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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

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

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, it is good news that the jobless rate has dropped to 4.3 percent, the lowest level in more than a decade. However, we still face tough challenges in building an economy that supplies employers with the talent needed to be competitive and in educating workers with the skills needed for success in today's economy.

Because our economy increasingly requires a more skilled workforce, the next generation of workers needs education beyond the traditional high school degree to find good-paying jobs that enable them to move up the career ladder and firmly into the middle class.

To solve these challenges, we need a strong demand-driven workforce development system that aligns education with the needs of employers. That is why the Committee on Education and the Workforce, which I am proud to chair, recently advanced, with unanimous support, legislation that will strengthen skills-focused education and help equip more students with the skills they need to achieve success.

However, the real solutions lie outside of Washington. That is why I am pleased the private sector is leading the way so that workers in industries have the skills to compete and prosper in the global economy.

I want to commend companies like JPMorgan Chase, Toyota, IBM, Boeing, and so many others for their commitment to creating public-private partnerships aimed at closing our skills gap and helping America's employers and workers succeed.

Recently, I had the opportunity to join a roundtable discussion with workforce development experts from a wide array of nonprofits, educational institutions, and workforce development leaders. They are working with employers to build sustainable and robust pipelines of talent to fill growing needs in critical sectors, such as healthcare and technology.

Communities across the country are looking to power their businesses with talent from their local communities, and they are doing this by developing partnerships that focus on employer engagement strategies, creating or expanding career pathways, reducing barriers to employment, and more effectively connecting students and graduates to jobs.

Helping people gain the skills they need to compete in the workforce is also a powerful approach to expanding access to opportunity and promoting economic mobility, because even as the economy improves, there are still vulnerable people at risk of being left behind.

Without the right skills and meaningful postsecondary credentials, these young people face entering the workforce without very bright prospects or, worse, unemployed and out of school.

We also need to create more opportunities for workers to obtain good-paying jobs that require more than a high school diploma but less than a college degree. This can help reduce unemployment by aligning education programs with the skills employers need.

As an example, JPMorgan Chase's New Skills for Youth initiative is helping expand high-quality education programs that begin in high school and end with postsecondary credentials and lead to long-term careers. Young people can gain the skills needed to enter high-paying occupations in growing fields, such as robotics, medical science, and coding, to build a promising future.

Failing to prepare young people with the right skills and education for these jobs is a missed opportunity for them personally, for our country, and our economy.

By working together on educational initiatives like New Skills for Youth, employers, nonprofits, and educational institutions can drive economic growth, promote greater mobility in communities throughout the country, and help more Americans achieve a lifetime of success.

HONORING FALLEN SAILORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HILL). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, firstly, I could not take this microphone on this occasion and not remember Congressman SCALISE, his injuries, and wish him and his family well, and the other victims of the cowardly and horrific assault on our colleagues and on our government last week in Virginia, but I came here specifically to honor seven Americans who died on the USS *Fitzgerald*.

Seven United States naval soldiers died when the *Fitzgerald* collided with a Japanese freighter. And there was a story this morning in The New York Times, another on the Daily Beast, and I am sure there are others, that caught my attention.

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The New York Times story showed the divergent backgrounds of these seven sailors. They are all Americans, but one has roots in Okinawa, another's roots were in the Philippines, another Vietnam, another Guatemala, then there was an Ohioan and a Virginian and a sailor named Martin from Maryland.

They are representative of our United States Navy, from different backgrounds, given an opportunity to serve our country, some because they are helping their families, some to gain citizenship, but all to serve our Nation, and all seven of these gentlemen lost their lives.

I had the honor of going on a naval sub about 10 days ago, the *Providence*, and I saw the camaraderie on that ship. There were no Caucasian sailors or African-American sailors or Asian-American or Latin-American; there weren't gay or straight sailors. They were United States sailors, United States Navy personnel. And they come together in a camaraderie to serve our country and to serve each other as shipmates in a way that is gratifying to witness and is special for our Nation.

Now, I want to mention who these sailors were, because they need to be memorialized here. Xavier Martin was from Maryland; Shingo Douglass was from Okinawa and San Diego, California; Dakota Rigsby, Palmyra, Virginia; Carlos Sibayan from Chula Vista, California, but the Philippines was the spot of origin, and his grandfather, who is a Filipino, also served in our United States Navy; Ngoc Truong Huynh, Vietnam, Oakville, Connecticut; Noe Hernandez was from Texas by way of Guatemala; and finally, Gary Rehm, Jr., from Ohio.

The Daily Beast told me something about Gary Rehm, Jr., that I wouldn't have garnered from The New York Times story that was so wonderful as it described the backgrounds and really the rainbow that these seven men made of America.

Gary Rehm was due to finish his service in 3 months, and he considered everybody on that ship, all the sailors, his kids. He had no children of his own, but the sailors were his kids. He rescued up to 20 sailors to see to it after the crash that they survived and then went to try to rescue six others, and it is at that point that Gary Rehm lost his life. He lost his life serving his shipmates, as he called them, his kids, his fellow sailors.

They were shipmates and sailors and United States naval personnel. They weren't Filipinos or Vietnamese or any other description. Gary Rehm, Jr., was a hero trying to save others. The other six were heroes, too, serving our country, and they lost their lives.

It was a great experience to be on the *Providence*, and it is a great honor to represent Millington Naval Air Base, which serves our country for personnel and recruitment purposes.

I am honored to be in this Congress, but more honored to represent people in the United States Naval Academy. I thank those seven for their valiant efforts and for giving their lives in service to their country.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

God, Father of us all, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Please send Your spirit upon this assembly, that the men and women who serve the United States in contentious times such as these might better work together for the benefit of our Nation. This is not easy, so bless them with Your wisdom and give them the patience and understanding to rise to the demands of their calling.

So also we ask Your blessing upon our world, where so many live and unfortunately die in nations and regions cursed by violence and division. Lord, have mercy.

Lord, be with us this day and all days, and may all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SCHNEIDER 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.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

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

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on World Refugee Day to share the remarkable story of one of my younger constituents, 8-year-old Raul Ortiz.

Raul was born amidst the gang-driven violence in Honduras. When he was 5, Raul was kidnapped and held for ransom by a crime cartel. Following his release, he and his mother later fled to the safety and the security offered by the United States.

Raul and his mom rightly worried for their security if they were forced to return to Honduras, and are seeking asylum in our country.

Raul is visiting Washington today to share a letter he wrote to President Trump to remember and protect refugee children like himself.

Writing of what the United States means to him, Raul writes: ''Here we are safe, and we have hope to see another tomorrow.''

Mr. Speaker, we are a country that was founded and built by immigrants and refugees, many fleeing oppression and violence.

Raul's story is our story. We cannot allow the door of opportunity and safety to close on the next generation of Americans like Raul seeking refuge here.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 19, 2017.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on June 19, 2017, at 1:49 p.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 782.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 3 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1506

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. CHENEY) at 3 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair

will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

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

MOBILE WORKFORCE STATE INCOME TAX SIMPLIFICATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1393) to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1393

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. LIMITATIONS ON STATE WITHHOLDING AND TAXATION OF EMPLOYEE INCOME.

(a) IN GENERAL.—No part of the wages or other remuneration earned by an employee who performs employment duties in more than one State shall be subject to income tax in any State other than—

(1) the State of the employee's residence; and

(2) the State within which the employee is present and performing employment duties for more than 30 days during the calendar year in which the wages or other remuneration is earned.

(b) WAGES OR OTHER REMUNERATION.—Wages or other remuneration earned in any calendar year shall not be subject to State income tax withholding and reporting requirements unless the employee is subject to income tax in such State under subsection (a). Income tax withholding and reporting requirements under subsection (a)(2) shall apply to wages or other remuneration earned as of the commencement date of employment duties in the State during the calendar year.

(c) OPERATING RULES.—For purposes of determining penalties related to an employer's State income tax withholding and reporting requirements—

(1) an employer may rely on an employee's annual determination of the time expected to be spent by such employee in the States in which the employee will perform duties absent—

(A) the employer's actual knowledge of fraud by the employee in making the determination; or

(B) collusion between the employer and the employee to evade tax;

(2) except as provided in paragraph (3), if records are maintained by an employer in the regular course of business that record the location of an employee, such records shall not preclude an employer's ability to rely on an employee's determination under paragraph (1); and

(3) notwithstanding paragraph (2), if an employer, at its sole discretion, maintains a time and attendance system that tracks where the employee performs duties on a daily basis, data from the time and attendance system shall be used instead of the employee's determination under paragraph (1).

(d) DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL RULES.—For purposes of this Act:

(1) DAY.—

(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), an employee is considered present and performing employment duties within a State for a day if the employee performs more of the employee's employment duties within such State than in any other State during a day.

(B) If an employee performs employment duties in a resident State and in only one nonresident State during one day, such employee shall be considered to have performed more of the employee's employment duties in the nonresident State than in the resident State for such day.

(C) For purposes of this paragraph, the portion of the day during which the employee is in transit shall not be considered in determining the location of an employee's performance of employment duties.

(2) EMPLOYEE.—The term ''employee'' has the same meaning given to it by the State in which the employment duties are performed, except that the term ''employee'' shall not include a professional athlete, professional entertainer, qualified production employee, or certain public figures.

