladimir Putin's brazen attack on our democracy is a flagrant demonstration of his disdain and disrespect for our Nation. This should not just outrage every American, it should compel us to action. But in the last 8 months, what price has Russia paid for attacking American democracy? Hardly any at all: modest sanctions against a few Russian individuals and entities, some Russian diplomats and spies sent home to Russia, two spy compounds have closed, at least for now—and all of this reversible and at the discretion of the President.

What has Russia's reaction been to America's tepid response and reaction to its aggressive behavior? More of the same. More aggression, more meddling. Russia attempted to overthrow the democratically elected Government of Montenegro and murder its Prime Minister. Russia attempted to interfere in France's election. We have already seen attempts to influence German public opinion ahead of the elections in

September, and there is every expectation that Russia will do the same thing in the Czech Republic, Italy, and elsewhere in future elections.

Sooner or later, my friends, there will be another American election that captures Russian attention and interest. The victim may be a Republican or a Democrat. To Putin, it won't matter because his targets are not Republicans or Democrats but Americans and all that we stand for as a people. He seeks to sow dissent amongst us and divide us from one another, to erode our resolve to resist his dark and dangerous view of the world, and to undermine our confidence in ourselves and our belief in our own values.

We must take our own side in this fight—not as Republicans, not as Democrats, but as Americans. It is time to respond to Russia's attack on American democracy with strength and resolve, with common purpose, and with action. Together with Senator GRAHAM and a number of other Senators, I am prepared to offer an amendment to this legislation that will begin to do just that. It incorporates some of the best ideas from different pieces of legislation already introduced in the Senate, ideas that have broad bipartisan support.

The amendment we are talking about would impose mandatory sanctions on transactions with the Russian defense or intelligence sectors, including the FSB and the GRU, the Russian military intelligence agency that was primarily responsible for Russia's attack on our election.

The amendment would impose mandatory visa bans and asset freezes on any individual who undermines the cyber security of public or private infrastructure and democratic institutions. It would impose mandatory sanctions on those who assist or support such activities.

The amendment would codify existing sanctions on Russia by placing into law five Executive orders signed by President Obama in response to both Russian interference in the 2016 election and its illegal actions in Ukraine, and it would take new steps to tighten those sanctions. For example, Russia's ability to issue new sovereign debt essentially allows Russia to borrow money from global capital markets to offset pressure from existing U.S. and European sanctions. So this amendment would impose mandatory sanctions on U.S. and third-party investment in sales of Russian sovereign debt as well as in the privatization of Russian state-owned assets.

The amendment would target the Russian energy sector, which is controlled by Vladimir Putin's cronies, with sanctions on investments in Russian petroleum and natural gas development as well as Russian energy pipelines.

We also need to put additional pressure on the ability of Putin and his cronies to move money they have looted from the Russian state. So this

amendment would mandate that the Secretary of the Treasury establish a high-level task force within the Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network that would focus on tracing, mapping, and prosecuting illicit financial flows linked to Russia if such flows interact with the U.S. financial system. The task force would also work with liaison officers in key U.S. Embassies, especially in Europe, to work with local authorities to uncover and prosecute the networks responsible for the illicit Russian financial flows.

Finally, recognizing that Russia seeks to undermine not just American democracy but Western democracy altogether, this amendment would provide support to the State Department, the Global Engagement Center, and USAID to help build the resilience of democratic institutions in Europe against Russian aggression exerted through corruption, propaganda, and other forms of political interference.

We need a strong Russia sanctions amendment. We need it now. We need it on this piece of legislation. We need this amendment because we have no time to waste. The United States of America needs to send a strong message to Vladimir Putin and any other aggressor that we will not tolerate attacks on our democracy. There is no greater threat to our freedoms than attacks on our ability to choose our own leaders free from foreign interference. So we must act accordingly, and we must act now.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, this body has a dual obligation—to ensure that there are sanctions against Iran for its destabilizing activity around the region and, indeed, the world but also sanctions against Russia for its interference with our election—one of the core democratic institutions of our Nation—as well as other acts that are hostile to the world order and to world peace.

I support S. 722, the Countering Iran's Destabilizing Activities Act, but I strongly believe it should have Russian sanctions included as well.

As the Senate proceeds to this urgently needed measure, Iran's own Parliament has suffered an ISIS-claimed terrorist attack in Tehran. I condemn that act of terror—one of many the world has suffered because of ISIS. We are at war with ISIS as we are with terrorists—extremism—around the world. It intentionally targets civilians. It uses violence to spread terror and destabilize the Middle East. ISIS has been a world terror organization.

The fact that Iran's leaders themselves direct and glorify terrorism against Israel and the United States does not diminish the horror of what has occurred. People of all faiths from an increasingly diverse number of nations have become victims of this terror spread by ISIS and Iran. What occurred today is, sadly, more evidence that Iran's unconditional support for Bashar al-Assad is directly counter to the interests of the Iranian people and our ongoing efforts to defeat ISIS.

We must hold Iran accountable. We must hold it accountable for its many malign activities through increasing and enforcing strong, targeted sanctions. I thank my colleagues, including Senator McCAIN, who just spoke so forcefully on the floor, Senator MENENDEZ, Senator CORKER, Senator CARDIN, as well as other colleagues who have worked on this cause. We must hold Iran accountable for the threat its acts of terrorism pose to our national security. We must hold it accountable to the threat its missile program holds to our allies, including Israel—our major strategic partner in that region. We must hold Iran accountable for the gross violations of human rights and war crimes that it and Russia together are perpetrating in Syria.

In the last few months, Iran has tested and fired ballistic missiles, tested a new Russian-made air defense system against missiles, and harassed U.S. ships. It continues to arm and enable the Hamas terrorist organization, the despotic Assad regime, and the supply of weapons to Hezbollah. It has enabled Hezbollah to amass 150,000 rockets and missiles—all aimed at civilians in Israel.

Last month, the State Department released a report on Iran's human rights violations. It continues to show a troubling trend of abuse and notes that Iran has more than 800 political prisoners and that it executed at least 469 people just last year.

We know that sanctions must be targeted and continually strengthened to deter Iran. This legislation will impose sanctions on Iran for its support of terrorism, human rights violations, and ballistic missile development. That includes sanctioning any person who knowingly violates arms embargoes or materially contributes to Iran's ballistic missile program. It also includes terrorism-related sanctions on members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its affiliates—going beyond members of the Quds Force, who are already sanctioned.

In no way does this sanctions program contradict or undermine the nuclear agreement with Iran. That agreement provided us and our allies the time and space to now push Iran to end its malign activities without the imminent threat of a nuclear weapon.

Congress must do everything it can to authorize new measures against Iran and ensure that this new administration effectively enforces them. We must also seize this opportunity to

hold Russia accountable as well for its egregious, aggressive behavior and ongoing violations of international law.

Russia's cooperation with Iran, including providing Iran with an S-300 air missile defense system that it recently tested, strengthens Iran as it fuels and finances a network of terrorism. Under Putin's direction, Russia both enabled and tried to cover up crimes in Syria. It invaded Ukraine. It illegally annexed Crimea. It attacked and interfered with our democracy.

Enough is enough. That is why I urge this body to adopt Russian sanctions as part of S. 722. Sadly and dangerously, our President has proven time and again to be unwilling to hold Vladimir Putin accountable. Congress must ensure that he does so. It must ensure that Russia receives a clear, unequivocal signal through this measure, Senator CARDIN's Counteracting Russian Hostilities Act, and Senator GRAHAM's Russia Sanctions Review Act, as an amendment to be adopted by this body to the Iran legislation, which I helped author. These measures are critical to sending a message that we will hold Russia accountable for its lawbreaking, its support of terrorism, its interference in our elections, its annexation of Crimea, its invasion of Ukraine, and its violation of the INF Treaty. I can accept nothing short of including these Russia bills to move forward to a final vote. I will support S. 722, but I believe there is a track and a path for this body to do both, and we must do it.

The imposition of mandatory sanctions codifying former President Obama's Executive orders regarding Ukraine and malicious cyber activity, as well as targeting individuals and entities contributing to Russia's oil and gas industries, should be part of this final passage. We cannot afford to wait any longer to take action.

I am disappointed that the President has seemed disinterested or at least unwilling to join in these sanctions against Russia. Unfortunately, the testimony that former Director Jim Comey will deliver tomorrow provides evidence as to possible motive and intent in his discussions with Comey that reflect on his apparent willingness to tolerate this aggressive conduct by Russia without holding it accountable.

This testimony from Director Comey is an explosive corroboration of the facts that have been reported—that the President asked for loyalty, threatening Jim Comey's job, and tried to influence the FBI's ongoing criminal investigation on multiple occasions. This conduct shows unequivocally the disdain the President has for the rule of law and clearly demonstrates that he believes he and his friends and family are above the law. I am saddened and I am chilled that this harrowing account will be given to the Senate Intelligence Committee rather than, in fact, in a fictional spy novel.

Director Comey deserves credit for his willingness to come before the committee, for his apparent candor and

truthfulness, and for his resistance to those demands for a pledge of loyalty and an end to the Flynn investigation, even when it meant his firing.

His testimony should serve as evidence in the investigation led by Robert Mueller but also as evidence that Mr. Mueller must have unimpeded space, resources, and independence to conduct his investigation. I will take action as a member of the Judiciary Committee to seek oversight simply to ensure that those resources are independent and are safeguarded. With this documented proof, clearly the White House has sought to derail our law enforcement officials in their enforcing of the law. We must ensure an end to such conduct, and we must send Russia a signal that, in fact, it will be held accountable; that the investigation into its meddling in our election will be pursued vigorously and aggressively; that anyone in this country who colluded with or aided and abetted that meddling will be held accountable; and that there will be no obstruction of justice. This goal should unite us across the aisle on a bipartisan basis.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I voted no today on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 722, the Iran sanctions bill.

I did so not because I oppose the underlying bill and the need to further sanction Iran's belligerent missile and terrorist activity; in fact, I support that legislation. I voted no to give a moment's pause after the terrible ISIS attack in Tehran that just occurred.

Earlier today, a pair of deadly attacks occurred over several hours in Tehran, including in the nation's parliament building, indiscriminately killing at least 12 people and wounding dozens more. The heavily armed assailants targeted guards, cleaners, and administrative employees of the parliament. ISIS later claimed responsibility for this barbaric attack.

I certainly have my differences with the Iranian regime, its continued sponsorship of Hezbollah and Hamas, its threats to Israel, its proxy wars in Yemen and Syria, and its human rights abuses, but we must remember that the Iranian regime isn't the same as the Iranian people, many of whom expressed sympathy with the American people after we suffered the horrific attack on September 11.

In fact, the Iranian Government issued a surprisingly strong statement of condemnation of the terrorists responsible after the September 11 attack.

There was even some hope after those statements that our two nations might work together on other shared interests, although unfortunately, other than the historic nuclear agreement, that has not come to pass.

Nevertheless, I think it is important that we pause and reaffirm the statement made today by our State Department that condemns the attack in Iran

and expresses condolences for the families and victims.

I also think it is critical that we finally take some action here in the Congress to address Russia's attack on our election, which occurred more than 7 months ago.

We have overwhelming evidence of this historic attack—an attack that I liken to a cyber act of war.

The majority party here in Congress has done nothing to respond to Russia's aggression or to help protect America against any future such attack on our democracy.

President Trump still refuses to acknowledge the Russian attack—seemingly more interested in befriending the Russians and complaining about former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Comey than convincingly telling Russia to never interfere in our election again or face the consequences.

This lack of resolve is truly an abdication of our national security responsibilities in Congress.

As one Polish security expert recently warned me, if the United States does not respond to the Russia attack on its own democracy, then Putin will feel emboldened and free to conduct further such attacks against other Western democracies.

Sadly, that has already proven true—just look at Russia's meddling in the recent French, German, and Dutch elections.

As we act to address Iran's troubling missile and destabilizing activity in the Middle East, including its continued threat against Israel, we must also act against Russia, which conducted a cyber act of war against our Nation.

We must ensure that existing sanctions placed on Russia for its destabilizing actions in Ukraine and Europe and its attack on our election are not lifted until such Russian actions are reversed or addressed.

I voted no on cloture today—out of respect for the Iranian people who suffered the horrific attack today and because I think it is long overdue for the Congress to finally respond to Russia's attack on our Nation—and stand prepared to support the final Iran sanctions bill after addressing these matters.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, Donald Trump has decided to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement on climate change. This is a decision that may prove to be one of the worst foreign policy blunders in our Nation's history.

There is no denying the mounting threat of climate change. We observe rising seas, warming global temperatures, and melting glaciers and ice sheets. Yet the President cast aside a historic global agreement forged through American leadership.

Americans now ask what to do next. For individual citizens, my answer is simple: Take action. Join an environmental group. Support science and scientists. Organize in your community.

Many Americans have been publicly pledging to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement through movements like the "I am still in" pledge. Every action, big and small, counts.

American corporations must also act. Unfortunately, they have been AWOL in the politics of climate change. This has been so frustrating because so many of them have great climate principles. They just abandon them when they come to Washington. That is why, for my 169th "Time to Wake Up" speech, I have a message for corporate America:

First, know that you are hugely influential in Congress. You command extraordinary attention in our political system. This gives you a unique power against the Breitbart fake-news spigot, the shameless fossil fuel industry, and the Koch brothers' climate denial operation, which were all behind the President's fateful decision.

President Trump's brain-dead withdrawal from the Paris accord may prove to be for the best if it creates heightened political interest in climate action from American business leaders. At the moment, corporate political interests in climate action, setting the fossil fuel industry aside entirely, still averages out below zero.

As a Senator, I see corporate America's lobbying efforts in Congress firsthand. Here are some highlights:

Silicon Valley lobbies through an organization called TechNet. TechNet represents Goliaths, like Microsoft, Apple, Google, and Facebook, all of which have great climate policies. TechNet also represents clean energy companies, like Sunrun, Bloom Energy, and SolarCity.

TechNet came again this year to lobby Congress on its six priorities. Here is a page from the actual lobbying materials that TechNet brought to our meeting. The group's Federal policies are these: tax reform, high-skilled immigration reform, education and workforce development, entrepreneurship and job creation, smart infrastructure, and digital trade. Climate change did not make it onto TechNet's priorities list. Even clean energy failed to make it onto the list of the organization that includes Bloom Energy, SolarCity, and Sunrun.

This is not a matter of these giants being cowed by the Trump administration. TechNet came last year when Obama was President, and climate change was not on their agenda then, either. Indeed, the week TechNet came last year, I also had a visit from the

timber and lumber industry. Despite what climate change is doing to America's forests, climate change was not on the lumber and timber industry agenda.

That very same week, the property casualty insurance industry came to meet me. These insurance companies write the big checks when climate change sends Mother Nature haywire. Climate change was not mentioned by this industry, either. That was quite a week.

Big business lobbying on climate change is actually worse than zero because the big business trade associations and lobbying groups are often run by the fossil fuel industry. Green energy manufacturers, represented in Washington, DC, by the National Association of Manufacturers, will find their own association lined up against them on climate change. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is one of climate action's most implacable enemies, despite the good climate policies of so many companies on its board.

These lobby groups are the most persistent voices of America's business community here in Congress. They are the ones who are most active, and they are constant enemies on clean energy and climate action—despite the companies they represent—because, in truth, they answer to the fossil fuel industry, not the business community, when it comes to climate change.

Here is how this can play out. Coca-Cola and PepsiCo are the two biggest beverage companies in America. Both have excellent climate policies. Pepsi even supports Ceres, a fledgling business lobbying group for climate action, but their trade association, the American Beverage Association, takes no lobbying interest in climate change. It knows how to lobby. We can see the lobbying expenditures run up in 2009 and 2010, when they were concerned about Congress's taxing sweetened drinks or corn syrup. It just takes no interest in climate issues.

Worse, Coke and Pepsi run money through the American Beverage Association to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Add their lobbying all up, and Coke and Pepsi do virtually nothing themselves. A few ounces of credit go to Pepsi for supporting Ceres. Their American Beverage Association trade group doesn't lift a finger to help, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is a brute force adversary.

The result is that the net lobbying presence of Coke and Pepsi in Congress on climate change is exactly opposed to the two companies' stated policies on climate change. They say one thing; their lobbying effort does the opposite.

On the other side of the fossil fuel divide, the heavy political hand of the fossil fuel industry is felt constantly around here, and that heavy hand is mercilessly opposed to any climate action and enforces its will with a parade of political weaponry akin to those old Soviet May Day parades of tanks, rockets, and artillery. Cross them, and they

come after you hard. Ask former Congressman Bob Inglis. He urged his fellow Republicans to heed the climate science and was hammered for it.

Also, no one should buy the phony assertions by Big Oil CEOs that they recognize that climate change is real and support putting a price on carbon. They say that. ExxonMobil's CEO said that to his shareholders again just last week.

In the Senate, I am the Senate author of a carbon price bill. I know who is lobbying where on carbon prices, and I can tell you their statement is just not true. Every single element of that Soviet May Day parade of fossil fuel political weaponry is dead set against any such thing. What do we conclude from that? Either Big Oil's CEOs don't know what their own lobbying apparatus is doing, or they are just not telling the truth. You guess which.

The strategy of the fossil fuel industry has been to control the Republican Party. You can jam things up by jamming up one party, and you can make it look like it is a partisan issue when it is just old-fashioned, self-interested lobbying. In order to accomplish that purpose, the worst of the political threats and blandishments of the fossil fuel industry are directed against Republicans.

As long as legitimate corporate leaders in America sit idly by while fossil fuel terrorizes and corrupts the Republican Party, there will not be much progress. "But, oh," some will say, "there aren't Republicans who will respond. This is too partisan an issue. It will be a wasted effort." Not so. I came to the Senate in 2007, and for years there was bipartisan action on climate change—2007, 2008, 2009.

It only stopped when the fossil fuel industry secured from five Republican-appointed Justices on the Supreme Court the disgraceful Citizens United decision of 2010. In 2007, lots of bipartisan activity; 2008, lots of bipartisan activity; 2009, lots of bipartisan activity; 2010, Citizens United—dead stop. That Citizens United decision is what started the fossil fuel Soviet May Day parade of unprecedented political artillery. No special interest had that kind of political artillery before Citizens United opened it up, and much of the post-Citizens United effort has been using dark money to hide the fossil fuel industry's hand.

Since Citizens United, there has been no bipartisan climate action, but that doesn't mean there aren't still Republicans willing to work with us. I know this firsthand. There are Republicans willing to work with us. They just need to know somebody will give them safe passage through the political kill zone that Citizens United has let the fossil fuel industry create. Well, with the Trump administration now all the way over in the "fossil fuel, Breitbart, Koch brothers climate denial corner," it now rests on the shoulders of the legitimate business community to come off the sidelines. They can't count on this ad-

ministration. They now have to come off the sidelines themselves and do so in strength commensurate with the seriousness of the problem.

If, as a country, we pitch ourselves and the world into the present worst-case climate change scenarios, billions of people will suffer, and suffering people want answers and justice. It will become hard to defend to them our American system of democratic government against charges of corruption and our system of market capitalism against charges of indifference. Government has been corrupted by fossil fuel interests, and too many companies are indifferent. You can't make a case without the facts to back it up, and American companies, more than anyone else, benefit from a world order where liberal democracies prevail. So the stakes for the American business community are very real.

The political mischief of the fossil fuel industry and its front groups will leave a lasting stain on the democracy we all treasure. It is time, in the wake of the President's decision on Paris— isolating America with Syria as our companion in isolation—it is time that the decent and honorable business community played a meaningful role in setting this right. To them, I say: Trump has betrayed you so now is the time to align your industry's political engagement with your industry's position on climate. That is not asking much. We are only asking that American corporations align their political engagement on climate change with their actual position on climate change. If you take climate change seriously, great. Take it seriously when you come to Congress. The United States of America, where 1 day after D-day—a day when Americans stormed ashore to free the continent of Europe, fought their way through to knock down Nazi tyranny, and then rebuilt Europe under the Marshall Plan and came home—that country ought not to be a pariah nation with Syria.

We needn't be a banana republic for fossil fuel. We can lead the world into a brighter, cleaner, safer energy future, but it will take an effort. So, corporate America, let's make the effort.

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

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

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARSHALL PLAN

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, it is nice to see the Presiding Officer in the Chair. Because he is a student of history, I know it will come as no surprise to my colleague from Colorado that this week marks the 70th anniversary of the Marshall Plan.

In 1947, Europe was in ruins. After years of war, factories from Man-

chester to Munich had been bombed out. Railroads laid disfigured from artillery. Farms stood defaced by the tracks of a thousand tanks. Across the continent, Europe's once humming economies stood silent. Over 60 million people had died, including 6 million Jews who were killed in the Holocaust.

Here in the United States, we mourned the loss of over 400,000 of our soldiers. We had spent, in today's dollars, nearly \$4 trillion to secure that victory in World War II. But to secure the peace, our leaders understood that even more was required of us. Truman's Secretary of State, George Marshall, told the Nation that without a return to "normal economic health in the world," there could be "no assured peace." In other words, if famine and poverty remained unchecked across Europe, unanswered, fascism and communism would soon follow, threatening U.S. interests and global stability at the same time.

So after years of sacrifice—sacrifice that this generation of Americans, thank goodness, has never had to endure—the easy course would have been to withdraw behind the Atlantic and the Pacific, turn our back on the world, and embrace isolation.

Instead, we proposed the Marshall Plan, a bold investment to revive Europe's economies, modernize industry, and expand trade, not only for allies like France and Britain but also for our enemies, Germany and Italy. It was extraordinary that political leaders here once made those decisions. I struggle to think of a time in human history when the victor helped to revive the vanquished with no strings attached, no colonial objective.

As the Marshall Plan made its way through Congress, leaders in Washington made the case to the American people, even standing firm against some who wanted to require European countries to buy only American products with the aid that we gave them. Still in the years to come, American farmers and manufacturers would fill millions of crates of wheat and wood, of sugar and steel to rebuild Europe from the ravages of war.