(3) PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE.—The term ''professional athlete'' means a person who performs services in a professional athletic event, provided that the wages or other remuneration are paid to such person for performing services in his or her capacity as a professional athlete.

(4) PROFESSIONAL ENTERTAINER.—The term ''professional entertainer'' means a person of prominence who performs services in the professional performing arts for wages or other remuneration on a per-event basis, provided that the wages or other remuneration are paid to such person for performing services in his or her capacity as a professional entertainer.

(5) QUALIFIED PRODUCTION EMPLOYEE.—The term ''qualified production employee'' means a person who performs production services of any nature directly in connection with a State qualified, certified or approved film, television or other commercial video production for wages or other remuneration, provided that the wages or other remuneration paid to such person are qualified production costs or expenditures under such State's qualified, certified or approved film incentive program, and that such wages or other remuneration must be subject to withholding under such film incentive program as a condition to treating such wages or other remuneration as a qualified production cost or expenditure.

(6) CERTAIN PUBLIC FIGURES.—The term ''certain public figures'' means persons of prominence who perform services for wages or other remuneration on a per-event basis, provided that the wages or other remuneration are paid to such person for services provided at a discrete event, in the nature of a speech, public appearance, or similar event.

(7) EMPLOYER.—The term ''employer'' has the meaning given such term in section 3401(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 3401(d)), unless such term is defined by the State in which the employee's employment duties are performed, in which case the State's definition shall prevail.

(8) STATE.—The term ''State'' means any of the several States.

(9) TIME AND ATTENDANCE SYSTEM.—The term ''time and attendance system'' means a system in which—

(A) the employee is required on a contemporaneous basis to record his work location for every day worked outside of the State in which the employee's employment duties are primarily performed; and

(B) the system is designed to allow the employer to allocate the employee's wages for income tax purposes among all States in which the employee performs employment duties for such employer.

(10) WAGES OR OTHER REMUNERATION.—The term ''wages or other remuneration'' may be limited by the State in which the employment duties are performed.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICABILITY.

(a) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This Act shall take effect on January 1 of the second calendar year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—This Act shall not apply to any tax obligation that accrues before the effective date of this Act.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 1393, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, the Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act provides a clear, uniform framework for when States may tax nonresident employees who travel to the taxing State to perform work. In particular, this bill prevents States from imposing income tax compliance burdens on nonresidents who work in a foreign State for 30 days or fewer in a year.

The State tax laws that determine when a nonresident must pay a foreign State's income tax and when employers must withhold this tax are numerous and varied. Some States tax income earned within their borders by nonresidents even if the employee only works in the State for just 1 day.

These complicated rules impact everyone who travels for work and many industries. As just one example, the Judiciary Committee heard testimony in 2015 that the patchwork of State laws resulted in a manufacturing company issuing 50 W–2s to a single employee for a single year. The company executive also noted, regarding the compliance burden, that ''many of our affected employees make less than $50,000 per year and have limited resources to seek professional advice.''

States generally allow a credit for income taxes paid to another State; however, it is not always dollar for dollar when local taxes are factored in. Credits also do not relieve workers of substantial paperwork burdens.

There are substantial burdens on employers as well. The committee heard

testimony in 2014 that businesses, including small businesses, that operate interstate are subject to significant regulatory burdens with regard to compliance with nonresident State income tax withholding laws. These burdens distract from productive activity and job creation.

Nevertheless, some object that the States will lose revenue if the bill is enacted. However, an analysis from Ernst & Young found that the bill's revenue impact is minimal. There is little motive for fraud and gaming because the amount of money at issue, taxes on less than 30 days' wages, is minimal.

Also, the income tax generally has to be paid; the question is merely to whom. Nor does this bill violate federalism principles. On the contrary, it is an exercise of Congress' Commerce Clause authority in precisely the situation for which it was intended.

The Supreme Court has explained that the Commerce Clause was informed by structural concerns about the effects of State regulation on the national economy. Under the Articles of Confederation, State taxes and duties hindered and suppressed interstate commerce. The Framers intended the Commerce Clause as a cure for these structural ills. This bill fits squarely within this authority by bringing uniformity to cases of de minimis presence by interstate workers in order to reduce compliance costs.

Last year's version of the bill passed the House on suspension by voice vote. This year's version is nearly identical, with two changes:

The professional entertainer exemption is narrowed from ''a person who performs services'' to ''a person of prominence who performs services'' in order to ensure that other entertainers retain the benefit of the bill's protections.

Second, the list of exclusions is expanded to cover film production employees if associated tax credits for instate productions are contingent on withholding film production wages earned in the State. This avoids disruption in such arrangements.

I commend the bill's lead sponsors, Representatives BISHOP and JOHNSON, and thank all of the bill's cosponsors.

Madam Speaker, I urge the bill's passage, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 1393. This bill represents a major assault on the sovereignty of the States, and it does particular damage to my home State of New York, depriving it of more than $100 million a year of its own tax revenue, which hardly fits the de minimis description by the gentleman from Virginia.

The Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act would prohibit States from collecting income tax from an individual unless the person works more than 30 days in that State in a calendar year.

Simplifying and harmonizing the rules on tax collection across the country is a worthy goal, and I support efforts by the States and the Multistate Tax Commission to resolve the issue. New York has been an active participant in these negotiations and wants to reach a fair solution. But imposing a solution on States, and one that would cause a large financial burden on particular States, is clearly not the answer.

The power to tax is a key index of sovereignty; yet this legislation would prohibit States from taxing activity solely within their own borders except as prescribed in the bill. I think that is constitutionally dubious. Although I take a broad view generally of the Commerce Clause, I doubt it extends to authorizing Federal regulation of a State's ability to tax a person doing business within that State's own borders.

This bill is also deeply troubling as a matter of policy. Under this legislation, if you work in a State of which you are not a resident for fewer than 30 days, your income will not be subject to tax by that State. That amounts to 6 weeks of 5-day workweeks. While a de minimis exception may make some sense, I hardly think that 6 weeks is de minimis.

Ultimately, the threshold for taxation is for each State to decide for itself. If I were still a member of the New York Legislature, I would consider the political and economic merits of taxing out-of-State business activity, and I would vote based on what I thought was best for my State. But by what right does Congress step in to tell New York that it must forego more than $100 million a year based on economic activity that occurs entirely within its borders?

In some States, the 30-day threshold may not have a great fiscal impact. But New York State, for example, is home to New York City, the Nation's center of commerce, which also sits right across the river from New Jersey and a very short distance from Connecticut. This makes New York a major destination for out-of-State business travelers and makes it, by far, the hardest hit State under this bill. According to the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, losses could be up to $120 million a year for New York.

□ 1515

This enormous financial loss would come at a time that the President and the Republican Congress are proposing to shift significant responsibilities to the States, while simultaneously slashing Federal assistance. If we further deprive New York of $120 million each year, and limit its ability to tax activity occurring within its own borders, vital services like education, law enforcement, and healthcare could all be on the chopping block.

During consideration of H.R. 1393 in the Judiciary Committee, I offered two amendments that would have mitigated its impact. The first would have reduced the bill's 30-day threshold to a far more reasonable 14 days, which is still almost 3 weeks of work without being subject to taxation. The other would have added highly paid individuals to the bill's list of exemptions, which would help avoid loopholes that could allow wealthy people to escape millions of dollars of taxation.

Had my amendments been accepted, the expected impact on New York would have been reduced by as much as $85 million a year. While still causing a significant drain on resources, these amendments would have gone a long way to making the bill fairer, while still achieving its underlying goals. Unfortunately, these amendments were defeated, and, therefore, I must oppose the bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to respond to the gentleman from New York.

I would like to point out that those revenues that might flow to New York because of their onerous system of imposing taxation for as little as one day's work in New York redounds to the benefit of the other 49 States, who would then receive that tax benefit, as it properly should.

Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP), the lead sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

I am grateful for this opportunity to speak on my bipartisan, bicameral bill, H.R. 1393, the Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act.

Madam Speaker, the 10th Amendment gives States the freedom to set their own public policy. It is important, however, that they do so in a way that does not infringe upon the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution, which gives jurisdiction over interstate commerce to Congress.

With our constitutional mandate in mind, at a time of rapid expansion in our workforce and an increasingly global and mobile economy, it is incumbent upon Congress to simplify and ease the complex burden that is imposed on interstate commerce activity.

In my 25 years as an attorney and a small-business owner, I am uniquely aware of the task of complying with the complexities of the various State income taxes, especially when you travel to another State for business.

The burden to comply is a particular burden to small businesses, as well as their employees, because they simply do not have the resources and cannot absorb the compliance costs. As a result, the current tax framework puts smaller businesses, the very backbone of our economy, at a substantial competitive disadvantage relative to larger businesses.

And complex reporting requirements punish the employees, too. The time and overall expenses that result from filing all of this paperwork is overwhelming, and, in many cases, financially devastating. It is all because they had the audacity to work outside of their home State.

Rather than driving profits back into their businesses and community by expanding payrolls and reducing the price of consumer goods, businesses are being forced to spend their hard-earned, scarce resources on complying with a menagerie of convoluted and ridiculous State income tax laws.

While crafting this legislation in committee, we heard a lot of anecdotal information and a lot of personal testimonials. In fact, we heard first-hand testimony from an employee, indicating that his employer had to file over 10,000 W–2s on behalf of their numerous employees, primarily because they had crossed State lines for work. He went on to tell us one of his co-workers had to file 50 W–2s—that is 50 W–2s—just for himself.

That didn't make sense to us, and it certainly doesn't make sense to most Americans. Imagine an individual, making less than $50,000 a year, having to file 10, 20, or even 50 W–2s. It is ridiculous, and it is unacceptable.

Madam Speaker, I am an ardent defender of the United States Constitution—in particular, the 10th Amendment—which delegates authority not granted to the Federal Government, to the States.

That said, the Constitution gives plenary jurisdiction to Congress relative to the regulation of interstate commerce, under Article I, section 8. It is, therefore, as in this case, the constitutional responsibility of Congress to identify and respond to an increasingly mobile and global economy and relieve it of unnecessary burdensome compliance requirements resulting from a patchwork of unique State income tax laws.

And that is why many groups that advocate on behalf of States, such as the American Legislative Exchange Council, agree with this legislation, because H.R. 1393 is the type of simple and streamlined interstate commerce regulation Congress should be enacting. In fact, there are more than 300 outside organizations that have encouraged support of this bill.

With the help of my colleague, HANK JOHNSON, on the other side of the aisle, our Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act is a carefully crafted, bipartisan, and bicameral measure that streamlines State income tax laws across the Nation.

It creates a uniform threshold, giving nonresidents 30 days to work in another State without being liable for that State's income tax. This simple and straightforward language ensures employees will have a clear understanding of their tax liability, and it gives employers a clear and consistent rule so that they can plan and accurately predict their tax liability, knowing the same rule applies for all States with an income tax.

It also means much less paperwork and reduced compliance costs for both States and businesses and their employees.

The goal of H.R. 1393 is to protect our mobile workers, and that includes traveling emergency workers and first responders; trade union workers; nonprofit staff; teachers; Federal, State, and local government employees; and much more. Any organization that has employees who cross State lines for temporary periods will benefit from this law.

I would also note that great care was taken with this bill to diminish the impact on State revenues. You heard testimony earlier relative to its impact on State governments. In fact, a 2015 study by Ernst & Young found that H.R. 1393 would actually raise State income tax revenues, while other States would only see a de minimis change.

With that said, I would like to take this time to thank all of the members of the Mobile Workforce Coalition who support our bill; Chairman GOODLATTE and his world class staff for all of their work; my 57 colleagues who cosponsored this in the House; as well as Senator THUNE, Senator BROWN, and nearly half of the United States Senate who have cosponsored our companion bill.

Madam Speaker, as Congress continues to work on comprehensive tax reform to jump start our economy and to provide relief for American families and businesses, the Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act is a great start to streamline the Tax Code and roll back unnecessary and costly administrative burdens.

With so much red tape interwoven in today's Tax Code, this bill is a commonsense way to cut through the clutter and simplify part of the filing process moving forward. Together, we can make our workforce the priority and help our small businesses grow and prosper.

Madam Speaker, I strongly encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 1393.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON).

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman NADLER for yielding.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1393, the Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act of 2017, is an important, bipartisan bill that will help workers and small businesses across the country—large businesses, also.

As the proud sponsor of this legislation in both the 110th and 111th Congresses, I am very familiar with how hard legislators on both sides of the aisle have worked since then to bring this bill to this point. I want to thank the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Congressman BOB GOODLATTE, for ushering this bill to the House to this point, and I ask my colleagues to please vote in favor of this legislation.

H.R. 1393 would provide for a uniform and easily administrable law that will simplify the patchwork of existing inconsistent and confusing State rules. It would also reduce administrative costs to the States and lessen compliance burdens on consumers.

Take my home State of Georgia as an example. If an Atlanta-based employee of a St. Louis company travels to headquarters on a business trip once a year, that employee would be subject to Missouri tax, even if the annual visit only lasts for 1 day. However, if that employee travels to Maine, her trip would only be subject to tax if her trip lasts for 10 days. If she travels to New Mexico on business, she would only be subject to tax if she was in the State for 15 days.

Acuity Brands is a leading Georgia-based lighting manufacturer that employs over 1,000 associates and has over 3,200 associates nationwide who travel extensively across the country for training, conferences, and other business.

In a letter in support of a prior, nearly identical version of this bill, Richard Reece, Acuity's executive vice president, writes that current State laws are numerous, varied, and often changing, requiring that the company expend significant resources merely interpreting and satisfying States' requirements. He concludes that ''unified, clear rules and definitions for nonresident reporting and withholding obligations would undoubtedly improve compliance rates, and it would strike the correct balance between State sovereignty and ensuring that America's modern mobile workforce is not unduly encumbered.''

We should heed the concerns of Acuity, and numerous other businesses across the country, by enacting H.R. 1393 into law.

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

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. With over 57 cosponsors during this Congress, it is clear that the Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act of 2017 is an idea whose time has come.

I thank my colleagues for their work on this bill and, in particular, Congressman BISHOP, for his leadership on this bill in the 115th Congress. He has carried the torch for our esteemed former colleague, the late Howard Coble, who passed this bill out of the House in the 112th Congress.

I also thank our staffs, who have worked tirelessly to build support for this legislation along bipartisan lines.

This bill is a testament to the good that can come from working across the aisle on bipartisan tax fairness reforms. I am optimistic that the passage of H.R. 1393 augurs well for the passage of other e-fairness legislation, which is critical to countless small businesses across the country, during this Congress.

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

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to bring this bill up for a vote soon. This country's employees and businesses deserve quick action.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I am the only speaker remaining and prepared to close, so I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 12 minutes remaining.

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

I want to quote from a letter from the president of the Federation of Tax Administrators and commissioner of the Oklahoma Tax Commission regarding this bill. She writes:

> This bill breaches the core of the relationship between the Federal Government and State governments, a relationship that is fundamentally important to the voters of Virginia and of Michigan. It is a clear example of the Federal Government crossing a line that is seldom breached and, in this instance, should not be. The attached resolution from the State tax agencies, all of them, offers in detail to explain the State's positions against the mobile workforce.

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Here are the three most compelling facts:

> One, States have in place a combination of laws, rules, and compliance standards that effectively eliminate an unfair outcome when it comes to recordkeeping and taxation of wages earned in a State by a nonresident;
>
> Two, these approaches, which include model legislation developed by the Multistate Tax Commission, take into account information that is available to employers and de minimis activities; and
>
> Three, H.R. 1393 goes beyond what is necessary to ensure fair outcomes and a reasonable reporting burden, in particular, because the bill takes away the states' rights to require proper wage reporting and withholding even when the employer already has the information to easily do so. It opens up opportunities for tax avoidance.

In closing, let me note that this legislation would not just harm New York and not just to a de minimis amount—$100 million to $120 million is hardly de minimis—but it would also have a similar effect on other States. That is why this bill is opposed by a broad coalition of labor and tax organizations, including the AFL–CIO, AFSCME, SEIU, the International Union of Police Associations, Federation of Tax Administrators, Multistate Tax Commission, and many others.

Whether or not your State is hurt financially by this bill, however, all Members should be concerned by legislation that so brazenly strips from a State one of the fundamental hallmarks of sovereignty: the ability to tax economic activity that occurs entirely within its own borders. If we can target New York and other States with this bill, what is to say we won't come after your State next.

I must also add that this bill is one in a series of bills that we have seen over the last few years that chip away at the revenue-raising and taxing ability of the States. Especially as the current majority and the current President seek to shift more responsibilities to the States and away from the Federal Government, we should not be depriving the States of their ability to raise revenues as they see fit within their own sovereignty.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this misguided bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

This bill enjoys broad bipartisan support. It has 57 cosponsors from both sides of the aisle. This bill will minimize compliance burdens on both workers and employers so they can get back to being productive, creating and performing jobs. We have received letters of support from hundreds of entities across the employment spectrum.

But this bill is not just about business; it is about individuals. One businessman told the Judiciary Committee that the compliance burdens from the patchwork of State laws falls on his employees, who make less than $50,000 per year and have limited resources to seek professional advice.

It has been questioned whether there will be revenue lost to the States. Analysis shows the impact is minimal, affecting mainly the allocation of revenues, not the overall size of the tax revenue pot.

Similarly, concerns about tax evasion are unfounded. Unlike in the general income tax context, there is little motive here for fraud or gaming.

The amount of money at issue, taxes on less than 30 days' wages, is minimal. More importantly, except in nine States, the employee will have to pay the tax, in any event, to the employee's home State, so the only savings would be from minor rate differentials between the two jurisdictions.

This legislation is a great example of Congress working in a bipartisan way to relieve burdens on hardworking Americans.

I want to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) for their bipartisan work on this legislation. I urge all of our colleagues to support the bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of a common sense bill, H.R. 1393 which would set a national standard of 30 days for states to subject non-residents to income tax requirements within that state.

Under current law, many of the 41 states with a broad based personal income tax rate subject out of state residents to income tax in that state on the first day they "work" in the state.

This patchwork of state laws have created a confusing and unworkable nationwide system where individuals who travel to another state for a conference or meeting can find themselves subject to income tax requirements in a state where they only spent a few days.

In fact, these overburdensome requirements can create a scenario in which a company of 7,000 employees who travel for domestic business may have to file 10,500 W–2's over the course of a given year. This burden can be even worse for a small business.