President Truman understood that, in time, strong European economies would become strong trading partners, strong military allies, and a bulwark of freedom against Soviet expansion. History proved him right, to say the least.

After the Marshall Plan, Western Europe surged back to life as Eastern Europe stagnated behind the Iron Curtain. In the West, production rose and hunger fell. Foes became friends. Bonds across the Atlantic solidified. Investments through the Marshall Plan helped lay the foundation for NATO, the common market, and the European Union.

Few actions in our foreign policy have been as consequential for America's long-term interests, for our national interests, and all at a cost of \$150 billion in today's dollars—25 times less than the total cost of World War II

and about 25 times less than what we paid in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As President Truman invested in Europe's recovery, he also helped fashion a new world order from the rubble of war. American leadership forged global institutions to enshrine our interests and values around the world for generations, giving rise to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, and the entire international system that we have today.

Seventy years ago, President Truman had the vision to think longer term. He had the wisdom to see that what was good for others was often good for us as well. And he had the courage to ask our citizens to lead, to sacrifice, and to believe that even after the second war in a generation, it was still within their power to shape a lasting peace.

Those actions, those qualities are why Truman's Presidency marks one of the finest periods in American foreign policy in the history of our foreign policy. The comparison with what we are seeing today just couldn't be starker.

Under the banner of putting America first, President Trump has undermined our interests at nearly every turn. At a time when China proposes to spend over a trillion dollars to expand its global influence with new railroads from Hungary to Kenya, new bridges and tunnels linking Southeast Asia together, and new electrical plants to power Pakistan, President Trump proposes to slash our foreign assistance advancing U.S. interests around the world. At a time when NATO faces challenges to its east and south, President Trump publicly rebukes the alliance and refuses to reinforce its bedrock principle of collective security.

As the recent terrorist attack unfolded in London, President Trump took to Twitter to promote his political agenda and sow fear in the wake of that attack. In the face of challenges like extremism and instability that demand 40-year strategies like the ones President Truman had in mind, President Trump is conducting his foreign policy 140 characters at a time.

Now, as the world unites to confront the perils of climate change, our President has withdrawn from the landmark Paris Agreement, which we helped forge, in a shameful abdication of America's global leadership. In doing so, the President ignored the voices of millions of Americans and thousands of businesses, urging him—against the arguments that he made—to stay in the agreement for climate reasons, for economic reasons, and for national security reasons as well. By withdrawing from it, the President has turned his back on millions of people across the globe, as well, mostly the poor, who are already on the edge of crisis, who may face drought, displacement, and famine from a warming planet.

America has a strong interest in avoiding that future. Anybody who has seen what has happened since the Arab

Spring understands what resulted from a doubling of the price of wheat in Egypt. A wise leader could see that. A President Truman would see that.

Like the Marshall Plan, the Paris Agreement recognized that in the modern world there is no "over there" anymore. Today, over there is here, and here is over there, and our President fundamentally doesn't understand it.

He claimed that withdrawing from the Paris Agreement would "put America first." In fact, this move threatens to put America last—last in innovation, last in clean energy, last in science, last in our moral responsibility to hand the next generation a safe and stable planet. That is why States and cities all across the country are making their own commitments to honor the Paris Agreement.

Now it is just us, Nicaragua, and Syria on the other side. That is why towns, cities, and States all across the country are scrambling to fill the void of leadership left by the administration to show the rest of the world that we are serious too.

In my home State of Colorado, we know that we can protect our economy and our climate, that we can grow our economy and protect our climate. We see those as linked together. You can't do one without the other. We developed the first State limits on methane pollution. We passed the first voter-led renewable standard in the entire Nation. We established our own limits on carbon pollution. And in the process, we have created 13,000 renewable energy jobs, with wind jobs alone expected to triple by 2020. On average, those jobs pay a salary of \$50,000. We are manufacturing again in our State with the supply chains that come along with it.

What comes with those commonsense regulations? One of the strongest economies in America, the lowest unemployment rate in America, and we see this all across the country. New energy jobs are growing 12 times faster than the overall economy. The President doesn't see any of that.

In a matter of months, from foreign assistance, to global alliances, to terrorism and climate change, the administration has imperiled America's stature with a shortsighted and willfully ignorant agenda that is profoundly out of step with the realities of the world and the interests of the people of the United States.

In a recent op-ed, senior officials from the administration painted the world as no more than an "arena" where nations "compete for advantage." They were trying to explain the President's behavior while he was in Europe. That attitude marks a huge departure from generations of American foreign policy. This is not about the Obama administration; this is about a set of traditional American values and approaches to the world that we have had almost since the Nation's founding, and the space the President is creating out there in the world by abandoning those treasured

American values gives space to those who seek every single day to undermine the liberal world order that has allowed our country and allies across the globe to succeed.

The President should understand that generations of leaders in the United States have put America first. They have always put America first—not in slogans or stump speeches but in the alliances and institutions we built, the values we champion, the alliances we forged that have given our world 70 years of peace and prosperity. That is a legacy upon which we must build—one that has put America first and has kept America first today and, if we act wisely, I think for decades to come.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from Kansas.

(The remarks of Mr. MORAN are printed in today's RECORD during consideration of S. Res. 174.)

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

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

HEALTHCARE REFORM

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the destructive path that the majority is headed down with their attempts to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

The Republican bill, and, frankly, the House Republican bill that the Senate is now considering in addition to other ideas is, in my judgment, not really a healthcare bill but a tax cut bill. It is a tax cut bill for the super-rich—not only the rich but, literally, the wealthiest few Americans—while increasing costs for middle-class families. It gives States the option to allow insurance companies to discriminate again like they did before the ACA was passed. It would also allow those same policies to devastate our hospitals, particularly those in rural communities. I live in a State where 48 out of 67 counties are, in fact, rural counties.

The Republican bill would rip away healthcare, according to the Congressional Budget Office, from 23 million Americans. Here is what that means in Pennsylvania, based upon the Congressional Budget Office numbers: Up to 770,000 Pennsylvanians could lose health insurance by 2026 if the bill were to pass, 48,000 Pennsylvania seniors on Medicare could lose access to services covered by Medicaid, and 52,600 Pennsylvanians with disabilities could lose Medicaid coverage. I live in a State

where, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, over 722,000 Pennsylvanians with disabilities rely on Medical Assistance for their medical care. Medical Assistance is the State version of Medicaid. We know that if you are a child, if you are a senior, or if you have a disability, many Americans in those categories, of course, rely upon Medicaid.

We also know, based upon the CBO numbers, that 180,000 Pennsylvanians could lose access to mental health and substance abuse care now provided by Medicaid. We have heard a lot of talk, and there has been a lot of work, actually, in this body, as well as in the other body, in the last year on the opioid problem. We have Democrats and Republicans focusing on a major national problem, an urgent public health problem. We have made some progress—not enough but some good progress—on opioid legislation. All of that would be badly undermined if we made the changes to Medicaid that some want to make here because of the significant impact that cuts to Medicaid would have on the challenge of reducing the opioid crisis.

So even the possibility that this bill might become law is, in a sense, destabilizing to the healthcare marketplace, which has been better each year we move forward from the passage of the ACA in 2010.

Just last week, the Pennsylvania Insurance Department announced average proposed rate increases for health insurance premiums for 2018. Here is what the Pennsylvania Insurance Department told us. If we maintain current law, premiums will go up 8.8 percent in Pennsylvania. If the Republicans get rid of the cost-sharing subsidies, which many seem either to want to get rid of or to want to ignore, thereby creating uncertainty—if those cost-sharing subsidies are thrown out the window—premiums will go up 2.5 times as much, by over 20 percent. So far, it is 8.8 percent under current law or 20 percent just based upon the cost-sharing subsidies being taken away.

Also, if the individual mandate is repealed, premiums will go up almost three times as much, by 23 percent. If we get rid of both the cost-sharing subsidies and the individual mandate, premiums in our State will go up by over 36 percent.

So we have a basic choice to make, at least as it relates to Pennsylvania. Under current law, it is 8.8 percent, and we should try to bring that down. I think there are ways we could work together in a bipartisan fashion to bring that down. But if we go in the direction that many want to go—especially on the Republican side—to undermine or to do nothing about cost-sharing and get to rid of the individual mandate, premiums go up 36 percent. So folks can make their choice to go up about 9 percent or to go up 36 percent. It is a real simple choice with basically two options.

The bill that was passed in the House would destroy the lives of many vul-

nerable Pennsylvanians. What should we do about it? Well, the first thing we should do with the bill is to throw it in the trash heap. That is where it belongs, and I hope that is where Senate Republicans are headed and that they are going to start over on a new bill, because the bill that was passed in the House is very bad for the country.

Among the 3 million Pennsylvanians with preexisting conditions are two remarkable young women whose mother first contacted me in 2009. Stacie Ritter, from Manheim, PA, is the mom of four children, including her twin daughters, Hannah and Madeline, who are depicted here in this picture when they were much younger. Hannah and Madeline were diagnosed with a rare and dangerous type of leukemia when they were just 4 years old. You can see their picture there at that time.

Stacy and her husband Benjamin went bankrupt trying to pay their daughters' medical bills. She wrote to me at the time, saying that without healthcare reform, "my girls will be unable to afford care, that is if they are eligible, for care that is critically necessary to maintain this chronic condition."

Fortunately, things have changed in the last 8 or so years. Fortunately, Hannah and Madeline are healthy young women now. They are freshman at Arcadia University and are doing well. They rely on the Affordable Care Act's protections to ensure that they have access to affordable coverage, whether they are on their parents' plan or purchasing a plan in the individual market. As you can see on my left, this is a picture of Hannah and Madeline today as college freshmen.

Without the Affordable Care Act, Hannah and Madeline could be denied health insurance. As their mom said, they could be "punished and rejected because they had the misfortune of developing cancer as a child."

The Republican bill passed in the House would put them at risk of being denied health insurance or being charged more because they are cancer survivors.

I don't know why anyone would support a bill that would do that.

Just a number of months ago I received a letter from Pam Simpson from Chester County, PA. Pam and her son Rowan have their story to tell. Rowan is 5 years old, and a number of years ago he was diagnosed with autism. I have talked about Rowan before on this floor and in other places and what Medicaid means for Rowan and his family. Medicaid provides important services for Rowan and others with disabilities, enabling Rowan to go to pre-school and allowing his mother to work. Here is what his mom said to me. I won't read the whole letter, but I will just highlight the first page.

The first page is Rowan's life before he was diagnosed with autism—all of the challenges that he and his family had—and Rowan's life after the diagnosis of autism, but, then, ultimately,

when he received Medicaid, or Medical Assistance, as we call it in Pennsylvania. Here is what his mom told me in the letter after he received word that he was going to be enrolled in Medical Assistance:

Late January 2016, I applied for Medicaid. That is Medical Assistance.

After Rowan was awarded Medical Assistance, we were able to obtain wrap-around services. These services included a Behavioral Specialist Consultant and a Therapeutic Staff Support worker.

She goes on later in that paragraph to say that these wrap-around services "have been a Godsend."

Then she goes on later and says:

I am thrilled by Rowan's daily progress. I cannot say enough good things about this program.

Then she says:

Without Medical Assistance, I am confident that I could not work full time to support our family. Our family would be bankrupt or my son would go without the therapies he sincerely needs.

Here is the last line of her letter:

We are desperately in need of Rowan's Medical Assistance and would be devastated if we lost these benefits.

She is referencing "Medical Assistance" for Medicaid, the same program at the State level.

So we have two families now that are totally reliant on these programs, either the ACA more broadly or, in particular, the Medicaid Program. Both families have referenced bankruptcy because of healthcare challenges in the life of that family—one who would be on the brink of bankruptcy, Rowan's family, and the other, who actually went through bankruptcy because of those healthcare challenges. No family in the United States of America should have to worry about going bankrupt because of a healthcare problem. We are well on our way to solving these problems, and no one should pull the rug out from under those families. But, unfortunately, when it comes to this legislation, that is exactly what could happen to many of them.

I will give a third example: Alex. Recently I met Alex, who is from South-eastern Pennsylvania. He is 9 years old, and he has Down syndrome. Here is what Alex, a 9-year-old, wrote:

Although I have a medical diagnosis of Down Syndrome, I am an excellent student. I get 100 percent on my spelling tests and I get picked as the Math King quite often. . . . My parents, my teachers, and everyone around me thought from the beginning there was nothing that I could not do. . . . I am able to get a good education because of the supports that I get from Special Education. That's why I am very concerned about the possible cuts in Medicaid funding in schools. . . . Medicaid funding in schools is a very, very important part of what makes it possible for us to receive successful education in school and become contributing members of our society.

That is a 9-year-old in Pennsylvania reminding us about this important program. Alex has tremendous potential that would be in jeopardy by the proposed cuts to Medicaid.

Here is another example: Peg Fagan of Pennsylvania. The Republican bill includes an age tax that will allow insurers to charge older Americans up to five times more than younger Americans. Peg is from Bucks County, in Southeastern Pennsylvania. She is a three-time cancer survivor who could not afford health insurance prior to the Affordable Care Act. She is approaching Medicare eligibility but still has a few years to go before she is old enough to enroll.

Peg was able to find affordable health insurance thanks to the ACA, but under the Republican bill, she could once again be discriminated against for being an older adult, and another possible object of discrimination would be that she is a cancer survivor.

That was the old law. That is where we were before, where insurance companies were allowed under the law to discriminate in that fashion. They could discriminate against you because you were a woman. They could discriminate against you because you had a preexisting condition. They could discriminate against you because you were a cancer survivor or because of your age, or so many other circumstances. I thought we were beyond that. I thought we had finally cured that problem, but some want to go back in time.

So the CBO tells us that the Republican bill would rip away healthcare from 23 million Americans. I just went through some Pennsylvania stories. We have a lot more, and my colleagues will be hearing them. But for Hannah and Madeline and Rowan and Alex and Peg, we should ask ourselves a couple of basic questions. Healthcare for those Pennsylvanians should not be made worse, and they should not be made worse off, in order to give the top one-tenth of 1 percent a \$200,000 giveaway. That is what the first version of the House healthcare bill would do. It would give the top one-tenth of 1 percent an average tax cut of \$197,000. I exaggerated; I said \$200,000. Let's be exact. It is \$197,000 each. Why would we take away healthcare or even risk or create uncertainty about healthcare for Hannah, Madeline, Rowan, Alex, and Peg because some people around here want to give tax cuts to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars to very wealthy people? That is not what I call a healthcare bill.

The Senate has an obligation, in my judgment—both parties—to stop this bill from being enacted into law. We cannot allow this legislation to pass or anything like it to become law. So I ask each Member of the Senate to consider these Pennsylvanians and plenty in your home States and the countless more like them who are anxiously hoping and praying this Congress will not vote to take away their healthcare.

DRUG AND VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS

Mr. President, I rise to express my support for the drug and other treatment courts, including veterans treatment courts, in Pennsylvania and the more than 3,000 across the Nation.

Just last month during National Drug Court Month, drug courts across the country held graduation ceremonies to recognize individuals who completed this rigorous treatment program. These courts, which serve about 150,000 people a year, hold offenders with substance use and mental health disorders accountable for their actions through strict supervision while also connecting them to the treatment they need. More than 1.25 million people have successfully graduated from drug and treatment court programs and are now on a path to recovery.

Research has demonstrated that drug and other treatment courts not only reduce crime but also reduce spending by slowing the cycle of recidivism. Drug and other treatment courts are also an important resource to law enforcement and community stakeholders working to combat the opioid epidemic. Opioid addiction is a growing public health crisis in Pennsylvania and throughout the Nation, and it demands real action. As public officials, we have an obligation to ensure that the resources and policies are in place to fight this scourge so that more families won't have to endure the heartache of losing a loved one to addiction.

Veterans treatment courts are innovative and collaborative programs to address some of the unique challenges that face our veteran communities. There are approximately 22 million veterans in the United States, and Pennsylvania is home to nearly 1 million. The majority of veterans return to our communities as leaders and lead exemplary lives; however, not every veteran's path is straightforward. That is why we need to make sure the right programs and support services are in place.

According to the Department of Justice, in 2011 and 2012, approximately 8 percent of the total incarcerated population in the United States were, in fact, veterans. These veterans found themselves serving time in correctional facilities because they had not received the treatment they needed. While this represents a very small percentage of veterans, it is important that we support programs like veterans treatment courts for veterans who face significant obstacles returning to civilian life, including mental health concerns, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance abuse issues. These treatment courts can have a lifelong impact on a veteran by helping them get out of the criminal justice system and get the necessary treatment they have earned. It is our obligation to work every day to ensure veterans are receiving the care and support they deserve.

There are many stories from across Pennsylvania and our country that exemplify why these veterans treatment courts are critical. Just to give one, shortly after Michael Colletti from Montgomery County received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Coast Guard, he found himself in the grips of

a serious addiction to opioids. To support his growing habit, Michael began stealing from his employer, resulting in his arrest and jail time. His crimes were caused by his opioid use disorder, and Michael found himself in the Montgomery County Veterans Treatment Court.

Finally, getting the accountability he needed and connecting with the benefits he earned as a veteran, Michael began the process of leaving behind his life of addiction and crime to start a new path. Today, Michael Colletti is a partner in a successful small business and a mentor to others in his community struggling with their own substance use.

He says of the veterans treatment court:

I wouldn't be here without the support network from the court. I wouldn't have my girlfriend, I wouldn't have my beautiful place, I wouldn't have my career, and most importantly, I wouldn't have the sound clarity of mind to be myself again. Now I am committed to paying it forward.

I and I know many others are proud to support a recent letter led by our colleagues, Senator KLOBUCHAR and Senator WICKER, highlighting the importance of funding the Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program and veterans treatment courts. As we go through the appropriations process, I urge my colleagues to consider the proven track record of these courts in improving outcome for graduates, and I hope Congress will offer strong support for these important programs that have been helping the justice system better serve individuals, veterans, their families, friends, and communities.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. TILLIS. 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.

BUDGET SCOREKEEPING REPORT

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I wish to submit to the Senate the budget scorekeeping report for June 2017. The report compares current-law levels of spending and revenues with the amounts the Senate agreed to in the budget resolution for fiscal year 2017, S. Con. Res. 3. This information is necessary for the Senate Budget Committee to determine whether budget points of order lie against pending legislation. The Republican staff of the Senate Budget Committee and the Congressional Budget Office, CBO, prepared this report pursuant to section 308(b) of the Congressional Budget Act, CBA.

My last filing can be found in the RECORD on April 27, 2017. The information contained in this report captures

legislative activity since that filing through June 5, 2017.

Republican Budget Committee staff prepared Tables 1-3 of this report.

Table 1 gives the amount by which each Senate authorizing committee exceeds or is below its allocation for budget authority and outlays under the most recently adopted budget resolution. This information is used for enforcing committee allocations pursuant to section 302 of the CBA. For this reporting period, 13 of the 16 authorizing committees are in compliance with their allocations. Legislative activity involving the appropriations process, continuing resolution and omnibus, during the last reporting period includes provisions, such as changes to health benefits for miners and Medicaid funding, charged to the Committee on Finance that caused it to breach its allocation. The other two committees in breach, as previously reported, are the Committee on Veterans Affairs and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. In total, authorizing committees are estimated to increase outlays by \$292 million more than they were allocated over the fiscal year 2017-2026 period. Of that \$292 million in violations, \$91 million stems from the Finance Committee's violations during this reporting period.

Table 2 gives the amount by which the Senate Committee on Appropriations exceeds or is below the statutory spending limits for fiscal year 2017. This information is used to determine points of order related to the spending caps found in sections 312 and 314 of the CBA. H.R. 244, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, P.L. 115-31, provided full-year appropriations for the current fiscal year. These appropriations, \$551.1 billion for defense and \$518.5 billion for nondefense, were consistent with the statutory limits imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011.

Table 3 tracks compliance with the fiscal year 2017 limit for overall changes in mandatory programs, CHIMPS, in appropriations bills, established in the fiscal year 2016 budget resolution. CHIMPS in the Consolidated Appropriations Act were consistent with this year's limit of \$19.1 billion. This information is used for determining points of order under section 3103 of that resolution.

In addition to the tables provided by Budget Committee Republican staff, I am submitting CBO tables, which I will use to enforce budget totals approved by the Congress.

CBO provided a spending and revenue report for fiscal year 2017, which helps enforce aggregate spending levels in budget resolutions under CBA section 311. CBO's estimates show that current-law levels of spending for fiscal year 2017 are below the amounts assumed in the budget resolution by \$303 million in budget authority and \$6.4 billion in outlays. CBO also estimates that revenues are \$1 million above assumed lev-

els for fiscal year 2017, but \$21 million below assumed levels for the fiscal year 2017-2026 period. Social Security levels are consistent with the budget resolution's fiscal year 2017 figures.

CBO's report also provides information needed to enforce the Senate pay-as-you-go, PAYGO, rule. The Senate's PAYGO scorecard currently shows increased deficits of \$226 million over the fiscal year 2016-2021 and \$227 million over fiscal year 2016-2026 periods. For both periods, outlays have increased by \$201 million, while revenues decreased by \$25 million over the 6-year period and \$26 million over the 11-year period. Missing from these levels are the budgetary effects of divisions M-O of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 and the miners' health provisions of H.J. Res. 99, the short-term continuing resolution, P.L. 115-30, which are required to be excluded based on language in the acts. The consolidated appropriations bill, however, is recorded as reducing revenues by \$24 million and \$25 million over the fiscal year 2016-2021 and fiscal year 2016-2026 periods, respectively. That revenue loss is found in the appropriations section of the bill, not covered by the exclusion, which includes provisions related to visa-program extensions and insurance coverage of mammography. The Senate's PAYGO rule is enforced by section 201 of S. Con. Res. 21, the fiscal year 2008 budget resolution.

Finally, included in this submission is a table tracking the Senate's budget enforcement activity on the floor. No budget points of order have been raised since my last filing.

All years in the accompanying tables are fiscal years.