One small business, which operates several customer service centers throughout the United States and has 600 employees working in 46 states, faces a significant burden trying to comply. Most of these 600 employees work out of one of the customer service centers, but 12 employees travel out of state to do a job occasionally. The manager of this company has to spend 3 plus hours every week figuring out the tax reporting requirements for these employees, even though most of them only pay $30 to $100 a year into these different taxing authorities.

Is this really a good use of the time of a small business? Wouldn't we rather have these individuals working to create jobs and grow our economy then wasting time complying with the burdensome reporting requirements for 42 different taxing authorities?

H.R. 1393 is a common sense solution to this problem. 30 days is a fair baseline standard that can be applied nationwide. It allows U.S. workers to travel and work around the country for a reasonable amount of time without subjecting them to reporting requirements for taxation in all of the jurisdictions in which they travel. If they stay longer than 30 days in any particular state then the state is free to tax them according to their own state laws.

With this new standard, American business will know what the rules of the road are across the country and they can plan their business accordingly.

I thank the Chairman for moving this important bill through the committee, and urge your support.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 1393, the "Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act of 2017."

I agree with the bill's sponsors that a uniform framework specifying when an employer must withhold state income tax could help ensure simplicity and be more administrable than the current varied state standards. However the means by which H.R. 1393 achieves this result would lead to significant state revenue losses and could actually encourage income tax avoidance.

To begin with, rather than promoting uniformity, H.R. 1393 would have a significant adverse impact on income tax revenues for certain states.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, for example, New York could lose between $55 million and $120 million annually if this measure was signed into law.

Other states that would be adversely impacted include Illinois, Massachusetts, and California.

And, as a result of the lost revenues from non-resident taxpayers, these states could be forced to make up their losses by shifting the tax burden to resident taxpayers or levying new taxes.

And states may even have to cut governmental services, such as funding for education and critical infrastructure improvements.

Another problem with H.R. 1393 is that it essentially provides a roadmap for state income tax liability avoidance.

By allowing an employer to rely on the employee's determination of the time he or she is expected to spend working in another state during the year, the bill prevents the employer from withholding an employee's state income taxes to a non-resident state.

This would be the result even if the employer is aware that the employee has been working in a state more than 30 days, as long as that state cannot prove that the employee committed fraud in making his annual determination and that the employer knew it.

Rather than proceeding with this flawed bill, the House should be considering a fair and uniform framework to allow states to collect taxes owed on remote sales.

By staying silent since the Supreme Court's 1992 Quill decision, Congress has failed to ensure that states have the authority to collect the sales and use tax on Internet purchases.

Placing brick and mortar businesses at a competitive disadvantage hurts main street Americans and means fewer local jobs and fewer opportunities.

Lost tax revenues mean that state and local governments will have fewer resources to provide their residents essential services, such as education and police and fire protection.

We owe it to our local communities, our local retailers, and state and local governments to act this Congress.

I am disappointed that rather than moving the bipartisan eFairness legislation that our communities need, we are considering H.R. 1393 instead.

Accordingly, I oppose H.R. 1393.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1393.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

IMPROVING SERVICES FOR OLDER YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE ACT

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2847) to make improvements to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and related provisions.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2847

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act''.

SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENTS TO THE JOHN H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM AND RELATED PROVISIONS.

(a) AUTHORITY TO SERVE FORMER FOSTER YOUTH UP TO AGE 23.—Section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(5), by inserting ''(or 23 years of age, in the case of a State with a certification under subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii) to provide assistance and services to youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained such age, in accordance with such subsection)'' after ''21 years of age'';

(2) in subsection (b)(3)(A)—

(A) by inserting ''(i)'' before ''A certification'';

(B) by striking ''children who have left foster care'' and all that follows through the period and inserting ''youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained 21 years of age.''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(ii) If the State has elected under section 475(8)(B) to extend eligibility for foster care to all children who have not attained 21 years of age, or if the Secretary determines that the State agency responsible for administering the State plans under this part and part B uses State funds or any other funds not provided under this part to provide services and assistance for youths who have aged out of foster care that are comparable to the services and assistance the youths would receive if the State had made such an election, the certification required under clause (i) may provide that the State will provide assistance and services to youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained 23 years of age.''; and

(3) in subsection (b)(3)(B), by striking ''children who have left foster care'' and all that follows through the period and inserting ''youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained 21 years of age (or 23 years of age, in the case of a State with a certification under subparagraph (A)(i) to provide assistance and services to youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained such age, in accordance with subparagraph (A)(ii)).''.

(b) AUTHORITY TO REDISTRIBUTE UNSPENT FUNDS.—Section 477(d) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (4), by inserting ''or does not expend allocated funds within the time period specified under section 477(d)(3)'' after ''provided by the Secretary''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) REDISTRIBUTION OF UNEXPENDED AMOUNTS.—

''(A) AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS.—To the extent that amounts paid to States under this section in a fiscal year remain unexpended by the States at the end of the succeeding fiscal year, the Secretary may make the amounts available for redistribution in the second succeeding fiscal year among the States that apply for additional funds under this section for that second succeeding fiscal year.

''(B) REDISTRIBUTION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall redistribute the amounts made available under subparagraph (A) for a fiscal year among eligible applicant States. In this subparagraph, the term 'eligible applicant State' means a State that has applied for additional funds for the fiscal year under subparagraph (A) if the Secretary determines that the State will use the funds for the purpose for which originally allotted under this section.

''(ii) AMOUNT TO BE REDISTRIBUTED.—The amount to be redistributed to each eligible applicant State shall be the amount so made available multiplied by the State foster care ratio (as defined in subsection (c)(4), except that, in such subsection, 'all eligible applicant States (as defined in subsection (d)(5)(B)(i))' shall be substituted for 'all States').

''(iii) TREATMENT OF REDISTRIBUTED AMOUNT.—Any amount made available to a State under this paragraph shall be regarded as part of the allotment of the State under this section for the fiscal year in which the redistribution is made.

''(C) TRIBES.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'State' includes an Indian tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortium that receives an allotment under this section.''.

(c) EXPANDING AND CLARIFYING THE USE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 477(i)(3) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677(i)(3)) is amended—

(A) by striking ''on the date'' and all that follows through ''23'' and inserting ''to remain eligible until they attain 26''; and

(B) by inserting '', but in no event may a youth participate in the program for more than 5 years (whether or not consecutive)'' before the period.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 477(i)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677(i)(1)) is amended by inserting ''who have attained 14 years of age'' before the period.

(d) OTHER IMPROVEMENTS.—Section 477 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 677), as amended by subsections (a), (b), and (c) of this section, is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking ''**INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM**'' and inserting ''**PROGRAM FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD**'';

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''identify children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and to help these children make the transition to self-sufficiency by providing services'' and inserting ''support all youth who have experienced foster care at age 14 or older in their transition to adulthood through transitional services'';

(ii) by inserting ''and post-secondary education'' after ''high school diploma''; and

(iii) by striking ''training in daily living skills, training in budgeting and financial management skills'' and inserting ''training and opportunities to practice daily living skills (such as financial literacy training and driving instruction)'';

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment'' and inserting ''who have experienced foster care at age 14 or older achieve meaningful, permanent connections with a caring adult'';

(C) in paragraph (3), by striking ''who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age prepare for and enter postsecondary training and education institutions'' and inserting ''who have experienced foster care at age 14 or older engage in age or developmentally appropriate activities, positive youth development, and experiential learning that reflects what their peers in intact families experience''; and

(D) by striking paragraph (4) and redesignating paragraphs (5) through (8) as paragraphs (4) through (7);

(3) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(D), by striking ''adolescents'' and inserting ''youth''; and

(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in subparagraph (D)—

(I) by inserting ''including training on youth development'' after ''to provide training''; and

(II) by striking ''adolescents preparing for independent living'' and all that follows through the period and inserting ''youth preparing for a successful transition to adulthood and making a permanent connection with a caring adult.'';

(ii) in subparagraph (H), by striking ''adolescents'' each place it appears and inserting ''youth''; and

(iii) in subparagraph (K)—

(I) by striking ''an adolescent'' and inserting ''a youth''; and

(II) by striking ''the adolescent'' each place it appears and inserting ''the youth''; and

(4) in subsection (f), by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

''(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than October 1, 2018, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on the National Youth in Transition Database and any other databases in which States report outcome measures relating to children in foster care and children who have aged out of foster care or left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption. The report shall include the following:

''(A) A description of the reasons for entry into foster care and of the foster care experiences, such as length of stay, number of placement settings, case goal, and discharge reason of 17-year-olds who are surveyed by the National Youth in Transition Database and an analysis of the comparison of that description with the reasons for entry and foster care experiences of children of other ages who exit from foster care before attaining age 17.

''(B) A description of the characteristics of the individuals who report poor outcomes at ages 19 and 21 to the National Youth in Transition Database.

''(C) Benchmarks for determining what constitutes a poor outcome for youth who remain in or have exited from foster care and plans the executive branch will take to incorporate these benchmarks in efforts to evaluate child welfare agency performance in providing services to children transitioning from foster care.

''(D) An analysis of the association between types of placement, number of overall placements, time spent in foster care, and other factors, and outcomes at ages 19 and 21.

''(E) An analysis of the differences in outcomes for children in and formerly in foster care at age 19 and 21 among States.''.

(e) CLARIFYING DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED TO FOSTER YOUTH LEAVING FOSTER CARE.—Section 475(5)(I) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 675(5)(I)) is amended by inserting after ''REAL ID Act of 2005'' the following: '', and any official documentation necessary to prove that the child was previously in foster care''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2847.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to support the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act.

In fiscal year 2015, almost 21,000 youth aged out of foster care, meaning they left foster care without a permanent family connection. Many of them are often poorly prepared for adulthood and lack some of the basic skills they need to be successful adults.

Last year, the House passed the Family First Prevention Services Act, a bill that would improve the lives of children and families by making sure more children can stay safely at home and not enter foster care in the first place, helping to make sure fewer children age out of care. The bill also updated the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program to allow States to assist older former foster youth up to the age of 23, including providing education and training vouchers, to help those young people who do age out to have a better future. Unfortunately, it did not pass the Senate, so it never became law.

I am glad my good friend, Mr. FASO, introduced the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act to highlight the needs of these older youth, and I know many will benefit from the changes made by his bill.

Specifically, this bill would support older youth leaving foster care by allowing existing funds used for financial housing, counseling, and employment support to support older youth leaving care. It would also allow HHS to redistribute unspent funds if a State has money remaining at the end of the fiscal year so more youth can be helped with existing resources. And through this bill, we will also be able to learn more about youth leaving foster care and their outcomes, which will help us develop better policies in the years ahead.

I am grateful for the opportunity we have today to support this bill. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, which would help to ensure that all the congressional resources that would be provided for foster youth will indeed be utilized and make sure they are used to help them in the furtherance of their education and becoming independent.

My colleague, KAREN BASS, who visited me just a few weeks ago, has been a leader on this legislation and on foster youth issues for a number of years, and our committee has worked closely with her to move it forward today.

I want to note that this is one of five bills the House is considering today to help at-risk families and children in foster care. All of these bills passed the House last year as part of the Family First Prevention Services Act, which also provided significant new investment in substance abuse, mental health, and parenting skills services to help kids and families avoid foster care when possible.

We continue to work on a bipartisan basis with our leadership and our colleagues in the Senate to find a way to move forward on broader foster care improvements, but today's action provides a good opportunity to once again highlight the sharp rise of children in foster care in the United States and, indeed, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, fueled in part by the opiate crisis.

In Massachusetts, between 2011 and 2015, the number of petitions to remove children from their homes grew 38 percent. Today, Massachusetts is home to nearly 10,000 kids in foster care. Over 1,000 of them are considered at risk of reaching adulthood without being adopted or safely reunified with their birth families. That is why it is so important that we do everything we can to help them finish their education and develop mentoring relationships with supportive adults.

While I am pleased that our committee and the full House are working together to help these young people, we can't ignore the bigger picture, which is the President's attempt to overturn the Affordable Care Act, because it will have real and measurable negative effects on these kids.

Republican Medicaid cuts jeopardize health coverage for older foster youth, the same youth we are trying to help with this bill. By cutting the essential health benefits and Medicaid, there will be a consequence. In turn, this endangers access to substance abuse treatment and, by extension, many of the treatment centers themselves.

Republican proposals to end the Social Services Block Grant would reduce States' abilities to provide substance abuse, mental healthcare, and supportive services to foster parents.

While these larger issues are deeply troubling, today's five children welfare bills, including the one before us now, represent an improvement over the status quo, and it is refreshing to note the bipartisan collaboration that is involved.

In addition to Congresswoman BASS' leadership on this bill to help foster youth, let me also recognize my colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee who are providing great leadership on these very issues—Mr. DAVIS, Ms. CHU, and Ms. SEWELL—for their work on behalf of foster children as reflected in these bills that they have coauthored and that we are considering today.

I urge our colleagues to support this bill and the other bipartisan child welfare improvements being considered today and to work with us to even do more to help foster youth succeed.

I reserve the balance of my time, and I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS), be allowed to control the balance of my time.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. FASO), the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House today to express support and ask my colleagues to support our

legislation, H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the cosponsors of this legislation, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS), the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS), the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE), and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARTWRIGHT).

Our legislation is designed to help support older foster youth as they transition into adulthood by making limited but much-needed changes to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.

While the Chafee program has largely enhanced outcomes for former foster youth, there is still room for improvement. Of the individuals who age out of foster care, nearly 20 percent will be homeless after 18, only half will be employed at age 24, and less than 3 percent will earn a college degree. This legislation seeks to improve on those results.

If enacted, our legislation would support the education of foster youth who leave care by extending the age of eligibility for education and training vouchers up to the age of 26. By changing the eligibility, we can help improve employment outcomes and job opportunities for older youth as they leave the system.

Additionally, this legislation will help youth who age out to maintain benefits by ensuring that they are provided with the necessary documentation that proves they were previously in foster care.

Finally, our legislation would extend the financial, housing, counseling, employment, and other services for former foster care youth. Currently, support services are only available to youth between the ages of 18 and 21. Under this legislation, States would be able to extend coverage up to the age of 23.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to note that this legislation is supported by many organizations throughout the Nation, including the Alliance for Children's Rights, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the California State Association of Counties, the Child Welfare League of America, Children Now, County Welfare Directors Association of California, the March of Dimes, and the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners.

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

Mrs. WALORSKI. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from New York (Mr. FASO).

Mr. FASO. I encourage my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation so that we can help improve outcomes for some of our Nation's most vulnerable individuals.

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Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding.

I strongly support H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act. This bill would expand eligibility for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program services and education for older foster youth, and ensure that all funds and education vouchers are used. I want to commend my colleague, Representative BASS, for her longstanding leadership on this bill.

As has been indicated by the ranking member, this important bill, and the other child welfare bills we will consider today, come from the Families First Prevention Services Act. The Families First Prevention Services Act begins a fundamental shift in Federal child welfare policy to preserving families rather than separating them. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that we enact the larger bill with these important child welfare provisions and as we consider the other bills separately today.

I would like to note that there are, indeed, five child welfare bills on the floor this afternoon, which is a real testament to the leadership of Chairman BRADY and Ranking Member NEAL. So I commend both of them for their leadership in bringing the Ways and Means Committee together to the extent that we can have five bills that have been researched, that have been debated; levels of agreement have been reached.

I strongly support the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS), my good friend.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I also want to sincerely thank Chairman KEVIN BRADY and the members of the Ways and Means Committee for their continued and invaluable work to protect America's children and strengthening our child welfare policy, as is in evidence in these five bills we are considering today.

Mr. Speaker, foster care issues rarely drive our national media headlines, yet, to the children who are in the child welfare system, the importance of finding solutions and eliminating the barriers that would ensure better futures, better outcomes, and a permanent connection to a loving family can make fundamental, lifelong differences to those who are some of America's most vulnerable children.

The goal of the Family First legislation, of which these bills are components, is to respond to the devastating data pertaining to the outcomes for foster youth who age out of care, often without any permanent connection and without the life skills and support systems necessary to thrive as independent adults.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard so many times from the States that there is a need to make our Federal child welfare funding flexible enough so that we never incentivize the placement of children into foster care who would safely receive care in their homes or with safe, loving relatives. This bipartisan package of child welfare system improvements makes important steps toward improving our child welfare system to better protect children and families, and I am certainly delighted to support its passage.

I want to thank, Mr. Speaker, again, those colleagues that have worked on this for their invaluable work on this critically important legislation.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL).

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member DAVIS for yielding.

I want to give a big thanks to my friend and colleague, Representative KAREN BASS of California. She is a true champion for our foster youth. I was happy to participate in her Foster Youth Shadow Day last month, which gave me the opportunity to meet with a constituent of mine that directly benefits from the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. I strongly urge all of my colleagues to host a foster child next year.

I also want to voice my strong support for Representative BASS' bill, H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act. The current Chafee Foster Care Independence Program plays an important role in our larger foster care system, and the services it provides should be extended to cover older youth up to the age of 23.

I was able to hear firsthand from my foster youth shadow, Khadejah Moore, about the struggles that foster youth face when they age out of the system. These young adults are thrown into the real world with little to no support system. It is an incredibly frightening time for these young youth. But if we can extend the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and also allow youth more time to use education vouchers, they have a better chance of having the opportunity to graduate college and successfully enter the workforce.

This is an important, commonsense bill, and I want to thank both Representative BASS and Representative FASO for introducing this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2847.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, having no other speakers, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU).

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2847, the bill offered by my friend

and colleague, KAREN BASS, a tireless leader on foster youth and child welfare.

I recently hosted an amazing young woman named Ruth during Foster Youth Shadow Day here on the Hill. The message Ruth wanted lawmakers to hear is that the obstacles she faces every day as a 19-year-old have not suddenly stopped now that she has aged out of foster care. Ruth has a resilient spirit and unstoppable determination, but she should not be left out in the cold as she pursues her education and her goal of helping other foster youth in the future.

The Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act will help people like Ruth by making vital changes to the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, an important source of funding for foster youth.

Currently, foster youth are only eligible for Chafee services if they are between the ages of 16 and 21. This bill expands access to the services provided by the program to include youth between the ages of 14 and 23. This is such a crucial change to the program since foster youth like Ruth face so many daunting challenges during the period of young adulthood as they transition toward independence and self-sufficiency.

Providing essential services such as access to older mentors and role models, connections to employment opportunities, and education vouchers for foster youth after they reach the age of 18 are key sources of support for foster youth. This bill helps ensure that foster youth have the resources needed to become healthy, thriving adults.