I ask unanimous consent that the accompanying tables be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

TABLE 1.—SENATE AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES—ENACTED DIRECT SPENDING ABOVE (+) OR BELOW (–) BUDGET RESOLUTIONS

	[In millions of dollars]		
	2017	2017–2021	2017–2026
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0	0	0
Armed Services			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0	0	0
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0	0	0
Commerce, Science, and Transportation			
Budget Authority	1	1	1
Outlays	1	1	1
Energy and Natural Resources			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0	0	0
Environment and Public Works			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0	0	0
Finance			
Budget Authority	–239	468	–204
Outlays	38	763	91
Foreign Relations			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0	0	0
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0	0	0
Judiciary			
Budget Authority	0	0	0

TABLE 1.—SENATE AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES—ENACTED DIRECT SPENDING ABOVE (+) OR BELOW (–) BUDGET RESOLUTIONS—Continued

	[In millions of dollars]		
	2017	2017–2021	2017–2026
Outlays	0	0	0
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0	0	0
Rules and Administration			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0	0	0
Intelligence			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0	0	0
Veterans' Affairs			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0	200	200
Indian Affairs			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0	0	0
Small Business			
Budget Authority	0	0	0
Outlays	0	0	0
Total			
Budget Authority	–238	469	–203
Outlays	39	964	292

TABLE 2.—SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE—ENACTED REGULAR DISCRETIONARY APPROPRIATIONS¹

	2017	
	Security ²	Nonsecurity ²
Statutory Discretionary Limits	551,068	518,531
Amount Provided by Senate Appropriations Subcommittee		
Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies	0	20,877
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies	5,200	51,355
Defense	515,977	138
Energy and Water Development	19,956	17,815
Financial Services and General Government	33	21,482
Homeland Security	1,876	40,532
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies	0	32,280
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies	0	161,025
Legislative Branch	0	4,440
Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies	7,726	74,650
State Foreign Operations, and Related Programs	0	36,586
Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies	300	57,351
Current Level Total	551,068	518,531
Total Enacted Above (+) or Below (–) Statutory Limits	0	0

¹ This table excludes spending pursuant to adjustments to the discretionary spending limits. These adjustments are allowed for certain purposes in section 251(b)(2) of BBEDCA.

² Security spending is defined as spending in the National Defense budget function (050) and nonsecurity spending is defined as all other spending.

TABLE 3.—SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE—ENACTED CHANGES IN MANDATORY SPENDING PROGRAMS (CHIMPS)

	2017	
CHIMPS Limit for Fiscal Year 2017		19,100
Senate Appropriations Subcommittees		
Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies		741
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies		8,452
Defense		0
Energy and Water Development		0
Financial Services and General Government		826
Homeland Security		187
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies		28
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies		8,009
Legislative Branch		0
Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies		0
State Foreign Operations, and Related Programs		0
Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies		857
Current Level Total		19,100
Total CHIMPS Above (+) or Below (–) Budget Resolution		0

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, June 7, 2017.

Hon. MIKE ENZI,
Chairman, Committee on the Budget,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The enclosed report shows the effects of Congressional action on the fiscal year 2017 budget and is current through June 5, 2017. This report is sub-

mitted under section 308(b) and in aid of section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act, as amended.

The estimates of budget authority, outlays, and revenues are consistent with the technical and economic assumptions of S. Con. Res. 3, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2017.

Since our last letter dated April 27, 2017, the Congress has cleared and the President

has signed the following legislation that has significant effects on budget authority, outlays, and revenues in fiscal year 2017: A joint resolution making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2017, and for other purposes (Public Law 115-30); and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31).

Sincerely,

KEITH HALL.

Enclosure.

TABLE 1.—SENATE CURRENT LEVEL REPORT FOR SPENDING AND REVENUES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017, AS OF JUNE 5, 2017

[In billions of dollars]

	Budget Resolution	Current Level	Current Level Over/Under (-) Resolution
ON-BUDGET			
Budget Authority	3,329.3	3,329.0	-0.3
Outlays	3,268.2	3,261.8	-6.4
Revenues	2,682.1	2,682.1	0.0
OFF-BUDGET			
Social Security Outlays ^a	805.4	805.4	0.0
Social Security Revenues	826.0	826.0	0.0

Source: Congressional Budget Office.

^a Excludes administrative expenses paid from the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund of the Social Security Administration, which are off-budget, but are appropriated annually.

TABLE 2.—SUPPORTING DETAIL FOR THE SENATE CURRENT LEVEL REPORT FOR ON-BUDGET SPENDING AND REVENUES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017, AS OF JUNE 5, 2017

[In millions of dollars]

	Budget Authority	Outlays	Revenues
Previously Enacted^{a,b}			
Revenues	n.a.	n.a.	2,682,088
Permanents and other spending legislation ...	2,054,297	1,960,884	n.a.
Appropriation legislation	132,558	614,655	n.a.
Offsetting receipts	-834,250	-834,301	n.a.
Total, Previously Enacted	1,352,605	1,741,238	2,682,088
Enacted Legislation:			
National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-10)	1	1	0
A joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2017, and for other purposes (P.L. 115-30)	2	2	0
Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31)	1,967,450	1,518,744	1
Total, Enacted Legislation	1,967,453	1,518,747	1
Entitlements and Mandatories:			
Budget resolution estimates of appropriated entitlements and other mandatory programs ..	8,928	1,795	0
Total Current Level^c	3,328,986	3,261,780	2,682,089
Total Senate Resolution^d	3,329,289	3,268,171	2,682,088
Current Level Over Senate Resolution	n.a.	n.a.	1
Current Level Under Senate Resolution	303	6,391	n.a.
Memorandum:			
Revenues, 2017-2026:			
Senate Current Level	n.a.	n.a.	32,351,639
Senate Resolution	n.a.	n.a.	32,351,660
Current Level Over Senate Resolution	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Current Level Under Senate Resolution	n.a.	n.a.	21

Source: Congressional Budget Office.

Notes: n.a. = not applicable; P.L. = Public Law.

^a Includes the budgetary effects of enacted legislation cleared by the Congress during the 114th session, prior to the adoption of S. Con. Res. 3, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2017.

^b Sections 193-195 of Division A of P.L. 114-254 provided funding, available until expended, for innovation projects and state responses to opioid abuse. CEO estimates that, for fiscal year 2017:

The \$20 million in discretionary budget authority provided by section 193 would result in an additional \$5 million in outlays for FDA innovation projects;

The \$352 million in discretionary budget authority provided by section 194 would result in an additional \$91 million in outlays for NIH innovation projects;

The \$500 million in discretionary budget authority provided by section 195 would result in an additional \$160 million in outlays for state response to opioid abuse.

Consistent with sections 1001-1004 of P.L. 114-255, for the purposes of estimating the discretionary budget authority and outlays for these provisions under the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Act of 1974 and the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Act of 1985, those amounts are estimated to provide no budget authority or outlays.

^c For purposes of enforcing section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act in the Senate, the resolution, as approved by the Senate, does not include budget authority, outlays, or revenues for off-budget amounts. As a result, current level does not include these items.

^d Periodically, the Senate Committee on the Budget revises the budgetary levels in S. Con. Res. 3, pursuant to various provisions of the resolution. The total for the Initial Senate Resolution shown below excludes \$81,872 million in budget authority and \$40,032 million in outlays assumed in S. Con. Res. 3 for non regular discretionary spending, including spending that qualifies for adjustments to discretionary spending limits pursuant to section 251(b) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. The total for the Revised Senate Resolution shown below includes amounts for non regular discretionary spending:

	Budget Authority	Outlays	Revenues
Initial Senate Resolution	3,226,128	3,224,630	2,682,088
Revisions:			
Pursuant to sections 311 and 314(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974	103,161	43,541	0
Revised Senate Resolution	3,329,289	3,268,171	2,682,088

TABLE 3.—SUMMARY OF THE SENATE PAY-AS-YOU-GO SCORECARD FOR THE 115TH CONGRESS, AS OF JUNE 5, 2017

[In millions of dollars]

	2017-2021	2017-2026
Beginning Balance ^a	0	0
Enacted Legislation: ^{b,c,d}		
Tested Ability to Leverage Exceptional National Talent Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-1)	*	*
Disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of the Interior known as the Stream Protection Rule (P.L. 115-5)	*	*
National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-10)	1	1
Providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to teacher preparation issues (P.L. 115-14)	*	*
Disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to "Clarification of Employer's Continuing Obligation to Make and Maintain an Accurate Record of Each Recordable Injury and Illness" (P.L. 115-21)	1	1
Disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to savings arrangements established by qualified State political subdivisions for non-governmental employees (P.L. 115-24)	*	*
An act to amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to modify the termination date for the Veterans Choice Program, and for other purposes (P.L. 115-26)	200	200

TABLE 3.—SUMMARY OF THE SENATE PAY-AS-YOU-GO SCORECARD FOR THE 115TH CONGRESS, AS OF JUNE 5, 2017—Continued

[In millions of dollars]

	2017-2021	2017-2026
Making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2017, and for other purposes (P.L. 115-30) ^e	*	*
Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31) ^f	24	25
U.S. Wants to Compete for a World Expo Act (P.L. 115-32)	*	*
Modernizing Government Travel Act (P.L. 115-34)	*	*
Disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to savings arrangements established by States for non-governmental employees (P.L. 115-35)	*	*
Follow the Rules Act (H.R. 657)	*	*
Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvement Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-36)	*	*
A bill to amend section 1214 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for stays during a period that the Merit Systems Protection Board lacks a quorum (S. 1083)	*	*
Current Balance	226	227
Memorandum:		
Changes to Revenues	-25	-26
Changes to Outlays	201	201

Source: Congressional Budget Office.

Notes: P.L. = Public Law; * = between -\$500,000 and \$500,000.

^a Pursuant to the statement printed in the Congressional Record on January 17, 2017, the Senate Pay-As-You-Go Scorecard was reset to zero.

^b The amounts shown represent the estimated effect of the public laws on the deficit.

^c Excludes off-budget amounts.

^d Excludes amounts designated as emergency requirements.

^e CBO estimates that this joint resolution will increase the deficit by \$2 million over the 2017-2021 period. Pursuant to section 202(c) of P.L. 115-30, the budgetary effects of this joint resolution are excluded from the Senate's PAYGO scorecard.

^f Division M of P.L. 115-31 contains the Health Benefits for Miners Act of 2017 and the Puerto Rico Section 1108(g) Amendment of 2017. Division N contains the HIRE Vets Act. CBO estimates that the provisions in Divisions M and N will increase the deficit by \$757 million over the 2017-2021 period, and by \$84 million over the 2017-2026 period. Pursuant to section 301(b) of Division M, the budgetary effects of Division M and succeeding divisions are excluded from the Senate's PAYGO scorecard.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 16-84, concerning the Department of the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$662 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

J.W. RIXEY,
Vice Admiral, USN, Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 16-84

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

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment \$482 million.

Other \$180 million.

Total \$662 million.

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

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Twenty-six (26) each AN/TPQ-53(V) Radar Systems to include Solid State Phased Array Radar with KN-4083 Selective Availability Anti-Spoofing Module (SAASM) enhanced Land/Sea Inertial Navigation System (INS) and automatic leveling system.

Eight hundred and forty (840), M931 Full Range Training Round, 120mm Projectiles with M781 fuzes (for live fire exercise).

Two thousand, two hundred and forty (2,240), M107, 155MM Projectiles with M557 fuzes (for live fire exercise).

Non-MDE includes: Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio Systems (SINGARS) and accessories; Defense Advanced Global Positioning System (GPS) Receiver (DAGR) equipment and accessories; Miltope laptops and accessories; Medium Tactical Vehicles FMTV M1092 5-ton trucks/chassis with support and accessories; software support; support equipment; classroom simulators; government furnished equipment; technical manuals and publications; essential spares and repair parts; consumables; live fire exercise and ammunition; tools and test equipment; training; transportation; U.S. Government technical support and logistic support; contractor technical support; repair and return support; quality assurance teams; in-country Field Service Representative (FSR) and other associated equipment and services.

(iv) Military Department: Army (ZAI).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Annex Attached.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: June 5, 2017.

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

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia—AN/TPQ-53(V)
Radar Systems and Related Support

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has requested a possible sale of twenty-six (26) AN/TPQ-53(V) Radar Systems to include Solid State Phased Array Radar with KN-4083 Selective Availability Anti-Spoofing Module (SAASM) enhanced Land/Sea Inertial Navigation System (INS) and automatic leveling system; Eight hundred and forty (840), M931, 120mm Projectiles with M781 fuzes (for live fire exercise); Two thousand, two hundred and forty (2,240), M107, 155MM Projectiles with M557 fuzes (for live fire exercise); Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio Systems (SINGARS) and accessories; Defense Advanced Global Positioning System (GPS) Receiver (DAGR) equipment and accessories; Miltope laptops and accessories; Medium Tactical Vehicles FMTV M1092 5-ton trucks/chassis with support and accessories; software support; support equipment; classroom simulators; government furnished equipment; technical manuals and publications; essential spares and repair parts; consumables; live fire exercise and ammunition; tools and test equipment; training; transportation; U.S. Government technical support and logistic support; contractor technical support; repair and return support; quality assurance teams; in-country Field Service Representative (FSR) and other associated equipment and services. The total estimated program cost is \$662 million.

This proposed sale will contribute to the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to improve the security of an important partner which has been and continues to be a leading contributor of political stability and economic growth in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia intends to use these radars to support its border security requirements and modernize its armed forces with a more current capability to locate and counter the source of incoming ballistic artillery, rockets, and mortars. This will contribute to Saudi Arabia's goal to update its military capability while further enhancing greater interoperability among Saudi Arabia, the United States and other allies. Saudi Arabia will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its armed forces.

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

The Lockheed Martin Corporation, Liverpool, New York, is the principal contractor for the AN/TPQ-53(V) Radars. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will require U.S. Government or contractor representatives to travel to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for a period of four (4) months for in-processing/fielding, system checkout and new equipment training, as well as providing the support of two in-country FSRs for two years.

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

TRANSMITTAL NO. 16-84

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

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The AN/TPQ-53(V) radar system is a highly mobile radar that automatically detects, classifies, tracks, and locates the point

of origin of projectiles fired from mortar, artillery and rocket systems with sufficient accuracy for first round fire for effect. It mitigates close combat radar coverage gaps and replaces the AN/TPQ-36 and AN/TPQ-37 Firefinder Radars; fully supporting Brigade Combat Teams (BCT), Division Artilleries (DIVARTYs), and Field Artillery (FA) Brigades. Designed to be transported by ship, trucks, train, or aircraft, it is capable of deploying as part of the counter-rocket, artillery, and mortar system of systems to provide a sense and warn capability for fixed and semi-fixed sites. The AN/TPQ-53(V) provides a net ready system with increased range and accuracy throughout a 90 degree search sector (stare mode) as well as 360-degree coverage (rotating).

a. The Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) hardware design of the AN/TPQ-53(V) is UNCLASSIFIED. Foreign source systems of similar design and capability are available in advanced industrial nations such as Sweden and Israel.

b. The AN/TPQ-53(V) software gives it an enhanced capability in terms of target detection and classification in an Electronic Countermeasure (ECM) environment. Release of detailed knowledge of the software code or test data could aid an adversary trying to identify ways of countering the detection capabilities of the AN/TPQ-53(V) or improve the performance of their own radar systems. Although the detection, classification technology, and concept used in the AN/TPQ-53(V) has been utilized for more than a decade, the ability to incorporate such technology on a solid state air cooled radar would be a major technological improvement. The software is UNCLASSIFIED. The system is classified SECRET when employed in a theater of operations.

c. The Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System (SINGARS) is a tactical radio providing secure jam-resistant voice and data communications of command, control, targeting, and technical information for the AN/TPQ-53(V) radar system. The spread-spectrum frequency hopping Electronic Counter-Counter Measures (ECCM) technology resident in the radio is sensitive but UNCLASSIFIED. While sensitive, the frequency-hopping algorithms used to generate the ECCM waveform are unique to the country of ownership and cannot be manipulated by potential adversaries for use or interference with other countries possessing SINGARS technology. Should a potential adversary come into possession of one of these radios, they would have the potential to intercept operational command, control, and targeting information. This potential problem is mitigated by the fact that the customer can secure information passed over the radio network using a commercial grade security capability equivalent to an AES 256-bit encryption system whose keys are controlled by the customer country.

d. The Defense Advanced Global Positioning System (GPS) Receiver (DAGR) is a handheld GPS location device with map background displaying the user's location. Unlike commercial grade GPS receivers capable of receiving Standard Positioning Signals (SPS) from GPS satellites, the DAGR is capable of receiving Precise Positioning Signals (PPS). PPS satellite signals provide significantly more accurate location data than do SPS signals. This capability within DAGR is possible due to the Selective Availability Anti-Spoofing Module (SAASM). The SAASM is an encrypted device permitting both receipt of PPS signals and the benefit of preventing potential adversaries from spoofing the system to display incorrect location information. The SAASM capability within the DAGR is sensitive but UNCLASSIFIED. The SAASM capabilities are sensitive due to the system's ability to access

restricted PPS GPS satellite signals and to prevent spoofing. While sensitive, the ability of potential adversaries to exploit the system are limited. The SAASM chip goes through a special process of loading encryption signals and unique access codes keyed to the customer country. These processes are strictly controlled by the US Air Force. If the DAGR is compromised, the US Air Force can cut off the device access to PPS signals and the anti-spoofing capability.

e. The same SAASM capabilities resident in the DAGR are also resident in the AN/TPQ-53(V) KN-4083 Inertial Navigation System (INS). The KN-4083 is a SAASM enhanced INS capability with a 3-axis Monolithic Ring Laser Gyro allowing extremely accurate location as well as 3-axis accelerometer to provide angular information regarding the radar position (i.e. pitch, roll, and azimuth data). While inertial navigation and accelerometer capabilities are well-known, the SAASM capability within the system makes it sensitive but UNCLASSIFIED. As with the DAGR, the US Air Force can cut off access to PPS signals and anti-spoofing capabilities, minimizing impacts should a potential adversary obtain the system.

2. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of the specific radar hardware and software elements, the information could be used to identify ways of countering the detection capabilities of the AN/TPQ-53(V) Radar System or improve the performance of their radar systems. Testing and identification of methods to defeat the AN/TPQ-53(V) ECCM capabilities would lead to improvements in the overall effectiveness of an adversary's system and improve their survivability.

3. A determination has been made that Saudi Arabia can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

4. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ACCOUNTABILITY AND WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION ACT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate adopted the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act. This legislation facilitates the process of terminating nonperforming VA employees by eliminating certain due process protections that are currently part of the system. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs says he needs this authority to reform the system. The Senate, by voice vote, honored the request. However, in Alaska, we have a different problem which is not addressed in the legislation, and that problem is filling vacant positions within the VA. The major challenge facing VA leaders in Alaska is recruitment and retention.

The Wasilla community based outpatient clinic, CBOC, serves veterans in the fastest growing community in the State. The last permanent physician at this CBOC resigned in May 2014, citing "excessive workload." A number of temporary physicians have rotated

through since, and some have considered VA employment, but ultimately said no. The fact remains that, for the past 3 years, the VA has not been able to recruit a single physician to permanently staff this CBOC, a facility that, given demand, requires a permanent staff of two—or possibly three—physicians. Wasilla is hardly the most remote place in the State. Actually, it is one of the least remote. Moreover, it is one of the most desirable places in Alaska to live. For example, Mat-Su Regional Hospital, the community hospital down the road, has no problem retaining medical professionals. Staffed with 160 physicians in 28 specialties, including primary care, it was recently highlighted by Becker's Hospital Review as one of the 150 best places to work in healthcare for 2017. By comparison, the VA has been unable to recruit a single physician to permanently tend to the needs of our veterans in the Mat-Su Valley.

That suggests to me that the VA has a second problem. The VA is simply not regarded as an employer of choice among potential recruits. Removing due process protections for VA employees may well exacerbate that problem. Over the past 14 years, I have spent time with a great many VA employees, and the fear that a supervisor may now have greater latitude to target an individual on a trumped up charge because they are seen to be rocking the boat or because they just don't like them is a real one. We have very good management in the Alaska VA healthcare system now, but the faces of managers change with some frequency and with those changes can come wide swings in management philosophies.

At a recent hearing of the MILCON-VA subcommittee, my friend from Florida, Senator RUBIO, asked Dr. Shulkin, "In your time at the Veterans Administration, have you ever seen or do you have any evidence of any instance in which supervisors targeted individuals for dismissal because they just don't like them and were going to make something up in order to get rid of them?" While the official transcript is not yet available, we do have the CQ transcript. That transcript indicates that Dr. Shulkin did not directly answer the question. He responded that the VA has seen cases of documented whistleblower retaliation.

But not every employee who faces inequity in the workplace becomes a whistleblower. Some just go out and find a new job which offers better working conditions and in some cases better money than the VA pays.

To his credit, Dr. Shulkin went on to say, "But, I want people to understand, I am not seeking this and I do not support your legislation so that we can willy-nilly fire employees, or allow supervisors to abuse our employees. This allows due process. I believe it's very important that our employees have due process, the right to pre-decisional appeals, and the right to be represented by the union or their attorneys."

I hope that he is right about how this will work out on the ground, but the VA is a highly decentralized system with a great many seemingly autonomous decisionmakers. In asking for this new authority, Dr. Shulkin must accept the responsibility for ensuring that it is not abused and must also accept accountability in the event that it is, but the larger question is whether all of the energy we have put into legislating VA accountability does anything to make the VA a more attractive employer to in-demand healthcare professionals. I would like to see the VA devote as much energy and creativity to addressing this challenge as it has to the issue before us yesterday.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

GRANITE MOUNTAIN/SPECULATOR MINE FIRE

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today I wish to remember metal mining's greatest disaster, the Granite Mountain/Speculator Mine Fire that took place 100 years ago in Butte, MT, that claimed the lives of 168 men.