Thanks again to Representative BASS for her work on this bill.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS), the sponsor of this bill.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my legislation, in conjunction with Representative FASO, to support the education and advancement of foster youth. I want to thank the Representative for his leadership on this issue. I also want to thank Chairman BRADY and Ranking Member NEAL for their leadership on behalf of the Nation's foster youth.

I do think it is very remarkable, as several other speakers have said, that today we are bringing forward five bipartisan bills to improve the Nation's foster care system. Each one of the bills addresses a serious challenges or gap in that system.

H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, allows States to expand the Chafee Grant Program to foster youth up to the age of 23. Currently, the program ends at 21. The Chafee Grant Program provides educational grants and other services to help young people transition into adulthood and become independent.

In May, as part of National Foster Youth Shadow Day that is organized by the National Foster Youth Institute, I had the opportunity to meet a young woman named Doniesha Thomas. Doniesha is from Los Angeles, and spent 20 years in foster care before she aged out. She described her foster home as abusive, and eventually she had to move several times.

Against tremendous odds, Doniesha has continued to persevere and is currently a college student at Los Angeles Trade Tech College, majoring in the administration of justice and minoring in paralegal studies.

Doniesha is just one of a small number of foster youth who actually make it to college. This is despite nearly 70 percent of foster youth expressing a desire to attend college. Those, like Doniesha, who are accepted and attend college face another hurdle, which is graduating. Currently, only 3 percent of foster youth who attend college graduate. Programs like Chafee are designed to help foster youth advance in college, trade school, and employment.

During National Foster Youth Shadow Day, I had the opportunity to speak to many other young people, and several of them described challenges that they face after—well, if they were lucky to graduate high school, where they attend college and then something happens; either they run out of resources or their housing falls through and they have to leave college, so their college is interrupted.

That is why this legislation is so important, because it allows for the flexibility; if the young person is not able to complete college in 4 years, they do have a couple of other years.

One of the things that many people don't realize is that when young people age out of the foster youth system—which typically is at 18, sometimes is at 21, depending on the State—that many times we literally put these young people on the street. They are 18 years old. They are in their foster home. They are given a bag, typically a large-sized trash bag, with all of their belongings, and they are put out on the street left to fend for themselves. With today's economic challenges, there are no 18-year-olds that can fend for themselves without a safety net.

If we think of middle class children, transitioning into adulthood is typically what happens at college. They go to college and they have housing. But if they have any challenges, they can always call home. They can text their parents. Their parents are there to rescue them in case they run out of money or something happens with their housing or their grades.

If we think of a young person out of the child welfare system who is literally put on the streets at the age of 18, you can only imagine what happens; which is why so many children in the foster care system wind up incarcerated. Many young girls wind up trafficked; and we did legislation on that a few weeks ago.

So if we want to stop what happens on the other end, with many young children winding up incarcerated, or early pregnancies, or other challenges, we need to make sure that we provide support for them early on.

H.R. 2847 will allow the flexibility for a student, again, who might need more time to complete their education. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, to give foster youth the same type of flexibility and support that we provide our own children.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

H.R. 2847 would provide important assistance for youth aging out of foster care.

In my State of Illinois, 22 percent of the more than 16,000 children placed in foster care in 2015 are aging out. Illinois is widely regarded as a leader among States when it comes to foster youth aging out of care; therefore, it is, indeed, one of the first jurisdictions in which young people who are in foster care on their 18th birthday were able to remain in beyond the age of 18.

Research conducted by the University of Chicago found that allowing foster youth to remain in care beyond the age of 18 is associated with an increase in child well-being, including postsecondary educational attainment. Specifically, former foster youth from Illinois are twice as likely to have ever attended college, and more than twice as likely to have completed at least 1 year of college by age 21, compared with foster youth in other States that have not been given the option to stay in care beyond 18 years of age.

□ 1600

Due to school mobility issues experienced in high school, only 58 percent of foster youth graduate from high school by age 19, which makes it unlikely that they would be graduated from college by age 21.

Extending access to Chafee Independence Act programs to age 23 rather than cutting these young people off at age 21 would ensure these youth are able to be supported beyond their first year of college. We know that when students lose access to critical financial aid resources such as the education training voucher in the middle of their college journey, it forces them to drop out of college in search of employment.

Last Saturday, I spent 2 hours with a group of young people who had been organized by a young fellow, Kenneth Bennett's son. His name is Taylor Bennett. Taylor is the younger brother of Chance the Rapper. He is 21 years of age and had organized young people who were transgender, who were homeless, who were out of school, who were in need of assistance and help, and they were pleased to know that we were going to be considering this legislation today, which I strongly support.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I want to thank Mr. FASO and Mr. REED from New York and Ms. BASS from California for introducing this important bill, and I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2847.

The question was taken.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

REDUCING UNNECESSARY BARRIERS FOR RELATIVE FOSTER PARENTS ACT

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2866) to review and improve licensing standards for placement in a relative foster family home, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2866

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Reducing Unnecessary Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act''.

SEC. 2. REVIEWING AND IMPROVING LICENSING STANDARDS FOR PLACEMENT IN A RELATIVE FOSTER FAMILY HOME.

(a) IDENTIFICATION OF REPUTABLE MODEL LICENSING STANDARDS.—Not later than October 1, 2018, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall identify reputable model licensing standards with respect to the licensing of foster family homes (as defined in section 472(c)(1) of the Social Security Act).

(b) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT.—Section 422(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 622(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (18), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (19), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(20) provide that, not later than April 1, 2019, the State shall submit to the Secretary information addressing—

''(A) whether the State licensing standards are in accord with model standards identified by the Secretary, and if not, the reason for the specific deviation and a description as to why having a standard that is reasonably in accord with the corresponding national model standards is not appropriate for the State;

''(B) whether the State has elected to waive standards established in 471(a)(10)(A) for relative foster family homes (pursuant to waiver authority provided by 471(a)(10)(D)), a description of which standards the State most commonly waives, and if the State has not elected to waive the standards, the reason for not waiving these standards;

''(C) if the State has elected to waive standards specified in subparagraph (B), how caseworkers are trained to use the waiver authority and whether the State has developed a process or provided tools to assist caseworkers in waiving nonsafety standards per the authority provided in 471(a)(10)(D) to quickly place children with relatives; and

''(D) a description of the steps the State is taking to improve caseworker training or the process, if any.''.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subject to subsection (b), the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) TRANSITION RULE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a State plan under part E of title IV of the Social Security Act which the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines requires State legislation (other than legislation appropriating funds) in order for the plan to meet the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by this Act, the State plan shall not be regarded as failing to comply with the requirements of such part solely on the basis of the failure of the plan to meet such additional requirements before the first day of the first calendar quarter beginning after the close of the first regular session of the State legislature that begins after the date of enactment of this Act. For purposes of the previous sentence, in the case of a State that has a 2-year legislative session, each year of the session shall be deemed to be a separate regular session of the State legislature.

(2) APPLICATION TO PROGRAMS OPERATED BY INDIAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS.—In the case of an Indian tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortium which the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines requires time to take action necessary to comply with the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by this Act (whether the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium has a plan under section 479B of the Social Security Act or a cooperative agreement or contract entered into with a State), the Secretary shall provide the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium with such additional time as the Secretary determines is necessary for the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium to take the action to comply with the additional requirements before being regarded as failing to comply with the requirements.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extent their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2866, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on H.R. 2866, the Reducing Unnecessary Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act, introduced by my friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER).

Introducing this legislation, Congressman SMUCKER was joined by our Ways and Means colleague, Congresswoman TERRI SEWELL from across the aisle. The bill has strong bipartisan support, including mine. I am a cosponsor. And the Child Welfare League of America has strongly endorsed this legislation.

So what does this bill do? Well, in short, the bill will reduce the bureaucratic process for placing children in foster care with relatives, when possible, and is in the best interest of the child.

Now, this just makes common sense. Last year alone, there were almost a half million children in foster care, more than 16,000 children in my home State of Pennsylvania alone. Now, there are countless family members of these foster children who are not only willing, but they are ready to have these children placed in their homes when one of their relatives can't take care of them.

As a matter of good public policy, we should be making the placement process much easier for family members, not more difficult, because it is often in the best interest of the child.

Studies show that placing foster children with relatives solves many of the problems children face when being placed into foster care; moreover, it improves the outcomes for these children. Children are more likely to succeed when they can stay with a family member of their own and someone they are already familiar with and know. Children placed with relatives tend to spend less time in foster care and also experience much more stability.

The problem is that, while current law allows States to waive certain licensing standards when placing children with relatives, many States have been slow to implement the law. One of the purported reasons is that caseworkers are slow or they simply don't know how to place children with relatives because of a lack of training on their part.

Today, caseworkers may not be adequately trained regarding their ability to waive certain standards when licensing relatives. This has resulted in delays in placing children with relatives.

And when these children are already facing a tremendous amount of turmoil and uncertainty in their lives, we shouldn't be tying them up in bureaucratic red tape. We need to do more to place these children with a loving family member whenever possible.

Now, how do we do that? Well, Representative SMUCKER's bill, H.R. 2866, will help remedy this problem by making our foster care system more family

friendly, by ensuring States take proactive steps to speed up the licensing process for relatives.