On the night of June 8, 1917, approximately 410 men were in the mine, working to meet the demand for copper that was created by our Armed Forces on the frontlines during World War I. An electric cable had been lowered into the mine earlier in the day and had gotten away from the workers, falling into a tangled coil. Later that evening, as crews examined the damaged cable, a lamp accidentally ignited the cable and sparked a fire that would fill the mine with smoke and poisonous gas.

Unable to lower cages due to fire damage, in an act of pure bravery, over 100 rescue workers immediately jumped into harm's way to try to rescue their trapped brothers. Miraculously, none of the rescue workers were killed, but sadly, after the conclusion of rescue efforts, a total of 168 miners were lost. The community of Butte grieved together, as did the entire Montana family.

Today I want to honor those who perished that tragic day and honor those whose families who would never be the same after it. Would you please join me in a brief moment of silence to remember those miners and their families?

This proclamation is meant to recognize the strength of those Montanans who sacrificed their lives in support of our Nation's military work in World War I, as well as those who jumped to help a fallen brother without question. The tragedy that befell our mining community highlights the strength found in the hearts of not only Montanans, but all Americans, and the moments that make heroes out of ordinary men and bring communities together.

So that future generations will not forget the men who perished that day, a memorial was built in honor of those who died in the Granite Mountain/

Speculator Mine Fire. If you are ever in our beautiful State, I hope you will take time to visit.

One hundred years after this tragedy, we are also reminded of how far we have come in hard rock mining. Jobs that were once seen as high risk are now very desirable, not just due to high wages, but more importantly because of advances in safety. In fact, according to the Department of Labor, fiscal year 2016 was the safest year in mining history. The continued progress toward safer mining has been a shared effort across State and Federal agencies, as well as the mining community itself. New technology, better practices, special initiatives, and improved training have led to a culture in mining communities and industry that prioritizes safety. The Granite Mountain/Speculator Mine Fire reminds us so that we must continue to push for even safer mining.

Lastly, I want to take a moment to thank those hard rock miners who are spread across our beautiful country and who continue to serve the American people. Thank you for all that you do. We must continue to prioritize safety that we never again have a tragedy like that of the Granite Mountain/Speculator Mine Fire.●

TRIBUTE TO HELEN AND BOBBY FELDMAN

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Helen and Bobby Feldman for their strong leadership in the Jewish community. Bobby and Helen have been involved in a number of causes that celebrate their Jewish heritage as well as make a difference by putting the needs and well-being of others before themselves.

Bobby and Helen have worked with many organizations, including Stand With Us, an organization dedicated to educating individuals all over the world about Israel and ways to combat anti-Semitism, and HonestReporting, a media watchdog organization dedicated to providing facts, figures, and statistics to journalists across the world to ensure Israel's story is told fairly by the media.

Bobby Feldman's interest in Jewish culture and causes stemmed from his early interest in environmental issues. He worked with the Jewish National Fund in Las Vegas where he now serves as the president of the southern Nevada chapter. Their organization is working to revitalize areas in Israel by planting trees, creating parks, and working to build a better country for years to come.

Helen Feldman has a list of accomplishments herself. She helped organize the Women's Alliance of the Jewish National Fund. This organization encourages future generations of Las Vegas women to celebrate our solidarity with Israel. She also volunteered her time at local nursing homes; there she shows off her amazing singing talents and brightens the day of so many Nevada seniors.

On Sunday, April 30, the Jewish National Fund is hosting their annual Love of Israel brunch where both Helen and Bobby will be recognized for their involvement in the community. These two individuals should be proud of all that they have done together.

Earlier this week, Israel celebrated their Holocaust Remembrance Day, honoring and remembering the 6 million Jewish people who were the victims of Nazi hatred. It serves us all as a reminder for the need to turn away prejudice and racism and embrace others. That is why I am both humbled and honored to acknowledge Helen and Bobby for their work here in the great State of Nevada. I also want to congratulate them on 29 years of marriage, and I look forward to seeing more from them as they continue to make us all very proud.●

TRIBUTE TO BETTY FOX

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Betty Fox and not only wish her a happy birthday, but also reflect on her years of service. Betty Fox served her country in the Armed Forces and remains an active leader in the community. On April 22, Betty Fox turned 98 years old, and to this day, she makes us proud to call her a fellow Nevadan and American.

Betty Fox joined the Marine Corps in April 1943 shortly after the beginning of World War II. She was stationed at the Marine Corps Air Station, MCAS, located in Cherry Point, NC. She was then sent to the MCAS in El Toro, CA, there she received the Honorable Service Lapel Button marking her outstanding service to her country. Betty Fox was promoted to private first class on August 20, 1943, then to corporal on January 24, 1944. She was discharged on February 5, 1944, but her promotions and designations reflect on her service and our country will never be able to fully repay her for the sacrifices she made in the defense of freedom.

In 1956, she moved to Las Vegas, NV, and has been a Nevadan ever since. Despite no longer being Active military personnel, Betty Fox remains involved in the local community. She epitomizes an age-old saying: "You are only as old as you feel."

Betty Fox volunteered at the Las Vegas convention center for the past 18 years. She is an active, lifetime member of the Marine Corps League, Local Detachment 186, and has marched in several Veteran's Day parades in order to honor those who, like her, sacrificed to defend America and its values.

Betty is also a lifetime member of Women Marine Association, WMA, and was an active member until the local chapter disbanded. After years of serving her country and community, she volunteered her time at the local senior living center, brightening the day of many of Nevada's senior citizens.

I am both humbled and honored to acknowledge Betty Fox for her service to our country and community. Her

sacrifices and continued commitment to helping those who served makes me proud to call her a fellow Nevadan. As Nevada's senior Senator, I want to honor her success, her life of giving back, and wish her the happiest 98th birthday. Rest assured, we all look forward to her continued efforts that are sure to inspire us all.●

RECOGNIZING THE WOMEN'S MINING COALITION

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the Women's Mining Coalition, a Nevada-born group that has devoted 25 years of service advocating for a strong U.S. mining industry. I am proud to honor the significant contributions the Women's Mining Coalition has made to the mining industry in the State of Nevada and throughout our Nation. I am extremely proud of their successes and am grateful for how it has benefited the Silver State.

In 1993, three Nevada geologists—Kathy Benedetto, Ruth Carraher, and Debbie Struhsacker—started the Women's Mining Coalition in response to the congressional debate to enact major changes to the U.S. mining law that would threaten the future of Nevada's mining industry and hard rock mining throughout the country. At that time, they never dreamed that their concept would involve more than taking a couple of trips to Washington, to talk to lawmakers about mineral exploration, the importance of mining, and that mining is a good career for women, but this Battle-Born Nevada concept has become a nationwide, quarter-century commitment to talk to Members of Congress about how modern mining provides the building blocks of our society while caring for the environment and providing family-wage jobs to miners and the many companies throughout the country that provide equipment, goods, and services to the mineral exploration and mining sectors.

Each year, WMC's Nevada members travel to the group's annual Washington, DC fly-in. These Nevada women represent the diverse domestic mining industry and discuss legislative issues and proposed rules affecting mining. During these meetings, WMC members put a face to mining that lawmakers don't expect: women involved in all facets of mining, from equipment operators and manufacturers, engineers, executives, miners, metallurgists, geologists, and environmental scientists.

Last September at a banquet in Las Vegas, the group received the prestigious Prazen Living Legends of Mining Award from the National Mining Hall of Fame for their many years of service and commitment to the mining industry. Not resting on their laurels, the Women's Mining Coalition is in Washington, DC, this week to continue their work to let Congress know that a strong mining industry is essential to the future of Nevada and our Nation.

Our national defense, our infrastructure, our electricity, our technology, our agriculture, our transportation, and communication capabilities all rely on the products of mining. The Women's Mining Coalition will continue to make this message heard with energy, talent, and enthusiasm.

As the senior Senator from the Silver State, I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in congratulating the Women's Mining Coalition on its 25 years of thoughtful advocacy on behalf of mining in Nevada and across the country. This group has advanced Nevada's mining industry, and I am honored to recognize this important contribution. I wish the Women's Mining Coalition well in its future endeavors in creating greater opportunities for mining in our great State.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

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

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

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:32 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1628. An act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2017.

H.R. 2192. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to eliminate the non-application of certain State waiver provisions to Members of Congress and congressional staff.

At 10:27 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 390. An act to provide emergency relief for victims of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes in Iraq and Syria, for accountability for perpetrators of these crimes, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 2004(b), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Member of the House of Representatives to the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation: Mr. DEUTCH of Florida.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 603 of the Depart-

ment of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114-323), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Minority Leader appoints the following individual to the Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission: Mr. Pete Gallego of Alpine, Texas.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 390. An act to provide for emergency relief for victims of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes in Iraq and Syria, for accountability for perpetrators of these crimes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H.R. 2192. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to eliminate the non-application of certain State waiver provisions to Members of Congress and congressional staff; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

H.R. 1628. An act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2017.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 286. A bill to require a land conveyance involving the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-92).

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. CORKER for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

*William Francis Hagerty IV, of Tennessee, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Japan.

Nominee: William F. Hagerty.

Post: Ambassador to Japan.

Nominated: 03/27/2017.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, date, amount, and donee:

1. Self: William F. Hagerty 9/1/16, 2,700.00, Trump Victory; 9/1/16, 2,700.00, Trump of President; 6/29/16, 5,400.00, John McCain; 5/25/16, 5,000.00, RNC/Convention; 5/22/16, 1,000.00, David Kustoff; 2/29/16, 2,700.00, Marco Rubio; 1/8/16, 33,400.00, RNC; 1/8/16, 1,600.00, RNC; 9/1/15, 5,000.00, TennPAC; 6/30/15, 2,700.00, Jeb Bush; 6/5/15, 3,000.00, TNGOP; 5/27/15, 2,500.00, Healthcare Freedom Fund; 4/21/15, 33,400.00, RNC; 11/3/14, 2,600.00, Lamar Alexander; 10/21/14, 1,000.00, David Perdue; 4/17/14, 1,000.00, John Ratcliffe; 2/17/14, 2,000.00, Keith Crisco; 2/3/14, 3,000.00, TNGOP; 12/30/13, 1,000.00, Jim

Tracy; 12/18/13, 1,000.00, John Ratcliffe; 12/10/13, 1,000.00, Marsha Blackburn; 9/3/13, 2,600.00, Diane Black; 8/14/13, 2,600.00, Lamar Alexander; 2/11/13, 3,000.00, TNGOP; 7/31/12, 4,175.00, Republican Party of Idaho; 7/31/12, 4,175.00, Republican State Comm of Mass; 7/31/12, 4,175.00, Oklahoma Leadership Council; 7/31/12, 4,175.00, VT Rep Fed. Elections Cmte; 6/22/12, 2,000.00, TNGOP; 6/21/12, 2,500.00, TennPAC; 6/21/12, 2,500.00, Alexander for Senate; 5/17/12, 50,000.00, Romney Victory; 5/17/12, 30,800.00, RNC; 5/17/12, 2,500.00, Mitt Romney; 5/9/12, 350.00, TNGOP.

2. Spouse: Christine L Hagerty; 9/1/16, 2,700.00, Trump Victory; 9/1/16, 2,700.00, Trump for President; 6/28/16, 5,400.00, John McCainPrimary/Gen; 2/29/16, 2,700.00, Marco Rubio; 1/8/16, 1,600.00, RNC; 1/8/16, 33,400.00, RNC; 6/30/15, 2,700.00, Jeb Bush; 11/3/14, 2,600.00, Lamar Alexander; 8/14/13, 2,600.00, Lamar Alexander; 9/3/13, 2,400.00, Diane Black; 7/31/12, 4,175.00, Republican Party of Mass; 7/31/12, 4,175.00, Oklahoma Leadership Council; 7/31/12, 4,175.00, Vermont Repub Federal Elections Cmte; 7/31/12, 4,175.00, Republican Party of Idaho; 6/13/12, 2,500.00, Mitt Romney; 6/13/12, 30,800.00, RNC; 6/13/12, 50,000.00, Romney Victory.

3. Children and Spouses: William F. Hagerty—none; Stephen L. Hagerty—none; Tara E. Hagerty—none; Christine B. Hagerty—none.

4. Parents: William Hagerty, III—Deceased; Ruth Hagerty, \$1000.00, 3/1/07 Mitt Romney; William Locke-Paddon—Deceased; Terry Locke-Paddon—none.

5. Grandparents: William F. Hagerty, Jr.—Deceased; Lillian Dwiggins Hagerty—Deceased.

6. Brothers and Spouses: Michael Hagerty—none; Robin Hagerty—none.

7. Sisters and Spouses: Elizabeth Hagerty—none.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 1298. A bill to modify the criteria used by the Corps of Engineers to dredge small ports; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 1299. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to reduce the occurrence of diabetes in Medicare beneficiaries by extending coverage under Medicare for medical nutrition therapy services to such beneficiaries with pre-diabetes or with risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 1300. A bill to prohibit the indefinite detention of persons by the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. NELSON (for himself, Mr. HELLER, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 1301. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the distribution of additional residency positions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. UDALL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. NELSON):

S. 1302. A bill to provide for the conversion of temporary judgeships to permanent judgeships, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1303. A bill to prohibit discrimination in adoption or foster care placements based on the sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status of any prospective adoptive or foster parent, or the sexual orientation or gender identity of the child involved; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ROBERTS (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. CASEY):

S. 1304. A bill to amend part B of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to exclude customary prompt pay discounts from manufacturers to wholesalers from the average sales price for drugs and biologicals under Medicare, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 1305. A bill to provide U.S. Customs and Border Protection with adequate flexibility in its employment authorities; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LEAHY:

S. 1306. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish refundable tax credits for expenses relating to ensuring safety and accessibility in historic structures; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. LEAHY, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 1307. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand eligibility to receive refundable tax credits for coverage under a qualified health plan; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 1308. A bill to increase authorized funding for the Soo Locks; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself and Mr. THUNE):

S. 1309. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to permit American Indian tribal councils to enter into agreements with the Commissioner of Social Security to obtain social security coverage for services performed by tribal council members; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ROUNDS (for himself, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. TESTER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. DONNELLY, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 1310. A bill to amend the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act of 1975 to specify which depository institutions are subject to the maintenance of records and disclosure requirements of such Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. HELLER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. COONS, Mr. HATCH, Mr. BURR, and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 1311. A bill to provide assistance in abolishing human trafficking in the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CORKER, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 1312. A bill to prioritize the fight against human trafficking in the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 1313. A bill to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program, and for other pur-

poses; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. KAINÉ (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1314. A bill to amend the Natural Gas Act to bolster fairness and transparency in consideration of interstate natural gas pipelines, to provide for greater public input opportunities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. NELSON):

S. Res. 185. A resolution recognizing and expressing support for the goals and ideals of National Water Safety Month; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. COTTON):

S. Res. 186. A resolution recognizing the Aviation Cadet Museum in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, as the national aviation cadet museum of the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. Res. 187. A resolution congratulating and honoring Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory on 50 years of groundbreaking discoveries; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 170

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 170, a bill to provide for non-preemption of measures by State and local governments to divest from entities that engage in commerce-related or investment-related boycott, divestment, or sanctions activities targeting Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 203

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 203, a bill to reaffirm that the Environmental Protection Agency may not regulate vehicles used solely for competition, and for other purposes.

S. 301

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 301, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit governmental discrimination against providers of health services that are not involved in abortion.

S. 319

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 319, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish within the Department of Veterans Affairs a center of excellence in the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation,

treatment, and rehabilitation of health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits.

S. 341

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 341, a bill to provide for congressional oversight of actions to waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation, and for other purposes.

S. 379

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 379, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the five month waiting period for disability insurance benefits under such title for individuals with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

S. 447

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 447, a bill to require reporting on acts of certain foreign countries on Holocaust era assets and related issues.

S. 486

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 486, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the non-application of Medicare competitive acquisition rates to complex rehabilitative wheelchairs and accessories.

S. 722

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 722, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to Iran in relation to Iran's ballistic missile program, support for acts of international terrorism, and violations of human rights, and for other purposes.

S. 749

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 749, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require the disclosure of the annual percentage rates applicable to Federal student loans.

S. 751

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 751, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish, fund, and provide for the use of amounts in a National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund to address the maintenance backlog of the National Park Service, and for other purposes.

S. 806

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 806, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act to ensure College for All.

S. 829

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin

(Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 829, a bill 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, and for other purposes.

S. 926

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 926, a bill to authorize the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation to establish the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial as a commemorative work in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

S. 928

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 928, a bill to prohibit, as an unfair or deceptive act or practice, commercial sexual orientation conversion therapy, and for other purposes.

S. 1018

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1018, a bill to provide humanitarian assistance for the Venezuelan people, to defend democratic governance and combat widespread public corruption in Venezuela, and for other purposes.

S. 1050

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1050, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Chinese-American Veterans of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II.

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1050, *supra*.

S. 1055

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) 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. 1068

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1068, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for increased investment in clean energy.

S. 1099

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1099, a bill 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.

S. 1129

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1129, a bill to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard, and for other purposes.

S. 1146

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 1154

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S.J. RES. 42

At the request of Mr. MURPHY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 42, a joint resolution relating to the disapproval of the proposed export to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of certain defense articles.

S.J. RES. 44

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 44, a joint resolution condemning the deadly attack on May 26, 2017, in Portland, Oregon, expressing deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims, and supporting efforts to overcome hatred, bigotry, and violence.

S. RES. 136

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 136, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

S. RES. 174

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 174, a resolution recognizing the 100th anniversary of Lions Clubs International and celebrating the Lions Clubs International for a long history of humanitarian service.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 1305. A bill to provide U.S. Customs and Border Protection with adequate flexibility in its employment authorities; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the Customs and Border Protection Hiring and Retention Act, or CBP HiRe Act.

In recent years, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, or CBP, has had a lot of trouble recruiting, hiring, and retaining personnel to adequately staff the border and our ports of entry. Today, CBP is nearly 1,000 officers below the mandated staffing levels. The Border Patrol, whose duty it is to secure 6,000 miles of borderlands, suffers from a shortage of more than 1,800 agents. These shortages persist, despite ample backing and funding from Congress and the threat they pose to both national security and trade-reliant communities and economies, particularly in my State of Arizona. This has been frustrating for border communities across the country, but it is especially problematic for Arizona, a State that depends on both border security and a lot of cross-border trade.

For example, the Nogales port of entry in Southern Arizona is one of the busiest ports in the United States. It processes approximately \$2.5 billion worth of produce each year. Arizona alone does about \$15 billion in trade with Mexico alone, every year. Mexican shoppers spend about \$8 million in stores in Arizona every day.

However, the port currently is suffering from a 23-percent shortage of CBP officers. Our ports cannot effectively and efficiently facilitate the flow of commerce across the border without adequate staffing.

One of the biggest challenges in both retaining and hiring new officers and agents for frontline positions has been the remoteness of CBP installations. CBP officers and border agents are often stationed in geographically remote and isolated locations. This likely contributes to the fact that, of those leaving the agency, nearly 30 percent of Border Patrol agents and over 10 percent of CBP officers are lost to other agencies.

Massive staffing shortages aside, CBP is barely able to hire fast enough to fill the jobs left by departing agents and officers. So we have great needs that are not being filled, but we also have attrition we simply can't replace. In fact, CBP hires only 1 out of every 64 applicants for officer positions, and 1 out of every 113 applicants for Border Patrol agent positions. This means that less than 2 percent of applicants manage to get through CBP's hiring process. The situation at CBP today is simply unsustainable.

Congress can't sit idly by as slow hiring rates and accelerating attrition threaten the security of our borders and the underpinnings of our economy. To that end, I am pleased to introduce my CBP HiRe Act with Senator

HEITKAMP from North Dakota. This legislation would streamline the hiring process and allow the CBP to finally bring more agents and officers into frontline positions.

Importantly, this bill gives CBP new tools to recruit and retain personnel in remote and hard-to-fill locations. This includes special salary rates and recruitment, relocation, and retention incentives.

In addition, the bill will eliminate bureaucratic redtape by giving CBP the authority to use direct-hire authority and to expedite the hiring of qualified applicants. Right now, the situation is that they have to deal with other Federal agencies and get virtually every incentive and program they want to approve and need to approve to hire more officers. They have to run it up the flagpole so many times with Federal agencies that it simply takes too long.

Lastly, the bill prevents CBP from disclosing an applicant's polygraph results with another Federal agency or non-Federal employer. Challenges relating to the administering of the polygraph have resulted in approximately 65 percent of the individuals failing the test.

Think about that. People who are in another law enforcement position, even those who have taken a polygraph before just a year or two prior—many of them fear that a false positive on a polygraph exam might impact their ability to move to another Federal agency if that is disclosed. If you have a polygraph, which can't be used in courts of law because it is not perfect or nowhere near perfect, then Federal agencies shouldn't be able to forward that to other Federal agencies. It acts as a big disincentive for people to apply for these positions because a false positive on a polygraph exam might imperil their chances to work for another Federal agency or to work in law enforcement later in their career. This also creates a disincentive, as I mentioned, for individuals to want to be hired by CBP.

In Arizona, safety and prosperity are inextricably linked to CBP's ability to secure the border and facilitate trade. The CBP HiRe Act will give CBP the tools and flexibility necessary to accomplish these missions.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan solution, and I look forward to seeing it move through the Senate without delay.

By Mr. LEAHY:

S. 1306. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish refundable tax credits for expenses relating to ensuring safety and accessibility in historic structures; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, founded more than two centuries ago, Vermont boasts a trove of historically preserved buildings, structures, and towns. These are part of our heritage, and our State's character. Making a priority of

managing and preserving our cultural heritage makes Vermont a National leader in this field.

Of course, many of these historic structures do not meet modern fire prevention codes and lack basic features such as sprinklers, which can drastically reduce the potential for irreparable damage from a fire. Today I am reintroducing the Historic Downtown Preservation and Access Act, a bill that would create a refundable tax credit for the installation of fire suppression systems and elevators in older, multi-use buildings in historic downtowns. Every year, fires destroy numerous historic buildings that often serve as the center of towns and villages across the nation. In 2011, the Brooks House in Brattleboro, Vermont, burned down after almost 150 years in use as a hotel and later, as a multi-use building for residential housing and commercial space. After six years of rebuilding and restoring, those who were displaced by this fire are finally getting back on their feet.

The Historic Downtown Preservation and Access Act will establish a 50 percent refundable tax credit of up to \$50,000 that incentivizes the installation of sprinkler systems in order to help prevent and minimize damage caused by fire, including potential loss of life, extensive property damage, and, in some instances, federal funding that is reinvested during the restoration process. This bill also includes a provision to encourage the installation of elevators in our historic buildings, making them accessible to all. This would ensure that upper floors for commercial or residential use are accessible to everyone, including tenants and their guests. Finally, this bill is updated to establish a tax credit for the costs incurred when removing hazardous substances from historic buildings, like lead paint, asbestos, and radon.

We should encourage the maintenance of the history and character of historic buildings and downtowns, while also ensuring that they remain safe and accessible to all. This bill is a responsible step forward in those efforts. As we look ahead to comprehensive tax reform, I hope that Congress will consider commonsense legislation like this that will help preserve our towns' unique histories and legacy features for decades to come, while promoting the safety of all Americans.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. LEAHY, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 1307. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand eligibility to receive refundable tax credits for coverage under a qualified health plan; to the Committee on Finance.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Affordable Health Insurance for the Middle Class Act, a common sense fix to improve affordability of health insurance on the

individual market. I am pleased that Senators HASSAN, WARREN, HARRIS, BALDWIN, and LEAHY have joined this bill as original cosponsors, and I appreciate their support.

Since its implementation, the Affordable Care Act has helped to expand health care and control out-of-pocket costs for millions of Americans. Over 20 million people who were previously uninsured now have coverage, there are no yearly or lifetime limits on coverage, and no one can be denied coverage or charged more based on their gender or because of a pre-existing health condition. The Affordable Care Act also expanded the individual marketplace, through which 18 million people currently get their coverage. Individuals who make between 100 and 400 percent of the federal poverty level, and who do not have affordable employer coverage available to them, can receive a tax credit subsidy to help pay for insurance on the individual market. This credit limits the cost of insurance at 9.69 percent of an individual's income.

However, someone who makes just one dollar above the income threshold immediately loses all federal assistance. This 'cliff' unfairly impacts middle-income Americans who are by no means wealthy, but who make just barely too much to qualify for the tax credit. I am particularly concerned about my constituents between the ages of 50 to 64, who are facing higher premiums as they age and who need access to health services but are not yet eligible for Medicare.

To address this issue, the Affordable Health Insurance for the Middle Class Act would eliminate the current cliff, and instead gradually phase out federal assistance based on income. Nobody would pay more than 9.69 percent of their income for insurance, and once someone's premium fell below this threshold, they would no longer receive federal assistance.

For example, in my hometown of San Francisco, a 60-year-old making \$50,000 currently pays \$946 per month for the second-lowest cost Silver plan and does not receive federal assistance. Under this bill, their premium would be capped at \$404, or 9.69 percent of their income, and the tax credit subsidy would cover the rest. This bill would create a fairer and more predictable system, ensuring that consumers on the individual market know just how much their insurance will cost and will have affordable options available. The Affordable Care Act has reduced costs and expanded benefits for many Americans, and it is critical that we build on this progress to further improve the law—not destroy it.

The bill is supported by a number of organizations, including the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, AANS, Child Welfare League of America, Congress of Neurological Surgeons, CNS, Families USA, Lung Cancer Alliance, and National Farmers Union.

This legislation is a simple fix that provides relief for middle-income

Americans and strengthens affordability protections for coverage through the individual market. I urge all of my colleagues to cosponsor the Affordable Health Insurance for the Middle Class Act. Thank you Mr. President and I yield the floor.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 1308. A bill to increase authorized funding for the Soo Locks; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise to speak about legislation I am introducing with my colleague from Michigan Senator STABENOW to authorize funding for a new Soo Lock.

Since 1855, locks at the St. Mary's River have allowed ships to pass between Lake Superior and Lake Huron. In modern times, this waterway has allowed large freighters to move coal, iron ore, and agricultural products throughout the Great Lakes. The Soo Locks are the most important link in a critical supply chain that connects iron ore mines in Minnesota and Michigan's Upper Peninsula with steel mills and manufacturing facilities all across the country.

During World War II, Congress authorized funding for a new lock because it was clear the country's ability to move iron ore to steel plants in Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania was absolutely critical for the war effort. It took less than 2 years to complete that project after Congress authorized the funding in 1942.

President Roosevelt signed an Executive order establishing the military district of Sault Saint Marie, and the Army stationed 10,000 troops there to defend the Soo Locks by land, air, and sea—so great was the fear that a German attack would instantly cripple Allied efforts to produce steel and weapons.

Today, there is only one Soo Lock—the Poe Lock—that is large enough to accommodate modern freighters, especially the 1,000-foot-long vessels that move millions of tons of iron ore each and every year. Over 80 percent of the commodities that flow through the Soo Locks must pass through the Poe Lock, and each one of those 1,000-foot freighters carries the equivalent of 3,000 truckloads of commodities. It is not possible to move that amount of iron ore in these 1,000-foot freighters by rail or by road, and on top of that, the steel mills are only equipped to handle the iron ore supply by water.

A study conducted by the Department of Homeland Security in 2015 confirmed that it is the Achilles' heel of our economy. Key findings from the Department say: "A disruption of the Poe Lock likely will cause an almost complete shutdown of Great Lake steel production."

The report goes on to say: "A shutdown of Great Lakes steel production likely will cause almost all North American appliances, automobiles,

construction equipment, farm equipment, mining equipment, and railcar production to cease within weeks."

Within weeks. The Homeland Security report estimates that 11 million Americans would lose their jobs if this were to happen.

Consider the fact that the jobs of millions of American workers depend on the ability of large ships to pass, as depicted, from here to here on the St. Mary's Falls Canal. Currently, there is only one lock that can accommodate this task. If this lock shuts down, steel plants in Ohio and Indiana and Kentucky shut down. Auto plants in Texas, Tennessee, California, and Michigan shut down. The American economy shuts down. The losses would be felt throughout the United States, wherever steel is used in the manufacturing process.

We are taking an unacceptable risk if we do not act swiftly to ensure that there is a backup in the case of a lock failure. That is why I am joining Senator STABENOW and members of the Michigan congressional delegation from both parties to introduce a bill that would authorize the funding for constructing another larger Poe-sized lock. The current authorization for the project is far below projected cost estimates. Our bill, which was introduced today, if enacted, will allow the Army Corps to move directly into the design and construction phase. We do not have a moment to lose.

Just last week, I traveled to the Soo Locks for a tour with members of the Michigan congressional delegation, and we saw firsthand how the dedicated men and women of the Army Corps are working to keep the locks functioning. They go to work each and every day with a full understanding of how the safety and security of the Nation rests with their ability to maintain this critical infrastructure. It is a credit to the skill of the Army Corps of Engineers that freighters have been able to pass through the St. Mary's on their journeys around the Great Lakes almost without interruption. But they are working with equipment that has been maintained well beyond its life cycle and in some cases beyond two life cycles. When I was there last week, I saw 100-year-old water pumps still in use.

We cannot continue to rely on the infrastructure investments made by our grandparents and great-grandparents. It is time to invest in our country and the well-being of our economy for future generations and pass the Soo Locks Modernization Act.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. HELLER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. COONS, Mr. HATCH, Mr. BURR, and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 1311. A bill to provide assistance in abolishing human trafficking in the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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. 1311

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 "Abolish Human Trafficking Act of 2017".

(b) **TABLE OF CONTENTS.**—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Preserving Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund.
- Sec. 3. Mandatory restitution for victims of commercial sexual exploitation.
- Sec. 4. Victim-witness assistance in sexual exploitation cases.
- Sec. 5. Victim protection training for the Department of Homeland Security.
- Sec. 6. Implementing a victim-centered approach to human trafficking.
- Sec. 7. Direct services for child victims of human trafficking.
- Sec. 8. Holistic training for Federal law enforcement officers and prosecutors.
- Sec. 9. Best practices in delivering justice for victims of trafficking.
- Sec. 10. Training for health professionals.
- Sec. 11. Improving the national strategy to combat human trafficking.
- Sec. 12. Specialized human trafficking training and technical assistance for service providers.
- Sec. 13. Enhanced penalties for human trafficking, child exploitation, and repeat offenders.
- Sec. 14. Targeting organized human trafficking perpetrators.
- Sec. 15. Investigating complex human trafficking networks.
- Sec. 16. Combating sex tourism.
- Sec. 17. Human Trafficking Justice Coordinators.
- Sec. 18. Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Human Trafficking.
- Sec. 19. Additional reporting on crime.
- Sec. 20. Making the Presidential Survivor Council permanent.
- Sec. 21. Strengthening the National Human Trafficking Hotline.
- Sec. 22. Ending government partnerships with the commercial sex industry.
- Sec. 23. Study of human trafficking victim privilege.
- Sec. 24. Understanding the effects of severe forms of trafficking in persons.
- Sec. 25. Combating trafficking in persons.
- Sec. 26. Grant accountability.

SEC. 2. PRESERVING DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING VICTIMS' FUND.

(a) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Congress that the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund established under section 3014 of title 18, United States Code—

(1) is intended to supplement, and not supplant, any other funding for domestic trafficking victims; and

(2) has achieved the objective described in paragraph (1) since the establishment of the Fund.

(b) **ENSURING FULL FUNDING.**—Section 3014 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking "September 30, 2019" and inserting "September 30, 2023";

(2) in subsection (f), by inserting “, including the mandatory imposition of civil remedies for satisfaction of an unpaid fine as authorized under section 3613, where appropriate” after “criminal cases”; and

(3) in subsection (h)(3), by inserting “and child victims of a severe form of trafficking (as defined in section 103 of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102))” after “child pornography victims”.

SEC. 3. MANDATORY RESTITUTION FOR VICTIMS OF COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 117 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“§ 2429. Mandatory restitution

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 3663 or 3663A, and in addition to any other civil or criminal penalty authorized by law, the court shall order restitution for any offense under this chapter.

“(b) SCOPE AND NATURE OF ORDER.—

“(1) DIRECTIONS.—An order of restitution under this section shall direct the defendant to pay the victim (through the appropriate court mechanism) the full amount of the victim’s losses, as determined by the court under paragraph (3).

“(2) ENFORCEMENT.—An order of restitution under this section shall be issued and enforced in accordance with section 3664 in the same manner as an order under section 3663A.

“(3) FULL AMOUNT OF THE VICTIM’S LOSSES DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘full amount of the victim’s losses’—

“(A) has the meaning given the term in section 2259(b)(3); and

“(B) includes the gross income or value to the defendant of the victim’s services, if the services constitute commercial sex acts as defined under section 1591.

“(4) FORFEITURE OF PROPERTY.—The forfeiture of property under this subsection shall be governed by the provisions of section 413 (other than subsection (d) of such section 413) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 853).

“(c) VICTIM DEFINED.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In this section, the term ‘victim’ means the individual harmed as a result of the commission of a crime under this chapter.

“(2) ASSUMPTION OF CRIME VICTIM’S RIGHTS.—In the case of a victim who is under 18 years of age, incompetent, incapacitated, or deceased, the legal guardian of the victim, a representative of the victim’s estate, or any other person appointed as suitable by the court may assume the crime victim’s rights under this section

“(d) PROHIBITION.—A defendant charged with an offense under this chapter may not be named as a representative or guardian of a victim of the offense.”.

(b) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections for chapter 117 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 2428 the following:

“2429. Mandatory restitution.”.

SEC. 4. VICTIM-WITNESS ASSISTANCE IN SEXUAL EXPLOITATION CASES.

(a) AVAILABILITY OF DOJ APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 524(c)(1)(B) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting “, chapter 110 of title 18” after “chapter 77 of title 18”.

(b) AMENDMENT TO TITLE 31.—Section 9705(a)(2)(B)(v) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting “, chapter 109A of title 18 (relating to sexual abuse), chapter 110 of title 18 (relating to child sexual exploitation), or chapter 117 of title 18

(relating to transportation for illegal sexual activity and related crimes)” after “(relating to human trafficking)”.

SEC. 5. VICTIM PROTECTION TRAINING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title IX of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (6 U.S.C. 641 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 906. VICTIM PROTECTION TRAINING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

“(a) DIRECTIVE TO DHS LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS AND TASK FORCES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary shall issue a directive to—

“(A) all Federal law enforcement officers and relevant personnel employed by the Department who may be involved in the investigation of human trafficking offenses; and

“(B) members of all task forces led by the Department that participate in the investigation of human trafficking offenses.

“(2) REQUIRED INSTRUCTIONS.—The directive required to be issued under paragraph (1) shall include instructions on—

“(A) the investigation of individuals who patronize or solicit human trafficking victims as being engaged in severe trafficking in persons and how such individuals should be investigated for their roles in severe trafficking in persons; and

“(B) how victims of sex or labor trafficking often engage in criminal acts as a direct result of severe trafficking in persons and such individuals are victims of a crime and affirmative measures should be taken to avoid arresting, charging, or prosecuting such individuals for any offense that is the direct result of their victimization.

“(b) VICTIM SCREENING PROTOCOL.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary shall issue a screening protocol for use during all anti-trafficking law enforcement operations in which the Department is involved.

“(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The protocol required to be issued under paragraph (1) shall—

“(A) require the individual screening of all adults and children who are suspected of engaging in commercial sex acts, child labor that is a violation of law, or work in violation of labor standards to determine whether each individual screened is a victim of human trafficking;

“(B) require affirmative measures to avoid arresting, charging, or prosecuting human trafficking victims for any offense that is the direct result of their victimization;

“(C) be developed in consultation with relevant interagency partners and nongovernmental organizations that specialize in the prevention of human trafficking or in the identification and support of victims of human trafficking and survivors of human trafficking; and

“(D) include—

“(i) procedures and practices to ensure that the screening process minimizes trauma or revictimization of the person being screened; and

“(ii) guidelines on assisting victims of human trafficking in identifying and receiving restorative services.

“(c) MANDATORY TRAINING.—The training described in sections 902 and 904 shall include training necessary to implement—

“(1) the directive required under subsection (a); and

“(2) the protocol required under subsection (b).”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–22; 129 Stat. 227) is amended

by inserting after the item relating to section 905 the following:

“Sec. 906. Victim protection training for the Department of Homeland Security.”.

SEC. 6. IMPLEMENTING A VICTIM-CENTERED APPROACH TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

Section 107(b)(2) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B)(ii); by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(D) PRIORITY.—In selecting recipients of grants under this paragraph that are only available for law enforcement operations or task forces, the Attorney General may give priority to any applicant that files an attestation with the Attorney General stating that—

“(i) the grant funds—

“(I) will be used to assist in the prevention of severe forms of trafficking in persons in accordance with Federal law;

“(II) will be used to strengthen efforts to investigate and prosecute those who knowingly benefit financially from participation in a venture that has engaged in any act of human trafficking;

“(III) will be used to take affirmative measures to avoid arresting, charging, or prosecuting victims of human trafficking for any offense that is the direct result of their victimization; and

“(IV) will not be used to require a victim of human trafficking to collaborate with law enforcement officers as a condition of access to any shelter or restorative services; and

“(ii) the applicant will provide dedicated resources for anti-human trafficking law enforcement for a period that is longer than the duration of the grant received under this paragraph.”.

SEC. 7. DIRECT SERVICES FOR CHILD VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

Section 214(b) of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13002(b)) is amended—

(1) in the heading by inserting “CHILD VICTIMS OF A SEVERE FORM OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS AND” before “VICTIMS OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY”; and

(2) by inserting “victims of a severe form of trafficking (as defined in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9)(A)) who were under the age of 18 at the time of the offense and” before “victims of child pornography”.

SEC. 8. HOLISTIC TRAINING FOR FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND PROSECUTORS.

All training required under the Combat Human Trafficking Act of 2015 (42 U.S.C. 14044g) and section 105(c)(4) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(c)(4)) shall—

(1) emphasize that an individual who knowingly solicits or patronizes a commercial sex act from a person who was a minor (consistent with section 1591(c) of title 18, United States Code) or was subject to force, fraud, or coercion is guilty of an offense under chapter 77 of title 18, United States Code, and is a party to a human trafficking offense;

(2) develop specific curriculum for—

(A) under appropriate circumstances, arresting and prosecuting buyers of commercial sex, child labor that is a violation of law, or forced labor as a form of primary prevention; and

(B) investigating and prosecuting individuals who knowingly benefit financially from participation in a venture that has engaged in any act of human trafficking; and

(3) specify that any comprehensive approach to eliminating human trafficking

shall include a demand reduction component.

SEC. 9. BEST PRACTICES IN DELIVERING JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall issue guidance to all offices and components of the Department of Justice—

(1) emphasizing that an individual who knowingly solicits or patronizes a commercial sex act from a person who was a minor (consistent with section 1591(c) of title 18, United States Code) or was subject to force, fraud, or coercion is guilty of an offense under chapter 77 of title 18, United States Code, and is a party to a severe form of trafficking in persons, as that term is defined in section 103(9) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9));

(2) recommending and implementing best practices for the collection of special assessments under section 3014 of title 18, United States Code, as added by section 101 of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–22; 129 Stat. 228), including a directive that civil liens are an authorized collection method and remedy under section 3613 of title 18, United States Code; and

(3) clarifying that commercial sexual exploitation is a form of gender-based violence.

SEC. 10. TRAINING FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.

Section 107 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(f)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(h) TRAINING FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.—

“(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

“(A) the term ‘pilot program’ means the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training pilot program established under paragraph (2); and

“(B) the term ‘Secretary’ means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

“(2) PILOT PROGRAM.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may continue a pilot program, which shall be known as the ‘Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training pilot program’ or the ‘SOAR to Health and Wellness Training pilot program’.

“(B) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—Under the pilot program, the Secretary may award grants to appropriate entities to train health care providers—

“(i) to identify potential human trafficking victims;

“(ii) to work with law enforcement agencies to report human trafficking and facilitate communication with human trafficking victims, in accordance with all applicable Federal, State, local, and tribal laws, including legal confidentiality requirements for patients and health care providers;

“(iii) to refer such victims to appropriate social or victims service agencies or organizations;

“(iv) to provide such victims with appropriate patient-centered, evidence-based care; and

“(v) to foster the practice of interprofessional collaboration, including practices used by organizations other than health care organizations.

“(C) FUNCTIONS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The functions of the pilot program shall include, as appropriate, the functions of the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training program that was operating on the day before the date of the enactment of this subsection and any of the authorized initiatives described in clause (ii).

“(ii) AUTHORIZED INITIATIVES.—The authorized initiatives of the pilot program shall include—

“(I) engaging stakeholders, including victims of human trafficking and Federal, State, local, or tribal partners;

“(II) making grants available to support training in health care sites that represent diversity in—

“(aa) geography;

“(bb) the demographics of the population served;

“(cc) the predominate types of human trafficking cases; and

“(dd) health care provider profiles; and

“(III) providing technical assistance to assist grantees in—

“(aa) achieving the objectives described in subparagraph (B); and

“(bb) reporting on any best practices they identify.

“(D) TERMINATION.—The pilot program shall terminate not later than October 1, 2022.

“(3) DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

“(A) DATA COLLECTION.—During any of the fiscal years 2018 through 2022 in which the Secretary carries out any of the authorized initiatives described in paragraph (2)(C), the Secretary shall collect data and report on—

“(i) the total number of entities that received a grant under this subsection—

“(I) during the previous fiscal year;

“(II) between the previous fiscal year and the date of the enactment of this subsection; and

“(III) between the date of the enactment of this subsection and the date of the establishment of the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training program that was operating on the day before the date of the enactment of this subsection; and

“(ii) the total number of health care providers and other related providers that participated in training supported by the pilot program—

“(I) during the previous fiscal year;

“(II) between the previous fiscal year and the date of the enactment of this subsection; and

“(III) between the date of the enactment of this subsection and the date of the establishment of the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training program that was operating on the day before the date of the enactment of this subsection.

“(B) REPORTING.—Not later than 90 days after the first day of each of the fiscal years 2018 through 2022, the Secretary shall prepare and submit to Congress a report on the data collected under subparagraph (A).

“(C) SHARING BEST PRACTICES.—The Secretary shall make available, on the website of the Department of Health and Human Services, a description of the evidence-based practices and procedures used by entities that receive a grant under the pilot program for carrying out the activities described in paragraph (2)(B).”.

SEC. 11. IMPROVING THE NATIONAL STRATEGY TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

Section 606(b) of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (42 U.S.C. 14044h(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(6) A national strategy to prevent human trafficking and reduce demand for human trafficking victims.”.

SEC. 12. SPECIALIZED HUMAN TRAFFICKING TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 111 of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 14044f) is amended—

(1) in the heading, by striking “LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING PROGRAMS” and inserting “SPECIALIZED HUMAN TRAFFICKING TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE”;

(2) in subsection (a)(2), by striking “means a State or a local government.” and inserting the following: “means—

“(A) a State or unit of local government;

“(B) a federally recognized Indian tribal government, as determined by the Secretary of the Interior;

“(C) a victim service provider;

“(D) a nonprofit or for-profit organization (including a tribal nonprofit or for-profit organization);

“(E) a national organization; or

“(F) an institution of higher education (including tribal institutions of higher education).”;

(3) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

“(b) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Attorney General may award grants to eligible entities to—

“(1) provide training to identify and protect victims of trafficking;

“(2) improve quality and quantity of services offered to trafficking survivors; and

“(3) improve victim service providers’ partnerships with Federal, State, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies and other relevant entities.”; and

(4) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking “or” at the end;

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

“(4) provide technical assistance on the range of services available to victim service providers who serve trafficking victims;

“(5) develop and distribute materials, including materials identifying best practices in accordance with Federal law and policies, to support victim service providers working with human trafficking victims;

“(6) identify and disseminate other publicly available materials in accordance with Federal law to help build capacity of service providers;

“(7) provide training at relevant conferences, through webinars, or through other mechanisms in accordance with Federal law; or

“(8) assist service providers in developing additional resources such as partnerships with Federal, State, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies and other relevant entities in order to access a range of available services in accordance with Federal law.”.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 2 of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–162; 119 Stat. 2960) is amended by striking the item relating to section 111 and inserting the following:

“Sec. 111. Grants for specialized human trafficking training and technical assistance for service providers.”.