Specifically, the bill would require Health and Human Services to identify reputable model standards for licensing foster family homes by October 1, 2018. States, subsequently, would need to do their part by submitting their plans to be in compliance with model standards for family foster care placement. Additionally, States would need to explain how caseworkers in their respective States are being trained.

This commonsense bill is at absolutely no cost to taxpayers, but it would pay tremendous dividends for our Nation's children. Every child deserves to be raised in a loving home. The Smucker-Sewell bill will ensure that many more children can live safely and happily with loving family members when they cannot stay in their own home with their nuclear family.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this important legislation. Passing this legislation is the very least we can do for these children.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for the purpose of a colloquy.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member DAVIS for yielding me the time.

At this time, I would like to engage in a colloquy with the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY).

As we have discussed, H.R. 2866 requires HHS to identify reputable model licensing standards so that States can determine whether their current requirements are in accord.

Is it your expectation that the National Association for Regulatory Administration's Model Family Foster Home Licensing Standards would be the kind of standards envisioned by the bill?

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

My feeling is the National Association for Regulatory Administration's Model Foster Home Licensing Standards would be a prime example of what HHS should consider.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for that response.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER), the sponsor of this important legislation, from my home State and a key member of the Keystone Coalition.

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of and to ask my colleagues' support for H.R. 2866, the Reducing Unnecessary Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act.

I would like to first thank my friend and colleague from Pennsylvania for his leadership and sponsorship of this bill. I would like to thank the chair of the Ways and Means Committee, Representative BRADY, and members of the Ways and Means Committee for bringing this bill to the floor, and I would like to thank my cointroducer of the bill, Representative SEWELL from Alabama, as well, for the work that she has done in regards to foster care issues over the years.

Every child, Mr. Speaker, deserves a loving home; but when a child's home is no longer safe, often because of abuse, neglect, or behavioral issues, children are placed in foster homes. In fact, in 2015, more than 670,000 American children—16,000 in Pennsylvania, the State, including in my district, more than 16,000 there have spent time in foster care.

Countless families across the country are willing and eager to accept foster children into their homes, and research shows that placement with relatives is better for the child. Therefore, Federal policy should make it easier for foster children to be placed with family members.

Our bill is being considered today on the floor, and again, I ask for my colleagues' support. When it comes to finding loving homes for children, this is a bipartisan issue. There are no Republicans or Democrats, just mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, and sons and daughters who believe each child should have a bed to be tucked into at night in a loving home.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also note that the following organizations have expressed support for H.R. 2866: the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Child Welfare League of America, First Focus, March of Dimes, and the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners.

Again, I would like to thank Representative SEWELL from Alabama for her work on foster care issues and for her leadership on this bill. We really appreciate her work.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I strongly support H.R. 2866, the Reducing Unnecessary Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act.

This important bill helps relative caregivers by requiring States to examine whether their licensing standards align with the best practices in licensing family foster homes. In so doing, H.R. 2866 requires States to set reasonable requirements for family homes, standards that consider community norms and cultural differences and standards that remove artificial barriers to family care.

I have advocated these provisions within my own bill to improve support for kinship caregivers, and I am proud to support Congresswoman SEWELL and Congressman SMUCKER's bill.

More than 25 percent of children in care live with a grandparent or other relative. My congressional district has the highest percentage of children living with grandparent caregivers in the Nation, followed closely by two other congressional districts in Illinois.

In Illinois, 37 percent of all children placed in out-of-home care are placed with relatives; however, less than half of these children are placed with relatives in homes that are licensed.

The vast majority of relative caregivers are not able to become licensed caregivers because the standards do not make sense with their circumstances, such as requiring a grandmother in an expensive city like Chicago to have one bedroom for each of her three grandbabies or requiring her to take dozens of hours of parent training each year.

In 2008, I worked with Congressman Jerry Weller from Illinois to allow States the ability to waive nonsafety licensing standards on a case-by-case basis to help kinship caregivers via the Fostering Connections Act. Unfortunately, many States chose not to exercise this waiver authority to assist kin caregivers.

For example, in 2011, although Illinois had more than 3,600 nonlicensed relatives caring for youth, only 72 licensing waivers for relatives were approved. Less than 2 percent received waivers.

H.R. 2866 requires States to modernize their licensing standards to align with the best practices in licensing. This is a commonsense and important change.

□ 1615

Further, this bill advances our goal of ensuring that States follow the waivers to meet the best interests of the children. To understand the use of waivers, Children's Bureau should collect data on State's granting waivers for nonsafety licensing standards for relatives, including the number of relatives applying for waivers, the number of waivers issued or denied, and the reason for denial.

I strongly support H.R. 2866, the Reducing Unnecessary Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act and urge my colleagues to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) who is a sponsor of this bill.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member DAVIS for yielding me the time.

H.R. 2866, the Reducing Unnecessary Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act, is a commonsense piece of legislation that has strong bipartisan support right here in the House. I want to especially thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SMUCKER) who is joining me in introducing this bill. I want to

thank him for his leadership on foster care and foster youth and again say thank you for looking for what is in the best interests of the most vulnerable children in our society.

H.R. 2866 has been supported by not only bipartisan support here in the House but has the support of many foster care advocacy groups, including Generations United, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do everything in our power to make the foster care system family friendly, and H.R. 2866 takes an important step in that direction. By motivating States to update the foster care licensing regulations, we can reduce red tape and make it easier for family members to become foster parents.

Research conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services, academics, and advocacy groups all show that children experience better outcomes when they are in the care of family members compared to children in nonrelative care.

When kids are placed with a relative like a grandparent, they experience fewer school changes, are less likely to reenter the foster care system, and are more likely to be adopted. Moreover, data shows that foster youth experience better behavioral and mental health outcomes, are more likely to report that they ''feel loved,'' and are more likely to stay connected with their communities.

I want to again thank Representative SMUCKER from Pennsylvania for his leadership and sponsorship of this bill with me, as well as my Democrat and Republican colleagues on the House Ways and Means Committee for unanimously supporting this legislation.

I am encouraged to see that this body values our foster youth, and I hope we can continue to keep up the spirit of bipartisanship.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS).

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2866, and I want to congratulate my good friends, Representatives SEWELL, KELLY, and SMUCKER for this legislation to reduce barriers for relative caregivers.

Ironically, in the 1990s, when the crack cocaine epidemic hit, that was the first time that women started using drugs equal to men. It hadn't happened before, and so families fell apart. One of the things that happened, in the early 1990s, was in the middle of the night a grandmother might be called and three grandchildren delivered to her by Children's Protective Services. The grandmother would take the children without any support and without any knowledge of how to deal with the trauma that the children faced.

During those years, we actually discriminated against relatives. We said very negative things about them such as: the apple doesn't fall far from the tree; and, if your daughter wound up on drugs, why should we give the children to you?

So during those years, we would rather pay a stranger—and there can be wonderful foster parents—but a stranger to take care of children instead of families.

One of the things we did in Los Angeles was we organized the grandmothers, and we trained them how to go before the board of supervisors and advocate on their own behalf. That happened all around the country. So there really was a movement of relatives who rose up and said: We want our children; we just need help. We might be on a fixed income, and we can't really support the children.

It is actually more expensive to put a child in foster care. So there began a national movement for relative caregivers to fighting for their rights and for services. So over the years, we really evolved to the point where we have legislation like this where we recognize the benefit of having relatives take care of children.

Ironically, the last piece of legislation we were talking about was about children aging out of the system. Before we prioritized relatives, what would happen is a young child who was aging out of foster care, we would put them on the street, and the first thing they would do would be to go look for their families because they might have family somewhere, and they would often do that.

This legislation, I think, is extremely important to allow flexibility for licensing of relative caregivers. Examples of grandmothers who I worked with directly who wanted to take in their grandchildren but they were told they didn't have enough bedrooms in their house, and so we were going to put the children in more expensive foster care and break them up and send them to different foster homes instead of leaving them with the grandmother or assist her in moving.

So legislation like H.R. 2866, I believe, will begin to address some of these challenges and do what every child needs, which is to be in a loving home with family.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

H.R. 2866 is important because it supports kinship caregivers. Research shows that children placed in kinship care are safer, more stable placements and are more likely to be connected with their siblings and community than children placed in nonrelative placements.

In addition to these positive outcomes for children in relative care, research shows that kinship care placements are more cost effective. In Illinois, cost studies estimated an average of $4,778 in savings of title IV-E administrative expenses over an 8-year period compared to a match control group that did not have this option.

More than 400,000 children make up our Nation's foster care population with more than one in four of these vulnerable children living with a grandparent or other relative. We should do as much as we can to strengthen these families and children. H.R. 2866 takes an important step forward.

Mr. Speaker, I have two facilities in my congressional district that have outstanding programs. They are 45-unit buildings that have been constructed for grandparents raising grandchildren. One is operated by the Sankofa Safe Child Initiative, the other by the Coppin AME Church Community Development Agency. Both of these are tremendous examples of what can happen when children have the opportunity to be nurtured by grandparents.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this legislation. I urge its passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a minute because I think today is one of those days where the American people look to the people's House and say: Isn't it something that they can actually agree? Isn't it something that they actually think with their hearts? Isn't it actually something that they can come together on an issue that is so basic, so simple, and so easy to understand?

We are talking about our most precious asset and the country's best hope for the future: our children.

As I heard Ms. SEWELL talk and Ms. BASS talk, I know in their hearts how they feel about this. I know this is not something they just thought about today or this week or thought this would be a good piece of legislation; they think it is good because it is good for American people.