SEC. 13. ENHANCED PENALTIES FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING, CHILD EXPLOITATION, AND REPEAT OFFENDERS.

Part I of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in chapter 77—

(A) in section 1583(a), in the flush text following paragraph (3), by striking “not more than 20 years” and inserting “not more than 30 years”;

(B) in section 1587, by striking “four years” and inserting “10 years”;

(C) in section 1591(d), by striking “20 years” and inserting “25 years”;

(2) in section 2426—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking “twice” and inserting “3 times”;

(B) in subsection (b)(1)(B) by striking “paragraph (1)” and inserting “subparagraph (A)”.

SEC. 14. TARGETING ORGANIZED HUMAN TRAFFICKING PERPETRATORS.

Section 521(c) of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4);

(3) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

“(3) a Federal offense involving human trafficking, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or transportation for prostitution or any illegal sexual activity; and”;

(4) in paragraph (4), as so redesignated, by striking “(1) or (2)” and inserting “(1), (2), or (3)”.

SEC. 15. INVESTIGATING COMPLEX HUMAN TRAFFICKING NETWORKS.

Section 2516 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(c)—

(A) by inserting “section 1582 (vessels for slave trade), section 1583 (enticement into slavery),” after “section 1581 (peonage),”; and

(B) by inserting “section 1585 (seizure, detention, transportation or sale of slaves), section 1586 (service on vessels in slave trade), section 1587 (possession of slaves aboard vessel), section 1588 (transportation of slaves from United States),” after “section 1584 (involuntary servitude),”; and

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking “kidnapping, human” and inserting “kidnapping, human”; and

(B) by striking “production,” and inserting “production, prostitution.”

SEC. 16. COMBATING SEX TOURISM.

Section 2423 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by striking “for the purpose” and inserting “with a motivating purpose”; and

(2) in subsection (d), by striking “for the purpose of engaging” and inserting “with a motivating purpose of engaging”.

SEC. 17. HUMAN TRAFFICKING JUSTICE COORDINATORS.

(a) HUMAN TRAFFICKING JUSTICE COORDINATORS.—The Attorney General shall designate in each Federal judicial district not less than 1 Assistant United States Attorney to serve as the Human Trafficking Coordinator for the district who, in addition to any other responsibilities, works with a human trafficking victim-witness specialist and shall be responsible for—

(1) serving as the legal counsel for the Federal judicial district on matters relating to human trafficking;

(2) prosecuting, or assisting in the prosecution of, human trafficking cases;

(3) conducting public outreach and awareness activities relating to human trafficking;

(4) ensuring the collection of data required to be collected under clause (viii) of section 105(d)(7)(Q) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(d)(7)(Q)), as added by section 18 of this Act;

(5) coordinating with other Federal agencies, State, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies, victim service providers, and other relevant non-governmental organizations to build partnerships on activities relating to human trafficking; and

(6) ensuring the collection of restitution for victims as required to be ordered under section 1593 of title 18, United States Code, and section 2429 of such title, as added by section 3 of this Act.

(b) DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE COORDINATOR.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall designate an official who shall coordinate human trafficking efforts within

the Department of Justice who, in addition to any other responsibilities, shall be responsible for—

(1) coordinating, promoting, and supporting the work of the Department of Justice relating to human trafficking, including investigation, prosecution, training, outreach, victim support, grant-making, and policy activities;

(2) in consultation with survivors of human trafficking, compiling, conducting, and disseminating, including making publicly available when appropriate, replication guides and training materials for law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, emergency responders, individuals working in victim services, adult and child protective services, social services, and public safety, medical personnel, mental health personnel, financial services personnel, and any other individuals whose work may bring them in contact with human trafficking regarding how to—

(A) conduct investigations in human trafficking cases;

(B) address evidentiary issues and other legal issues; and

(C) appropriately assess, respond to, and interact with victims and witnesses in human trafficking cases, including in administrative, civil, and criminal judicial proceedings; and

(3) carrying out such other duties as the Attorney General determines necessary in connection with enhancing the understanding, prevention, and detection of, and response to, human trafficking.

SEC. 18. INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

Section 105(d)(7)(Q) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(d)(7)(Q)) is amended—

(1) in clause (vi), by striking “and” at the end; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(viii) the number of convictions obtained under chapter 77 of title 18, United States Code, aggregated separately by the form of offense committed with respect to the victim, including recruiting, enticing, harboring, transporting, providing, obtaining, advertising, maintaining, patronizing, or soliciting a human trafficking victim; and”.

SEC. 19. ADDITIONAL REPORTING ON CRIME.

Section 237(b) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (28 U.S.C. 534 note) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(4) incidents of assisting or promoting prostitution, child labor that is a violation of law, or forced labor of an individual under the age of 18 as described in paragraph (1); and

“(5) incidents of purchasing or soliciting commercial sex acts, child labor that is a violation of law, or forced labor with an individual under the age of 18 as described in paragraph (2).”.

SEC. 20. MAKING THE PRESIDENTIAL SURVIVOR COUNCIL PERMANENT.

Section 115 of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-22; 129 Stat. 243) is amended by striking subsection (h).

SEC. 21. STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE.

(a) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Section 105(d)(3) of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(d)(3)) is amended—

(1) by inserting “and providing an annual report on the case referrals received from the

national human trafficking hotline by Federal departments and agencies” after “international trafficking”; and

(2) by inserting “and reporting requirements” after “Any data collection procedures”.

(b) HOTLINE INFORMATION.—Section 107(b)(1)(B)(ii) of such Act (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(1)(B)(ii)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “The number of the national human trafficking hotline described in this clause shall be posted in a visible place in all Federal buildings.”.

SEC. 22. ENDING GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE COMMERCIAL SEX INDUSTRY.

No Federal funds or resources may be used for the operation of, participation in, or partnership with any program that involves the provision of funding or resources to an organization that—

(1) has the primary purpose of providing adult entertainment; and

(2) derives profits from the commercial sex trade.

SEC. 23. STUDY OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIM PRIVILEGE.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Judicial Conference of the United States shall—

(1) conduct a study on the necessity and desirability of amending the Federal Rules of Evidence to establish a Federal evidentiary privilege for confidential communications between a victim of human trafficking, regardless of whether the victim of human trafficking is a party to a legal action, and a caseworker assisting the victim of human trafficking; and

(2) submit to Congress a report on the study conducted under paragraph (1).

SEC. 24. UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF SEVERE FORMS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title VI of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-22; 129 Stat. 258) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“**SEC. 607. UNDERSTANDING THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF SEVERE FORMS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.**

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shall jointly conduct a study on the short-term and long-term physical and psychological effects of serious harm (as that term is defined in section 1589(c)(2) and section 1591(e)(4) of title 18, United States Code, as amended by the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-457; 122 Stat. 5044)) in order to determine the most effective types of services for individuals who are identified as victims of these crimes, including victims in cases that were not investigated or prosecuted by any law enforcement agency, and how new or current treatment and programming options should be tailored to address the unique needs and barriers associated with these victims.

“(b) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of the Abolish Human Trafficking Act of 2017, the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shall make available to the public the results, including any associated recommendations, of the study conducted under subsection (a).”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-22; 129 Stat. 227) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 606 the following:

“Sec. 607. Understanding the physical and psychological effects of severe forms of trafficking in persons.”.

SEC. 25. COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.

(a) **TRAFFICKING VICTIMS PREVENTION ACT OF 2000 PROGRAMS.**—Section 113 of the Trafficking Victims Prevention Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7110) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “2014 through 2017” and inserting “2018 through 2022.”; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking “2014 through 2017” and inserting “2018 through 2022.”; and

(2) in subsection (i), by striking “2014 through 2017” and inserting “2018 through 2022.”.

(b) **REINSTATEMENT AND REAUTHORIZATION OF GRANTS TO COMBAT CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING.**—

(1) **REINSTATEMENT OF EXPIRED PROVISION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 202 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 14044a) is amended to read as such section read on March 6, 2017.

(B) **CONFORMING AMENDMENT.**—Section 1241(b) of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (42 U.S.C. 14004a note) is repealed.

(2) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by paragraph (1) shall take effect as though enacted on March 6, 2017.

(3) **REAUTHORIZATION.**—Section 202(i) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005, as amended by paragraph (1), is amended to read as follows:

“(i) **FUNDING.**—For each of the fiscal years 2018 through 2022, the Attorney General is authorized to allocate up to \$8,000,000 of the amounts appropriated pursuant to section 113(d)(1) of the Trafficking Victims Prevention Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7110(d)(1)) to carry out this section.”.

SEC. 26. GRANT ACCOUNTABILITY.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section—

(1) the term “covered agency” means an agency authorized to award grants under this Act;

(2) the term “covered grant” means a grant authorized to be awarded under this Act; and

(3) the term “covered official” means the head of a covered agency.

(b) **ACCOUNTABILITY.**—All covered grants shall be subject to the following accountability provisions:

(1) **AUDIT REQUIREMENT.**—

(A) **DEFINITION.**—In this paragraph, the term “unresolved audit finding” means a finding in the final audit report of the Inspector General of a covered agency that the audited grantee has utilized funds under a covered grant for an unauthorized expenditure or otherwise unallowable cost that is not closed or resolved within 12 months from the date when the final audit report is issued.

(B) **AUDITS.**—Beginning in the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this Act, and in each fiscal year thereafter, the Inspector General of a covered agency shall conduct audits of recipients of covered grants to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of funds by grantees. The Inspector General shall determine the appropriate number of grantees to be audited each year.

(C) **MANDATORY EXCLUSION.**—A recipient of funds under a covered grant that is found to have an unresolved audit finding shall not be eligible to receive funds under a covered grant during the first 2 fiscal years beginning after the end of the 12-month period described in subparagraph (A).

(D) **PRIORITY.**—In awarding covered grants, a covered official shall give priority to eligi-

ble applicants that did not have an unresolved audit finding during the 3 fiscal years before submitting an application for the covered grant.

(E) **REIMBURSEMENT.**—If an entity is awarded funds under a covered grant during the 2-fiscal-year period during which the entity is barred from receiving covered grants under subparagraph (C), a covered official shall—

(i) deposit an amount equal to the amount of the grant funds that were improperly awarded to the grantee into the General Fund of the Treasury; and

(ii) seek to recoup the costs of the repayment to the fund from the recipient of the covered grant that was erroneously awarded grant funds.

(2) **NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS.**—

(A) **DEFINITION.**—For purposes of this paragraph and each covered grant program, the term “nonprofit organization” means an organization that is described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code.

(B) **PROHIBITION.**—A covered grant may not be awarded to a nonprofit organization that holds money in offshore accounts for the purpose of avoiding paying the tax described in section 511(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(C) **DISCLOSURE.**—Each nonprofit organization that is awarded a covered grant and uses the procedures prescribed in regulations to create a rebuttable presumption of reasonableness for the compensation of its officers, directors, trustees, and key employees, shall disclose to the applicable covered official, in the application for the covered grant, the process for determining such compensation, including the independent persons involved in reviewing and approving such compensation, the comparability data used, and contemporaneous substantiation of the deliberation and decision. Upon request, a covered official shall make the information disclosed under this subparagraph available for public inspection.

(3) **CONFERENCE EXPENDITURES.**—

(A) **LIMITATION.**—No amounts made available to a covered agency to carry out a covered grant program may be used by a covered official, or by any individual or entity awarded discretionary funds through a cooperative agreement under a covered grant program, to host or support any expenditure for conferences that uses more than \$20,000 in funds made available by the covered agency, unless the covered official provides prior written authorization that the funds may be expended to host the conference.

(B) **WRITTEN APPROVAL.**—Written approval under subparagraph (A) shall include a written estimate of all costs associated with the conference, including the cost of all food, beverages, audio-visual equipment, honoraria for speakers, and entertainment.

(C) **REPORT.**—

(i) **DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.**—The Deputy Attorney General shall submit an annual report to the appropriate committees of Congress on all conference expenditures approved under this paragraph.

(ii) **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.**—The Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress an annual report on all conference expenditures approved under this paragraph.

(iii) **DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.**—The Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress an annual report on all conference expenditures approved under this paragraph.

(4) **ANNUAL CERTIFICATION.**—Beginning in the first fiscal year beginning after the date

of enactment of this Act, each covered official shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress an annual certification—

(A) indicating whether—

(i) all audits issued by the Office of the Inspector General of the applicable covered agency under paragraph (1) have been completed and reviewed by the appropriate official;

(ii) all mandatory exclusions required under paragraph (1)(C) have been issued; and

(iii) all reimbursements required under paragraph (1)(E) have been made; and

(B) that includes a list of any recipients of a covered grant excluded under paragraph (1) from the previous year.

(c) **PREVENTING DUPLICATIVE GRANTS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Before a covered official awards a covered grant, the covered official shall compare potential awards under the covered grant program with other covered grants awarded to determine if duplicate grant awards are awarded for the same purpose.

(2) **REPORT.**—If a covered official awards duplicate covered grants to the same applicant for the same purpose the covered official shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that includes—

(A) a list of all duplicate covered grants awarded, including the total dollar amount of any duplicate covered grants awarded; and

(B) the reason the covered official awarded the duplicate covered grants.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CORKER, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 1312. A bill to prioritize the fight against human trafficking in the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, this week, I am introducing a bill known as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017. I want to thank Senators FEINSTEIN, CORNYN, KLOBUCHAR, CORKER and RUBIO for joining as original co-sponsors. I also want to thank the many organizations that support this bill and worked so closely with us on its development; they include Rights4Girls, Polaris, the ATEST Coalition, Shared Hope International, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators, and the National District Attorneys Association.

As its title implies, our legislation is aimed at combating the terrible scourge of human trafficking in the United States. To call trafficking victims' suffering a grave violation of our most basic human rights would be an understatement. Trafficking is a life-shattering crime that too-often goes unnoticed, despite the profound injury it inflicts on its victims and our society. Traffickers typically operate in the shadows, making it hard to identify them as well as their victims. That invisibility makes it harder still to rescue the victims and bring the perpetrators to justice.

But there are some things we do know about human trafficking, and we know them with some certainty. We know, for example, that trafficking is happening in rural areas, in cities, and in the suburbs. It is not confined to any

one area, because it has become so profitable. It has become a problem of national significance.

To be sure, we have made some strides in combating this terrible crime since the passage of the original Trafficking Victims Protection Act, or TVPA, over 15 years ago. The TVPA, last reauthorized in 2013, authorizes some very important programs to help victims. The bill I'm introducing this week updates and extends a number of these programs, which are under the jurisdiction of the Departments of Justice and Labor. Senator CORNYN this week is introducing a complementary bill that would reauthorize other TVPA programs, including those at the Departments of Health and Homeland Security.

This is not the first time we have collaborated on this subject. Two years ago, Senator CORNYN sponsored, and I cosponsored, another important measure, known as the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. As chair of the Judiciary Committee, I made that 2015 law's passage a top priority for our Committee and fought for its enactment. It established a new fund to help cover survivors' services and also equipped law enforcement with new tools to fight traffickers. The services authorized under this 2015 statute are crucial to helping survivors rebuild their lives with dignity.

The bill that I am introducing this week is a critical next step in ensuring that human trafficking is prevented, its perpetrators prosecuted, and its victims protected. This bill, drafted with bipartisan support, would require more training for investigative personnel at the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security. It also extends a grant program by which school personnel can receive training to recognize and respond to signs of trafficking in our educational system.

This bill also offers increased assistance to prosecutors and law enforcement agencies in their fight against human trafficking. For instance, it authorizes the Secret Service to offer investigative and forensic assistance to other crime fighting agencies. And it updates key provisions of the Missing Children's Assistance Act, which authorizes the important work of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The Center operates a cyber tipline by which internet service providers can report child sexual abuse.

Additionally, the bill I am introducing signals Congress' continued support for services available to trafficking victims who cooperate with federal law enforcement in trafficking investigations. Specifically, the bill authorizes an Office of Victim Assistance within the Department of Homeland Security. This office, which is staffed with specially trained victim assistance personnel, plays a crucial role in securing victims' cooperation with trafficking investigations.

Finally, this bill would promote the collection of more data on trafficking,

and it would promote increased coordination among the federal agencies engaged in combating this crime. Meaningful partnerships at the federal level can help expand awareness, leverage expertise, and facilitate creative solutions.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senator GRASSLEY in introducing the Trafficking Victims' Protection Act of 2017.

Last week, I met with a remarkable group of anti-trafficking stakeholders in Fresno, California, who reinforced what I have long held to be true: stamping out the horrific crime of human trafficking must be among our top priorities as lawmakers. At our meeting, Central Valley law enforcement, service providers and, most importantly, survivors of human trafficking educated me about the nature and prevalence of sex and labor trafficking in the Central Valley. I learned that counties like Fresno and Tulare serve as key stops along major California trafficking circuits, with victims as young as 10-years-old being shipped to Los Angeles, Las Vegas and beyond. I also learned that in 2016 alone, Fresno Police arrested more than 140 sex buyers and traffickers. This tells me that the demand for trafficking is far too high. Central Valley law enforcement and service providers are working together to reduce this demand, crack down on traffickers, and better serve victims, through a unique, highly-coordinated and victim-centered approach that I believe ought to be emulated nationwide.

Over the past seven years they have teamed up to identify and critically to provide comprehensive services to nearly 500 trafficking victims. When Central Valley law enforcement took down a trafficking ring last year, the ring leader and two of his associates were arrested and prosecuted, and approximately 50 victims were rescued, including 23 children. These victims were all provided with wraparound services, and the ring leader was sentenced to 40 years in prison. This is the kind of coordinated, victim centered work we need to support and replicate nationwide. The Trafficking Victims' Protection Act of 2017 aims to do that.

I have now met with law enforcement, service providers and survivors representing Southern, Central and Northern California. All have made one thing abundantly clear: lawmakers at all levels of government must commit whatever time and resources are needed to thwart this horrendous crime.

Over the past two decades, Congress has taken action to combat human trafficking. We passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 and, 8 years later, passed the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act. And two years ago, Congress passed the Justice for Victims of Human Trafficking Act—a

landmark piece of legislation. The law focuses on reducing demand, rescuing victims, educating law enforcement and judges, and making sure that trafficking enterprises are put out of business. But it is clear that our work is far from done. The human trafficking industry continues to be one of the biggest criminal enterprises in the world and it is constantly evolving. The use of the internet to sell children for sex has escalated dramatically over the past several years.

In my home State, District Attorney Nancy O'Malley and her pioneering anti-trafficking team identified 47,719 internet users looking to purchase sex in Alameda County alone during a single month. Many of the victims posted on these sites are underage. In one survivor study, a staggering 75% of minor sex trafficking victims reported being bought or sold online. And last year, the Washington Post reported devastating accounts about human trafficking is also committed by Islamic State fighters, who sell young girls over platforms such as Facebook.

The bill that Senator GRASSLEY and I have introduced includes a provision that would give to law enforcement an additional tool to prevent human traffickers from accessing the internet and other tech platforms to sell minors for commercial sex. Under current current law, it is a criminal offense to advertise commercial sex acts with a minor. This legislation would add civil injunction authority to the criminal provision, providing the Department of Justice with a more readily accessible tool to deny human traffickers access to tech platforms to commit trafficking crimes. The bill also supports and strengthens efforts to prevent, detect, and respond to human trafficking crimes.

It allows school resource officers at schools to train school personnel to recognize and respond to signs of child sex trafficking. This is important because kids are often recruited at schools. In one heartbreaking case in Oakland, California, a 12-year-old student with top grades suddenly changed her normal behavior. She stopped completing her assignments, became withdrawn, and began wearing provocative clothing. Eventually, she stopped going to school altogether. Her parents contacted the school looking for her, but no one was able to locate her. She was discovered 24 hours later on an online sex advertisement based out of Los Angeles. This 12-year-old girl had been groomed by a trafficker—but no one was able to recognize the signs of exploitation. Teachers and school personnel interact with these kids every day. They are critical in recognizing which kids are at risk or are about to become exploited. We need to be sure that they are familiar with the patterns and practices of human traffickers, and know how to identify and respond to suspected victims.

In addition to working with Chairman GRASSLEY on the reauthorization

bill, I am also pleased to cosponsor Senator CORNYN and Senator KLOBUCHAR's Abolish Human Trafficking Act of 2017. One of the most important provisions of this bill is the mandatory designation of at least one Human Trafficking Justice Coordinator in each United States Attorney's Office. This is critical to ensure that our judicial system treats human trafficking offenses with the seriousness they deserve. Among other responsibilities, this Coordinator will be responsible for assisting in the prosecution of human trafficking cases. This includes the prosecution of those who solicit minors for commercial sex, a change in the law that was enacted in the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act.

In 2015, former United States Attorney Eileen Decker conducted one of the first federal prosecutions of a buyer under this new statute. The buyer, a 59-year-old man from Torrance, admitted to lying to federal prosecutors about his conduct with a 16-year-old girl he met online and hired for commercial sex acts. He was sentenced to 57 months in prison. Former United States Attorney Decker remarked that this case should serve as a warning to adults who engage in this type of criminal conduct.

It is critical that such prosecutions continue. Stemming the abuse and exploitation of trafficking requires confronting not only the predatory suppliers, but also those who solicit young girls for commercial sex. The designation of a Human Trafficking Justice Coordinator would ensure that those who violate human trafficking offenses, both buyers and sellers, are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. The Human Justice Trafficking Coordinator would also be responsible for ensuring the collection of restitution for victims.

Restitution for trafficking victims is mandatory under federal law. Moreover, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act requires the Justice Department to train prosecutors to seek restitution for trafficking victims, regardless of whether the victim requests restitution. Yet, we continue to see our judicial system failing to do right by victims. In a 2015 law review article, the Human Trafficking Pro Bono Legal Center reported on the appallingly low rates of restitution orders in human trafficking prosecutions. In a study of federal human trafficking cases brought over a four period, federal courts failed to order restitution in nearly two-thirds of cases involving sex trafficking offenses. And shockingly, they found that the victims least likely to obtain restitution orders were children trafficked in the sex industry. Less than one in three defendants who commit sex trafficking offenses against children were ordered to pay restitution to their victims. This is unacceptable.

Furthermore, even if restitution is ordered against a trafficker, restitution itself is not being effectively col-

lected. In response the requests from the Judiciary Committee, the Attorney General included restitution order and collection data in the Department of Justice's report on trafficking for fiscal year 2015. Of the \$4,268,358 ordered in restitution in 2015, only \$987 was collected.

While we may not expect to see full restitution collected in the year it is ordered, it is shocking that the total restitution collected is less than 1% of what was ordered.

That is why we have tried to include additional restitution provisions in the bill to better support victims. For example, there is an additional provision in the bill to update the Combat Human Trafficking Act of 2015, a bill that I authored with Senator PORTMAN. That bill mandated extensive training on restitution for prosecutors and judges. It is our hope that with these updates—and with the recent enactment of the Justice for All Reauthorization Act of 2016 to make sure that prosecutors are held accountable in seeking restitution—victims will be better supported going forward. I am hopeful that we will be able to pass these bipartisan bills this Congress. I urge my colleagues in this body to support the passage of this important, comprehensive legislation to protect trafficking victims.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 1313. A bill to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I thank the senior Senator from Louisiana for working with me on the flood insurance bill that we are introducing today. This issue is so important to both of our States because both of our States have experienced enormous levels of flooding every year due to extreme weather.

In New York, after Superstorm Sandy hit our State, millions of homes and businesses were damaged by flooding that occurred. My colleague from Louisiana could go on and on and will tell you about flood damage his own constituents have had to endure, so it should be clear to everyone here that it is not a partisan issue.

Flooding can happen anywhere, in any State, from the Northeast to the gulf coast and everywhere else. Protecting our communities from the devastation that comes from flooding should be one of our highest priorities in this Chamber.

Unfortunately, the National Flood Insurance Program has not been doing its job very well. Too many families who have had their properties damaged in a flood or even destroyed in a flood have paid their flood insurance premiums year after year only to find out there was some loophole that prevented them from getting the coverage

they need. We cannot turn our backs and allow this to keep happening.

The bipartisan bill I have written with the Senator from Louisiana would ensure that flood insurance is more affordable for homeowners. It would make sure the Flood Insurance Program is no longer riddled with loopholes that leave our homeowners stranded and fighting with insurance companies on their own, all while trying to recover and rebuild from the flood damage. It would finally give homeowners the peace of mind that flood insurance rates will actually be affordable so that low- and moderate-income homeowners are not priced out of their homes because of extreme rate increases.

Our bill would also fund more projects to protect homes and communities from flood risk in the first place. Our bill would more than double the amount of funding a homeowner can receive for raising the elevation of their home, which is a proven way to protect against floods in certain areas, and it would provide more funding for FEMA's flood mitigation program. Those funds are used by States and local communities to plan and carry out projects that help manage flood risk to homes and other structures.

After Superstorm Sandy hit New York, too many families in my State experienced what amounted to a disaster after that disaster. They encountered engineering fraud. They had to deal with excessive delays and widespread underpayment of claims. This was shameful and totally unacceptable, especially for a program specifically designed to help people in their greatest time of need. So I am particularly pleased that this bill would fix some of the fundamental flaws in the National Flood Insurance Program's claims and appeals process that harmed so many of my constituents.

Our bill would prohibit engineering reports from being altered by anyone other than the person who inspected the home. That was one of the main causes of fraud for many homeowners in my State. It would require FEMA to have more direct oversight over the litigation costs and engineering costs that are billed to the government. It would repeal the onerous earth movement exemption, which too often has been used to deny flood claims to families who desperately need the payments after a flood.

Our bill also would ensure that engineers and insurance companies are not shielded from legal liability when they do commit fraud, which, unfortunately, was much more common than anyone would even think.

The Flood Insurance Program expires on September 30 of this year, and it is absolutely vital that we reauthorize it with strong reforms that protect homeowners. We need to do everything we can to ensure that the Flood Insurance Program is affordable, sustainable, transparent, and accountable. This is our chance to do that now.

This is a good bipartisan bill, and I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join us in making these important reforms to the National Flood Insurance Program.

I yield the floor now to my colleague from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from New York for yielding, as well as for the tremendous work she and our staffs have done together on the Flood Insurance Affordability and Sustainability Act of 2017.

There is a capriciousness of flooding which makes the National Flood Insurance Program so important. You can have a mountaintop village next to a dry gulch. If there is a sudden flash flood, folks who have lived there 100 years suddenly find their 100-year-old homes destroyed. The NFIP helps rebuild the lives of those who are so affected.

The Flood Insurance Program is critical, not just to that mountaintop village but, by extension, our entire country. The economic impact of flooding extends far beyond real estate transactions to the fundamental vitality of communities and the workforce that operates our ports, develops and refines our domestic energy, and produces our seafood and agriculture for global consumption. It just makes sense.

Most towns started on the coast and on riverways because that is how goods were transported, and the history of these waterside communities is what makes them, one, economically vital, but, two, also makes them susceptible to flooding. I will note that the Presiding Officer's State of Pennsylvania, I believe, has among the most incidents of flooding in our country—principally because there are so many riverine systems. There is a valley with a river. If the water rises quickly, that riverside community is flooded. Look at my State of Louisiana. It relies on an accessible and affordable flood insurance program, but that benefits the country.

Louisiana is the No. 1 producer of offshore oil and gas, producing over 15 percent of our Nation's domestic energy supply. That is 15 percent of our Nation's domestic energy supply. It is home to the second largest refining capacity in petrochemical industry. The Gulf of Mexico is home to 11 of the top 20 U.S. ports by cargo volume, and we have one of the largest seafood industries in the world. After Hurricane Katrina, when our port facilities were affected and the farmers in the Upper Missouri suddenly could not get their crop to international markets, it shows the importance of our ports for our entire economy.

The National Flood Insurance Program allows folks in my State to participate in a working coast that gets that energy inland and gets those products in the international market, and this is what provides the value-added contribution to our domestic economy. Since the creation of the National Flood Insurance Program, people in Louisiana paid over \$5 billion in flood

insurance premiums, but, unfortunately, we have suffered some of the greatest losses after Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustov, Isaac, and the flooding of the great Louisiana floods of last March and August.

While the NFIP has a deficit of \$24 billion—according to FEMA's premium and payout data—the NFIP would have had a surplus if we remove the 2005 loss year, including the losses incurred after Superstorm Sandy. I will also note that New Orleans flooded because federally built floodwalls designed to protect those businesses and families were constructed in a faulty way. This has been recognized, and their failure is what led to the expense. I am not here to say that NFIP doesn't need reforms—it needs reforms—but to underscore the fact that the program has worked for many years despite its failings. We need to reauthorize the NFIP and use the opportunity to improve the program, make it more affordable, transferring more risk to the private sector at a lower cost, increase investment mitigation, modernizing flood mapping to produce greater accuracy, and improve the transparency and accountability of all the participants that operate and administer the program.

There are a number of constituencies interested in long-term reauthorization of NFIP. Senator GILLIBRAND and I know that the issue of flooding crosses party and geographical lines. We wanted to set the right bipartisan tone as Congress begins to debate the issue by introducing our bill, the Flood Insurance Affordability and Sustainability Act. We hope the legislation will contribute to the ongoing discussion and work the committees of jurisdiction are conducting as we move toward reauthorization of the NFIP and with the needed reforms that enhance affordability and sustainability of the program.

Senator GILLIBRAND and her staff are passionate advocates for an affordable and sustainable flood insurance program. I am glad to work with her on this issue. We have listened to many stakeholders: bankers, realtors, homebuilders, flood plain managers, insurers, reinsurers, mapping experts, local government officials, financial experts and, most importantly, homeowners who work on our working coast and who have so much invested in making sure they can live and raise their families in a way which has protection from the capriciousness of flooding.

I thank my colleague from New York, as well as Senator CAPITO, for her contribution to this legislation and process.

By Mr. KAINÉ (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1314. A bill to amend the Natural Gas Act to bolster fairness and transparency in consideration of interstate natural gas pipelines, to provide for greater public input opportunities, and for other purposes; to the Committee

on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. KAINÉ. Mr. President. Today I am introducing a bipartisan bill to make the process of siting natural gas pipelines fairer and more transparent.

For some time now, I have been listening to Virginians with passionate views on the proposed Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley Pipelines. For various reasons, many oppose one or both of these projects, while others support these projects. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, FERC, is tasked with analyzing all the issues—purpose and need for a project, impacts on 2 people living on the route, potential risks to the environment or property—and deciding what course best serves the public interest.

From listening to all sides, I have concluded that while reasonable people may reach different conclusions, FERC's public input process is flawed and could be better. Accordingly, this legislation proposes several steps to address several shortcomings, all of which were originally brought to my attention by Virginia constituents. For instance, this bill requires programmatic analysis of pipelines proposed around the same time and in the same geographic vicinity so that the full impacts of multiple projects can be analyzed. It requires a greater number of public comment meetings so that citizens are not required to commute long distances to meetings at which they must speed through just a few minutes of remarks on these complex topics. And it clarifies the circumstances under which eminent domain should and should not be used.

I am pleased to be joined by my colleague Senator MARK WARNER on this bill, and our Virginia Republican colleague Representative MORGAN GRIFITH is preparing a similar bill in the House of Representatives. While our views may differ on many aspects of energy policy, we can all agree that the public deserves reasonable opportunity to weigh in on energy infrastructure projects and that this process can be fairer and more transparent without mandating a particular outcome.

I encourage the Senate to consider this legislation, not to pave the way for pipelines nor to throw up insurmountable roadblocks to them—but to give the public greater certainty that the federal government's infrastructure decisions are fair and transparent.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 185—RECOGNIZING AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL WATER SAFETY MONTH

Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. NELSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 185

Whereas, according to the 2016 report of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, there were estimated averages of—

(1) 5,600 pool- or spa-related nonfatal drowning injuries treated at a hospital emergency department during each of the 2013 through 2015 calendar years; and
(2) 367 pool- or spa-related nonfatal or fatal drowning injuries involving children younger than 15 years old during each of the 2011 through 2013 calendar years, with 77 percent of those injuries involving children younger than 5 years old;

Whereas, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drowning is—

(1) the leading cause of unintentional death in the United States among children 1 through 4 years old; and
(2) the second-leading cause of unintentional death in the United States among children 5 through 14 years old;

Whereas drowning ranks fifth among the leading causes of unintentional injury or death in the United States, and every day, approximately 10 individuals die from unintentional drowning, 2 of whom are children 14 years old or younger;

Whereas the goal of National Water Safety Month is to prevent or reduce the number of unintentional drowning-related injuries and deaths in pools and open water venues;

Whereas the recreational water industry, as represented by the organizations involved in the National Water Safety Month Coalition, has contributed to that goal by—

(1) developing, through codes and standards, safe public swimming facilities and residential pools and spas; and
(2) providing aquatic programs and public awareness relating to unintentional accidents in pools and open water venues;

Whereas unintentional drowning deaths that occur each year, especially of children under 5 years old, can be prevented by teaching children to swim, by using barriers and other devices that aid in preventing access to areas where drowning could occur, and especially by providing constant adult supervision without distraction;

Whereas each public pool and spa in the United States should be in compliance with the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 8001 et seq.), which was signed into law on December 19, 2007, and requires all public pools to install safe drain covers that help prevent entrapment;

Whereas each residential pool and spa in the United States should be built and maintained in accordance with the guidelines described in that Act or the International Swimming Pool and Spa Code, which a State or locality may adopt through building codes and standards;

Whereas ⅓ of drowning deaths occur during May through August; and

Whereas, for the tenth consecutive year, May has been recognized as National Water Safety Month: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Water Safety Month;

(2) supports promoting awareness of water safety by increasing public education and awareness;

(3) acknowledges the grief of families who have faced the loss of a loved one, and commends the families who, in their grief, choose to promote and educate the public on water safety;

(4) encourages States, localities, and territories of the United States to—

(A) support the goals and ideals of National Water Safety Month by issuing a proclamation to designate May 2017 as “National Water Safety Month”;

(B) support the adoption of codes and standards that provide safety requirements

that may decrease the incidence of drowning; and

(C) engage in and encourage public awareness campaigns, including campaigns that educate individuals on—

(i) how to swim;
(ii) layers of protection; and
(iii) adult supervision;
(5) recognizes the vital role that swimming and aquatic-related activities play in maintaining physical and mental health and enhancing quality of life;
(6) encourages efforts to educate the public about water safety to prevent drownings and recreational water-related injuries; and
(7) understands the vital importance of communicating water safety rules and programs to families and individuals of all ages, including owners of private pools, users of public swimming facilities, and visitors to waterparks.

SENATE RESOLUTION 186—RECOGNIZING THE AVIATION CADET MUSEUM IN EUREKA SPRINGS, ARKANSAS, AS THE NATIONAL AVIATION CADET MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. COTTON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

S. RES. 186

Whereas the Aviation Cadet Museum was founded in 1994 by former aviation cadet and Air Force First Lieutenant Errol Severe;

Whereas, from 1917 until 1965, the flying cadet and succeeding aviation cadet programs served as the primary production source for nearly 500,000 joint service pilots, navigators, and bombardiers;

Whereas the bravery, courage, dedication, and heroism of aviators and supporting ground crews from the Army Air Corps and the Army Air Forces were critical factors in defeating the enemies of the United States during World War I and World War II;

Whereas the Aviation Cadet Museum in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, is the only museum in the United States that exists exclusively to preserve and promote an understanding of the role of aviation cadets in the 20th century; and

Whereas the Aviation Cadet Museum is dedicated to—

(1) celebrating the spirit of the United States; and

(2) recognizing the teamwork, collaboration, patriotism, and courage of the men who trained for and fought in, as well as those individuals on the home front who mobilized and supported, the national aviation effort: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes the Aviation Cadet Museum in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, as the national aviation cadet museum of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 187—CONGRATULATING AND HONORING FERMI NATIONAL ACCELERATOR LABORATORY ON 50 YEARS OF GROUNDBREAKING DISCOVERIES

Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 187

Whereas, in 2017, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (referred to in this pre-

amble as “Fermilab”) celebrates the 50th anniversary of the date on which the first employees of Fermilab started work in Illinois, June 15, 1967;

Whereas Fermilab 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 and honors 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.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 220. Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, to impose sanctions with respect to Iran in relation to Iran's ballistic missile program, support for acts of international terrorism, and violations of human rights, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 221. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. MARKEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 222. Mr. TILLIS (for Mr. MORAN) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 174, recognizing the 100th anniversary of Lions Clubs International and celebrating the Lions Clubs International for a long history of humanitarian service.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 220. Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. PORTMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, to impose sanctions with respect to Iran in relation to Iran's ballistic missile program, support for acts of international terrorism, and violations of human rights, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. 13. SENSE OF SENATE ON THE UNWAVERING COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Senate makes the following findings:

(1) Following World War II, the United States rejected isolationism, established its role as a world leader, and developed an international alliance system that protected the United States while supporting democracy, freedom, and economic prosperity with European nations.

(2) 70 years ago, the United States announced the Marshall Plan for Europe, a strategic investment in Europe, as well as articulated the Truman Doctrine, which sought to contain a growing Soviet threat in Southern Europe.

(3) In 1949, the United States, Canada, Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United Kingdom signed the North Atlantic Treaty that formed the basis of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (in this section referred to as “NATO”).

(4) NATO was created to protect countries from a growing Soviet threat, promote international peace and stability, and defend freedom.

(5) To date, 29 countries have joined NATO.

(6) For more than 67 years, NATO has served as a central pillar of United States national security and a deterrent against adversaries and external threats.

(7) NATO continues to improve its collective defense measures, enhance its military capabilities to address a full spectrum of complex threats, and partner with non-NATO countries to promote international stability.

(8) Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty is an integral part of NATO and states that “[t]he Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all . . .”.

(9) NATO invoked Article 5 for the first time less than 24 hours after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against the United States.

(10) In Afghanistan, NATO allies and partners have served alongside United States forces since 2001, reaching a peak of more than 42,000 ally and partner forces, 6,300 NATO forces continue to serve today alongside the 6,900 United States forces there, and more than 1,100 NATO ally and partner forces have paid the ultimate price in service to the collective defense of NATO.

(11) NATO took the lead in helping combat the terrorist threat in Afghanistan through the International Security Assistance Force and Operation Resolute Support, contributing to the safety of the United States and the international community.

(12) All 29 NATO allies and many NATO partners are contributing to the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

(13) Approximately 18,000 military personnel are currently engaged in NATO missions around the world, conducting operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo, the Mediterranean, and off the Horn of Africa.

(14) NATO conducts a range of maritime security operations in the Mediterranean and is essential to establishing stability along the borders of Europe and to responding to the ongoing refugee and migrant crisis.

(15) For nearly 10 years, NATO has provided airlift support for the mission of the African Union in Somalia, as well as assisted with training the African Standby Force at the request of the African Union.

(16) For more than 17 years, NATO has led peace-support operations in Kosovo to maintain safety and security in a volatile region.

(17) NATO has three standing forces on active duty at all times to defend the Alliance, air policing capability, maritime forces, and an integrated air defense system.

(18) Whereas NATO allies and the international community continue to look to NATO to deter the increasingly revanchist activities of Russia.

(19) Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford, testified before the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate on July 19, 2015, that Russia presents the “greatest existential threat” to the United States.

(20) The malign actions of Russia—its 2008 incursion into Georgia, its illegal annexation of Crimea, its continued military action in Ukraine, its targeting of civilians in Syria, its ongoing information war in Europe, its continued violations of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Agreement, and its cyberattacks aimed at influencing United States elections—have violated international laws and norms.

(21) Russia continues to use disinformation campaigns and promote state propaganda to discredit democracy and undermine NATO members.

(22) Since the illegal annexation of Crimea and direct support to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine by Russia in 2014, NATO members have undertaken the biggest reinforcement of the collective defense of NATO since the end of the Cold War, enhancing allied readiness and deterrence measures in response to Russian aggression.

(23) The efforts of NATO to confront and deter Russian aggression in Eastern Europe have included a three-fold increase in the size of the NATO Response Force (NRF) to 40,000 troops; the creation of a Spearhead Force of 5,000 troops capable of deploying within a few days to respond to any threat against an ally, particularly on the eastern flank of NATO; the forward deployment of up to 4,000 troops to Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania; an increase in the air policing and maritime missions of NATO in Eastern Europe; and a significant increase in NATO training and military exercises in Eastern Europe.

(24) Following the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2014, the United States established Operation Atlantic Resolve and the European Reassurance Initiative to reassure NATO allies that the United States would uphold its global security commitments and work in coordination with European partners to deter Russian aggression.

(25) Since 2014, Operation Atlantic Resolve and the European Reassurance Initiative have demonstrated the continued commitment of the United States to its NATO allies and partners by engaging in deterrence and security measures against potential Russian aggression in the region.

(26) Whereas the United States is further strengthening its force presence in Europe through the continuous deployment of an armored brigade combat team to Poland on a rotating basis.

(27) On January 6, 2017, as a part of Operation Atlantic Resolve, 3,500 United States troops from the 4th Infantry Division in Fort Carson, Colorado, along with more than 2,500 military vehicles, were deployed to Eastern Europe to deter regional aggression.

(28) Continued United States leadership in NATO is critical to ensuring that NATO remains the greatest military alliance in history.

(29) All NATO members have recommitted themselves to sharing the security burden of NATO at the 2014 NATO Wales Summit by pledging to meet the defense spending target

for NATO members of 2 percent of gross domestic product within 10 years.

(30) The United States, Greece, Poland, Estonia, and the United Kingdom all have exceeded that defense spending target.

(31) Since the Wales Summit, Latvia, Lithuania, and many other allies have increased defense spending in an effort to meet that defense spending target.

(32) NATO remains committed to its open door policy on enlargement, working with countries in the Euro-Atlantic region that aspire to join NATO to help meet the requirements for membership.

(33) General James Jones, United States Marine Corps (retired), former National Security Advisor, testified before the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate in July 2016 that “[o]ur 27 NATO allies offer America forward basing, which allows us to better fight enemies like ISIS and deter adversaries like the new Russia and to meet shared challenges. Twenty-eight countries acting as one is a powerful alliance”.

(34) Secretary of Defense James Mattis testified before the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate, during his hearing as nominee for Secretary of Defense, that “[w]e must also embrace our international alliances and security partnerships. History is clear: Nations with strong allies thrive and those without them wither”.

(35) There is a long tradition of strong bipartisan agreement that participation in NATO strengthens the security of the United States.

(36) NATO is the first peacetime military alliance the United States entered into outside the Western Hemisphere and today remains the largest peacetime military alliance in the world.

(37) A fractured NATO alliance would harm the interests of the United States and embolden adversaries of the United States.

(38) A strong and united Europe is important to United States strategic interests.

(b) SENSE OF SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate—

(1) to pledge that the United States will continue to maintain strong leadership and strengthen its commitments to NATO;

(2) to strongly encourage NATO members to fulfill their pledge to invest at least 2 percent of gross domestic product on defense spending, invest at least 20 percent of such spending on major equipment (including research and development), and shoulder appropriate responsibility within NATO;

(3) to welcome Montenegro as the newest member of NATO;

(4) to recognize the historic contribution and sacrifice NATO member countries have made while combating terrorism in Afghanistan through the International Security Assistance Force and Operation Resolute Support; and

(5) to honor the men and women who served under NATO and gave their lives to promote peace, security, and international cooperation since 1949.

SA 221. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. MARKEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, to impose sanctions with respect to Iran in relation to Iran’s ballistic missile program, support for acts of international terrorism, and violations of human rights, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Add at the end the following new section:
SEC. 13. UKRAINIAN ENERGY SECURITY.

(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to support the Government of Ukraine in restoring its sovereign and territorial integrity;

(2) to condemn and oppose all of the destabilizing efforts by the Government of the Russian Federation in Ukraine in violation of its obligations and international commitments;

(3) to never recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Government of the Russian Federation or the separation of any portion of Ukrainian territory through the use of military force;

(4) to deter the Government of the Russian Federation from further destabilizing and invading Ukraine and other independent countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus;

(5) to assist in promoting reform in regulatory oversight and operations in Ukraine's energy sector, including the establishment and empowerment of an independent regulatory organization;

(6) to encourage and support fair competition, market liberalization, and reliability in Ukraine's energy sector;

(7) to help Ukraine and United States allies and partners in Europe reduce their dependence on Russian energy resources, especially natural gas, which the Government of the Russian Federation uses as a weapon to coerce, intimidate, and influence other countries;

(8) to work with European Union member states and European Union institutions to promote energy security through developing diversified and liberalized energy markets that provide diversified sources, suppliers, and routes;

(9) to continue to oppose the NordStream 2 pipeline given its detrimental impacts on the European Union's energy security, gas market development in Central and Eastern Europe, and energy reforms in Ukraine; and

(10) that the United States Government should prioritize the export of United States energy resources in order to create American jobs, help United States allies and partners, and strengthen United States foreign policy.

(b) PLAN TO PROMOTE ENERGY SECURITY IN UKRAINE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and the Secretary of Energy, shall work with the Government of Ukraine to develop a plan to increase energy security in Ukraine, increase the amount of energy produced in Ukraine, and reduce Ukraine's reliance on energy imports from the Russian Federation.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The plan developed under paragraph (1) shall include strategies for market liberalization, effective regulation and oversight, supply diversification, energy reliability, and energy efficiency, such as through supporting—

(A) the promotion of advanced technology and modern operating practices in Ukraine's oil and gas sector;

(B) modern geophysical and meteorological work followed by international tenders to help attract qualified investment into exploration and development of areas with untapped resources in Ukraine;

(C) a broadening of Ukraine's electric power transmission interconnection with Europe;

(D) the strengthening of Ukraine's capability to maintain electric power grid stability and reliability;

(E) independent regulatory oversight and operations of Ukraine's gas market and electricity sector;

(F) the implementation of primary gas law including pricing, tariff structure, and legal regulatory implementation;

(G) privatization of government owned energy companies through credible legal frameworks and a transparent process compliant with international best practices;

(H) procurement and transport of emergency fuel supplies, including reverse pipeline flows from Europe;

(I) provision of technical assistance for crisis planning, crisis response, and public outreach;

(J) repair of infrastructure to enable the transport of fuel supplies;

(K) repair of power generating or power transmission equipment or facilities; and

(L) improved building energy efficiency and other measures designed to reduce energy demand in Ukraine.

(3) REPORTS.—

(A) IMPLEMENTATION OF UKRAINE FREEDOM SUPPORT ACT OF 2014 PROVISIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report detailing the status of implementing the provisions required under section 7(c) of the Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-272), including detailing the plans required under that section, the level of funding that has been allocated to and expended for the strategies set forth under that section, and progress that has been made in implementing the strategies developed pursuant to that section.

(B) REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report detailing the plan developed under paragraph (1), the level of funding that has been allocated to and expended for the strategies set forth in paragraph (2), and progress that has been made in implementing the strategies.

(C) BRIEFINGS.—The Secretary of State, or a designee of the Secretary, shall brief the appropriate committees of Congress not later than 30 days after the submission of each report under subparagraph (A). In addition, the Department of State shall make relevant officials available upon request to brief the appropriate committees of Congress on all available information that relates directly or indirectly to Ukraine or energy security in Eastern Europe.

(D) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term "appropriate committees of Congress" means—

(i) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(ii) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated for the Department of State a total of \$30,000,000 for fiscal years 2018 through 2019 to carry out the strategies set forth in subsection (b)(2) and other activities under this section related to the promotion of energy security in Ukraine.

(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as affecting the responsibilities required and authorities provided under section 7 of the Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-272).

SA 222. Mr. TILLIS (for Mr. MORAN) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 174, recognizing the 100th anniversary of Lions Clubs International and celebrating the Lions Clubs International for a long history of humanitarian service; as follows:

On page 6, strike the fourth whereas clause.

On page 6, in the seventh whereas clause, strike "the United Kingdom and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation" and insert "partner organizations".

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have 9 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 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, June 7, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 7, 2017, at 10:15 a.m., in 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing to consider pending nominations.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 7, 2017 at a time to be determined, to hold a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 7, 2017, at 10 a.m. in order to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Brock Long.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 7, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. in SR-418, to conduct a hearing titled, "Examining the Veterans Choice Program and the Future of Care in the Community."

COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate on Wednesday, June 7, 2017 from 10 a.m., in room SH-216 of the Senate Hart Office Building to hold an open hearing entitled "FISA Amendments Act."

COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate on Wednesday, June 7, 2017 from 2 p.m., in room SH-219 of the Senate Hart Office Building to hold a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

The Committee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 7,

2017, at 2:30 p.m., in open session, to receive testimony on Department of Defense nuclear acquisition programs and the nuclear doctrine.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES' SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources' Subcommittee on National Parks is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to hold a hearing on Wednesday, June 7, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., in Room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 174.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 174) recognizing the 100th anniversary of Lions Clubs International and celebrating the Lions Clubs International for a long history of humanitarian service.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, 100 years ago today, Lions Clubs International was created in Chicago, IL, and today the Senate is considering adoption of this resolution, S. Res. 174, commemorating this tremendous occasion. One hundred years later, Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club, with more than 1.4 million members who participate in more than 46,000 clubs across the globe.

In my State of Kansas alone, we have more than 270 Lions Clubs, and I have been a member of Lions Clubs since I graduated from college, went to work, and got involved in the community. I have seen firsthand how Lions Clubs make a significant difference in the communities they are in, as well as their reach around the globe in addressing problems in their communities and humanitarian needs around the world. Lions are committed to caring for those less fortunate, from young to old, and they do so in a way that shows care and compassion. It is all about the right motivation. They care about people, and they make a difference. It is this selfless service and commitment to a greater good that is needed in our country today.

In the face of serious challenges, I believe those who volunteer their time and their resources in community civic clubs, not-for-profits, schools and fundraisers, in churches and charities are the ones who have the greatest impact on people's lives. This kind of involvement at the local level has the potential to make meaningful and tangible differences in the lives of people

around us, perhaps more so than even the best intentioned Federal programs that come from the Nation's Capital. I am of the view that we change the world one soul, one person at a time, and it happens in Lions Clubs and their efforts in their communities and globally every day.

Over their 100 years of existence, the Lions Clubs have supported the blind, encouraged the young, provided relief to those struck by tragedy, and fought to eradicate disease. They have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to humanitarian work internationally and are committed to serving 100 million people around the globe.

As we reflect upon all the good that has come from the last 100 years among Lions Clubs members, may our commitment to our neighbors, our communities, and our fellow men and women be strengthened and renewed. Today, Lions Clubs begin another century of service to others as they seek out ways to better our world.

I offer my congratulations to Bob Corlew of Milton, TN, who is the international president, and I welcome Lions members from around the globe as they gather in Chicago later this month for their international convention. From 100 years ago in Chicago to this month, 100 years in which they celebrate their birth, the Lions Clubs motto is "We serve."

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; the Moran amendment to the preamble be considered and agreed to; the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 174) was agreed to.

The amendment (No. 222) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To remove references to specific entities)

On page 6, strike the fourth whereas clause.

On page 6, in the seventh whereas clause, strike "the United Kingdom and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation" and insert "partner organizations".

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to. The resolution, with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 174

Whereas, on June 7, 1917, Chicago business leader Melvin Jones founded Lions Clubs International in Chicago, Illinois, based on the principle that "[y]ou can't get very far until you start doing something for somebody else";

Whereas the motto of Lions Clubs International, "We Serve"—

(1) was selected in 1954 after having been submitted by Lion D.A. Stevenson of Font Hill, Ontario, in an international contest; and

(2) applies to the charitable and humanitarian priorities of Lions Clubs International, including—

(A) eyesight preservation and blindness prevention;

(B) services for individuals with disabilities;

(C) hearing and speech conservation;

(D) diabetes awareness;

(E) youth outreach;

(F) services for older individuals;

(G) activities that promote international goodwill;

(H) disaster relief; and

(I) environmental protection;

Whereas, with over 46,000 clubs and 1,400,000 members in over 200 countries and geographical areas around the globe, Lions Clubs International is the largest service organization in the world;

Whereas the purposes of Lions Clubs International include—

(1) to create and foster a spirit of understanding among people around the world;

(2) to promote the principles of good government and good citizenship;

(3) to take an active interest in the civic, cultural, social, and moral welfare of the community;

(4) to provide a forum for the open discussion of all matters of public interest, except that members of Lions Clubs International may not debate partisan politics and sectarian religion;

(5) to encourage service-minded individuals to serve their communities without personal financial reward; and

(6) to encourage efficiency and promote high ethical standards in commerce, industry, public works, and professional and private endeavors;

Whereas, on March 12, 1920, a Lions Club was chartered in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, and Lions Clubs became an international organization;

Whereas, in 1925, at the Lions Club in Cedar Point, Ohio, Helen Keller charged members of Lions Clubs International with becoming "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness";

Whereas, in 1926, polar explorer and member of the District of Columbia Lions Club, Admiral Richard E. Byrd, Jr., flew over the North Pole carrying the flag of Lions Clubs International;

Whereas, in 1930, after witnessing an individual with a vision impairment having difficulty crossing a street, Lion George Bonham painted a cane white with a red band for use by visually impaired individuals;

Whereas, in 1931—

(1) the first Lions Club was established south of the United States in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico; and

(2) the first Lions Clubs International convention was held in Toronto, Ontario;

Whereas, in 1935, during the Lions Clubs International convention in Mexico City, Amelia Earhart, who was an honorary member of the New York City Lions Club, completed a record-breaking nonstop flight from Los Angeles, California, to Mexico;

Whereas, in 1939, the members of the Detroit Uptown Lions Club converted an old farmhouse in the State of Michigan into a school to train dog guides for visually impaired individuals, helping to popularize dog guides worldwide;

Whereas, on June 6, 1939, the first Little League baseball game was played at Park Point in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, after Lion Carl Edwin Stotz appealed to Lions Clubs International, the Young Men's Christian Association, and other community partners for support to provide an organized baseball program for children;

Whereas, in 1944, the first eye bank in the world was established in New York City, and as of March 2017, most eye banks are sponsored by Lions Clubs International;

Whereas, in 1945, Lions Clubs International assisted in drafting the Charter of the United Nations, which began a lasting relationship between Lions Clubs International and the

United Nations that includes Lions Clubs International aid and volunteers for—

- (1) the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund;
- (2) the World Health Organization;
- (3) the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; and
- (4) other humanitarian projects;

Whereas, in 1957, the Leo Clubs youth program of Lions Clubs International was established to provide young people with the opportunity for personal development through volunteer work;

Whereas, as of March 2017, there are approximately 157,000 Leos and 600 Leo Clubs in over 200 countries and geographical areas worldwide;

Whereas, in 1968, the Lions Clubs International Foundation (referred to in this preamble as "LCIF") was established to assist Lions Clubs International with global and large-scale local humanitarian projects;

Whereas LCIF has given more than \$826,000,000 in grants to support the humanitarian work of Lions Clubs International;

Whereas, in 1972, LCIF awarded its first grant, in the amount of \$5,000, to assist flood victims in South Dakota;

Whereas, in 1977, Lion Jimmy Carter became the 39th President of the United States;

Whereas, in 1985, LCIF awarded its first Major Catastrophe Grant, in the amount of \$50,000, for earthquake relief in Mexico;

Whereas, in 1986, Mother Teresa accepted a Lions Humanitarian Award;

Whereas, in 1987, Lions Clubs International amended its bylaws and invited women to become members, and women are now the fastest growing group of new members in Lions Clubs International;

Whereas, in 1990, LCIF launched SightFirst, an initiative that—

- (1) assists Lions Clubs International in activities to restore eyesight and prevent blindness on a global scale; and
- (2) eventually raised more than \$415,000,000 to target low vision, trachoma, river blindness, childhood blindness, diabetic retinopathy, and glaucoma;

Whereas, in 1995, LCIF began a partnership with the Carter Center, led by former President and Lion Jimmy Carter, to combat river blindness in Africa and Latin America, and by 2003, LCIF and the Carter Center had provided 50,000,000 river blindness treatments;

Whereas, in 2001, LCIF partnered with the Special Olympics on Opening Eyes, an initiative to provide vision screening for Special Olympics athletes;

Whereas, in 2002, Lions Clubs International chartered a club in China, which became the first voluntary membership group in China;

Whereas, in 2007, the Financial Times ranked LCIF as the best nongovernmental organization worldwide with which to establish a partnership;

Whereas, in 2011, LCIF awarded its 10,000th grant, bringing the total amount awarded to grant recipients by LCIF to \$708,000,000;

Whereas, in 2013, LCIF partnered with the GAVI Alliance to protect millions of children from measles and rubella in 2013;

Whereas LCIF committed \$30,000,000 for immunizations, an amount matched by partner organizations;

Whereas, in 2013, with the support of Lions Clubs International and the Carter Center, river blindness was eliminated in Colombia; and

Whereas, in 2014, Lions Clubs International launched the Centennial Service Challenge, a global initiative to serve 100,000,000 people around the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

- (1) congratulates Lions Clubs International on its 100th anniversary on June 7, 2017;

- (2) recognizes Lions Clubs International for 100 years of promoting community service and humanitarian assistance;

- (3) encourages Lions Clubs International to continue to emphasize the values of community service and improving the community for all individuals; and

- (4) applauds Lions Clubs International for instilling in young people the value of community service.

CONGRATULATING AND HONORING FERMI NATIONAL ACCELERATOR LABORATORY ON 50 YEARS OF GROUNDBREAKING DISCOVERIES

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 187, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 187) congratulating and honoring Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory on 50 years of groundbreaking discoveries.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. TILLIS. 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. 187) 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, JUNE 8, 2017

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, June 8; 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 resume consideration of the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 110, S. 722, postcloture; finally, that all time during recess, adjournment, morning business, and leader remarks count postcloture on the motion to proceed to S. 722.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Sen-

ators WYDEN, MERKLEY, PETERS, and SANDERS.

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

The Senator from Vermont.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, in the U.S. Senate, it is the Parliamentarian's office that determines whether a reconciliation bill is in compliance with the rules of the Senate. That is not the function of the chairman of the Budget Committee. If it were, we could save taxpayers' money and get rid of the Parliamentarian's office, but that is not what we should be doing.

I am extremely concerned, therefore, that the chairman of the Budget Committee, in an apparently unprecedented manner, appears to have made that determination himself with regard to the Trump-Ryan healthcare bill that was passed several weeks ago in the House. As I understand it, the Parliamentarian has made a narrow ruling with respect to the jurisdiction of a provision in this bill that would eliminate healthcare subsidies for low-income Native Americans.

I look forward to hearing from the Parliamentarian as soon as possible on the broader ruling on whether the Trump-Ryan healthcare bill is in compliance with the instructions contained in the budget resolution requiring this bill to save at least \$1 billion in the HELP Committee and at least \$1 billion within the Finance Committee.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Oregon.

HONORING THE HEROES OF THE PORTLAND ATTACK

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, Senator MERKLEY and I have come today together to discuss our resolution honoring the heroes of the Portland attack. On May 26 in Portland, our hometown, our community lost two very brave people: Ricky Best and Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche. They stood up courageously against terrorism and for core American and Oregon values of tolerance and freedom.

Along with Micah David-Cole Fletcher, who was seriously injured, these three extraordinary Samaritans stepped in to protect two girls who were being terrorized on public transit by a man menacing them because he thought they were Muslim. These three Oregon heroes did not run when they saw danger. Instead, these three advanced toward the danger.

I paid my respects last week at the beautiful memorial that my fellow Portlanders created at the transit station where this attack occurred. I can assure my colleagues that the message of the memorial could not be more clear: The heroes of Portland stood up to terror, and we ought to be willing to call out the hate and the evil they confronted.

So today, I join with our friend and colleague Senator MERKLEY to express

our deepest condolences to the families, the friends of the victims, so that we can all make clear how much we appreciate them and how grateful we are—and we all are—to be able to stand with the two girls who were being terrorized and to support all community efforts to overcome hatred and bigotry and violence.

As a son of parents who fled the Nazis, I know full well what hate speech is all about. There must be zero tolerance for hate speech and violence because otherwise you give it room to fester and grow. Hate speech and violence must have no place in Oregon or anywhere else in our great Nation.

With these three Oregon heroes forever in our memories, we must and we will recommit to fighting hate, violence, and terrorism every chance that we have. We urge adoption of this important resolution.

I yield to my friend and colleague Senator MERKLEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I thank my friend and colleague Senator WYDEN for submitting this resolution. I am proud to partner with him as we address this senseless, deadly attack that occurred back home in Oregon just 12 days ago.

Robert Kennedy once said: “We must recognize that this short life can neither be ennobled or enriched by hatred.” We have been reminded of that in this part of our history in the last year and a half in which we have seen acts of hatred flourishing across the country, preying on divisions among parts of our society. It is incumbent on all of us to call out the unacceptability of hate speech and certainly to work to bring unity where there has been division.

This all came together in dramatic, deadly fashion on the MAX train when a man spouting hatred and anti-Muslim rhetoric accosted two young women sitting on the train. Three men stood up and sprang into action and told him that was unacceptable.

I wish we could turn back the clock and have the incident stop right there with that intervention. These men, by being willing to stand up in that setting, are champions of justice. They were saying that this is unacceptable. They were saying that it must stop. But then this confrontation turned deadly, with the man spouting the hate speech pulling a knife, stabbing all three of these champions, killing two of them, and nearly killing the third. These individuals, Rick Best and

Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, paid with their lives. The third individual, Micah David-Cole Fletcher, came very close to losing his as well.

We have been holding the families in our hearts and in our prayers. The community came together and had a vigil and another ceremony at the Muslim educational center and at the funerals to let the families know that, across Oregon, people are carrying them in their hearts and prayers. Certainly, one of those prayers was for the full recovery of Micah David-Cole Fletcher. He is back on his feet, and it is just a beautiful thing to see that he is out of the hospital. He spoke very eloquent words that I would like to share with you. In the days after the attack, he said:

I want you to imagine that for a second, being the little girl on that MAX. This man is screaming at you. His face is a pile of knives, his body is a gun, everything about him is cocked, loaded and ready to kill you. There’s a history here with this. You can feel that this has happened before. And the only thing that was different was the names and faces.

Micah continued. He said:

And then a stranger, two strangers, three strangers, come to your aid, they try to help you, and that pile of knives just throws itself at them. Kills them.

Well, this was an extraordinarily traumatic experience for these young girls simply to be accosted on the train and all the more so to see that those who came to their rescue were stabbed, with two of them dying and the third badly injured.

Our hearts are, again, so connected to the families. We must have a determination as a society to put healing where there has been division, to put empathy where there has been antipathy, to replace hatred with a connection, with a love.

Robert Kennedy said in that same speech when he was commenting on the fact that nothing has ever been ennobled or enriched by hatred—he continued to say this:

But we can perhaps remember—if only for a time—that those who live with us are our brothers, that they share with us the same short moment of life, that they seek—as do we—nothing but the chance to live out their lives in purpose and in happiness, winning what satisfaction and fulfillment that they can.

Can’t we come together as a society and enable each person to be able to live out their lives in purpose and happiness and set aside this divisiveness and this hatred?

I hope on this occasion, as we honor the incredible heroism of the three

men who sprang into action and as we mourn the loss of two of them, that we all will dedicate ourselves to this purpose of creating a connection, creating unity, and creating respect and that we shall see the banishment of hate speech and hate violence.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, we yield back the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

(The remarks of Mr. PETERS pertaining to the introduction of S. 1308 are printed in today’s RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:47 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, June 8, 2017, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

RYAN MCCARTHY, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE ARMY, VICE PATRICK JOSEPH MURPHY.
PATRICK M. SHANAHAN, OF WASHINGTON, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, VICE ROBERT O. WORK, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

JEFFREY BOSSERT CLARK, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL, VICE JOHN CHARLES CRUDEN.

THE JUDICIARY

ALLISON H. EID, OF COLORADO, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE TENTH CIRCUIT, VICE NEIL M. GORSUCH, ELEVATED.

RALPH R. ERICKSON, OF NORTH DAKOTA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE EIGHTH CIRCUIT, VICE KERMIT E. BYE, RETIRED.

DABNEY LANGHORNE FRIEDRICH, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, VICE REGGIE B. WALTON, RETIRED.

TIMOTHY J. KELLY, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, VICE ROSEMARY M. COLLYER, RETIRED.

TREVOR N. MCFADDEN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, VICE RICHARD J. LEON, RETIRED.

STEPHEN S. SCHWARTZ, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS FOR A TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE LYNN JEANNE BUSH, TERM EXPIRED.

MICHAEL P. ALLEN, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE BRUCE E. KASOLD, TERM EXPIRED.

AMANDA L. MEREDITH, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE WILLIAM A. MOORMAN, RETIRED.

JOSEPH L. TOTH, OF WISCONSIN, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE LAWRENCE B. HAGEL, RETIRED.