Mr. SMUCKER joined with Ms. SEWELL to have this legislation come forward. It is a breath of fresh air for the people's House. This is legislation that protects children, legislation that puts children with their families in case they can't be taken care of in their own homes, and it is an incredible effort by both sides.

I want to tell you what a great privilege it is to serve with you today and to be on the floor with you. Mr. DAVIS is eloquent. Ms. BASS, Ms. SEWELL, and Mr. SMUCKER of Pennsylvania are good friends of mine. So it is good to be here today.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2866, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

MODIFICATIONS OF CREDIT FOR PRODUCTION FROM ADVANCED NUCLEAR POWER FACILITIES

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1551) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for production from advanced nuclear power facilities, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1551

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

SECTION 1. MODIFICATIONS OF CREDIT FOR PRODUCTION FROM ADVANCED NUCLEAR POWER FACILITIES.

(a) TREATMENT OF UNUTILIZED LIMITATION AMOUNTS.—Section 45J(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) in paragraph (4), by inserting ''or any amendment to'' after ''enactment of'', and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) ALLOCATION OF UNUTILIZED LIMITATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Any unutilized national megawatt capacity limitation shall be allocated by the Secretary under paragraph (3) as rapidly as is practicable after December 31, 2020—

''(i) first to facilities placed in service on or before such date to the extent that such facilities did not receive an allocation equal to their full nameplate capacity, and

''(ii) then to facilities placed in service after such date in the order in which such facilities are placed in service.

''(B) UNUTILIZED NATIONAL MEGAWATT CAPACITY LIMITATION.—The term 'unutilized national megawatt capacity limitation' means the excess (if any) of—

''(i) 6,000 megawatts, over

''(ii) the aggregate amount of national megawatt capacity limitation allocated by the Secretary before January 1, 2021, reduced by any amount of such limitation which was allocated to a facility which was not placed in service before such date.

''(C) COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROVISIONS.—In the case of any unutilized national megawatt capacity limitation allocated by the Secretary pursuant to this paragraph—

''(i) such allocation shall be treated for purposes of this section in the same manner as an allocation of national megawatt capacity limitation, and

''(ii) subsection (d)(1)(B) shall not apply to any facility which receives such allocation.''.

(b) TRANSFER OF CREDIT BY CERTAIN PUBLIC ENTITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 45J of such Code is amended—

(A) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f), and

(B) by inserting after subsection (d) the following new subsection:

''(e) TRANSFER OF CREDIT BY CERTAIN PUBLIC ENTITIES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—If, with respect to a credit under subsection (a) for any taxable year—

''(A) the taxpayer would be a qualified public entity, and

''(B) such entity elects the application of this paragraph for such taxable year with respect to all (or any portion specified in such election) of such credit,

the eligible project partner specified in such election (and not the qualified public entity) shall be treated as the taxpayer for purposes of this title with respect to such credit (or such portion thereof).

''(2) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) QUALIFIED PUBLIC ENTITY.—The term 'qualified public entity' means—

''(i) a Federal, State, or local government entity, or any political subdivision, agency, or instrumentality thereof,

''(ii) a mutual or cooperative electric company described in section 501(c)(12) or section 1381(a)(2), or

''(iii) a not-for-profit electric utility which has or had received a loan or loan guarantee under the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.

''(B) ELIGIBLE PROJECT PARTNER.—The term 'eligible project partner' means—

''(i) any person responsible for, or participating in, the design or construction of the advanced nuclear power facility to which the credit under subsection (a) relates,

''(ii) any person who participates in the provision of the nuclear steam supply system to the advanced nuclear power facility to which the credit under subsection (a) relates,

''(iii) any person who participates in the provision of nuclear fuel to the advanced nuclear power facility to which the credit under subsection (a) relates, or

''(iv) any person who has an ownership interest in such facility.

''(3) SPECIAL RULES.—

''(A) APPLICATION TO PARTNERSHIPS.—In the case of a credit under subsection (a) which is determined at the partnership level—

''(i) for purposes of paragraph (1)(A), a qualified public entity shall be treated as the taxpayer with respect to such entity's distributive share of such credit, and

''(ii) the term 'eligible project partner' shall include any partner of the partnership.

''(B) TAXABLE YEAR IN WHICH CREDIT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.—In the case of any credit (or portion thereof) with respect to which an election is made under paragraph (1), such credit shall be taken into account in the first taxable year of the eligible project partner ending with, or after, the qualified public entity's taxable year with respect to which the credit was determined.

''(C) TREATMENT OF TRANSFER UNDER PRIVATE USE RULES.—For purposes of section 141(b)(1), any benefit derived by an eligible project partner in connection with an election under this subsection shall not be taken into account as a private business use.''.

(2) SPECIAL RULE FOR PROCEEDS OF TRANSFERS FOR MUTUAL OR COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC COMPANIES.—Section 501(c)(12) of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(I) In the case of a mutual or cooperative electric company described in this paragraph or an organization described in section 1381(a)(2), income received or accrued in connection with an election under section 45J(e)(1) shall be treated as an amount collected from members for the sole purpose of meeting losses and expenses.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(1) TREATMENT OF UNUTILIZED LIMITATION AMOUNTS.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) TRANSFER OF CREDIT BY CERTAIN PUBLIC ENTITIES.—The amendments made by subsection (b) shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. RICE) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1551, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of H.R. 1551, a bill I have sponsored that modifies the advanced nuclear production tax credit.

The nuclear production tax credit has been a vital incentive to jump-start a nuclear industry that has been dormant for almost 40 years. Unfortunately, due to overregulation, ambiguities in the law, and other unanticipated events, the first-in-a-generation nuclear plants that began construction because of this tax credit are in danger of being shut down midconstruction.

Without certainty that these facilities will have full access to the allocation of their tax credits, it may be another 30 or 40 years before this country builds another cutting-edge nuclear facility. Thankfully, the legislation we are considering today provides these facilities the certainty they so desperately need to move forward.

□ 1630

Almost 12 years ago, Congress established the nuclear production tax credit as part of a broader package designed to ensure our energy independence. Not wanting to oversubsidize the nuclear industry, Congress set out to limit the credit in a number of ways, including a national production capacity that effectively capped the amount of this credit available.

South Carolina and Georgia responded to this incentive, making large investments in nuclear facilities that represented the pinnacle of safety and innovation in the industry. After years of applications, planning, and rigorous oversight by multiple regulatory authorities, these plants began construction in 2013, receiving sizable allocations of the nuclear production tax credit's national capacity.

Yet, it quickly became clear changes to the underlying provision were necessary in order for these plants to fulfill the capacity allocation as Congress originally intended. For example, right now, not-for-profit entities like public utilities are unable to utilize or transfer their share of the credits, leaving the majority of the tax credits allocated to these two plants unusable.

Additionally, strict placed-in-service date rules would force these plants to make decisions between finishing before a deadline or making sure they are constructed in the safest way possible.

Recently, to make matters worse, a third-party contractor for both plants unexpectedly filed for bankruptcy, putting the projects in jeopardy of finishing before the placed-in-service date, if at all.

In the coming weeks, both plants must go before State regulators and provide a plan for how they will continue construction. The full availability of the $2 billion in tax credits will be a key factor in the regulators' assessment of whether to approve the plans to continue with the facilities or shut down the construction completely.

Taking a step back for a second, I think it is important to note that one of my top priorities in Congress is to help restore our country's competitiveness through a comprehensive overhaul of our Tax Code. An ideal tax system promotes parity between different energy sources and gets the government out of the business of picking winners and losers.

Before we get to that ideal tax system, we must create a smooth transition from our current system to the new system. This legislation is an important part of that transition. As Ways and Means Committee Chairman BRADY said at our markup last week: ''Nuclear power is a critical component of an all-of-the-above strategy for energy independence and national security.''

Without this legislation, the nuclear power industry may cease to exist as we know it today in this country, which is exactly why passing this legislation today is more important now than ever. Nuclear power is crucial to our energy independence.

Additionally, if these facilities shut down tomorrow, it will immediately cost 12,000 jobs in South Carolina and Georgia. It will cost the ratepayers hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars in increases in their annual utility bills. And most alarming, our national security will be jeopardized, as countries like China and Russia continue to make massive investments in nuclear power production.

We need to give these plants the certainty of the tax credits as Congress originally intended, not just for South Carolina and Georgia, but for the continued innovation of nuclear energy and the security of our Nation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1551, a bipartisan bill to modify the section 45J production tax credit for advanced power.

This bill is sponsored by two of my colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. BLUMENAUER from Oregon and Mr. RICE from South Carolina. It enjoys bipartisan support of members of the committee as well.

Passage of this bill is critical to thousands of jobs in South Carolina and Georgia. As you know, I am committed to passing good, bipartisan legislation that puts and keeps Americans to work in good-paying jobs.

However, I must highlight my disappointment that the committee at this moment has not acted on other important priorities in the energy tax space. For example, there is bipartisan interest in this Congress for extending section 48 investment tax credit for non-solar, section 48-eligible technologies. H.R. 1090, the Technology for Energy Security Act, introduced by our colleagues, Mr. REED from New York and Mr. THOMPSON from California, is supported by a bipartisan group of 93 Members of Congress.

The committee is overdue in considering this important piece of legislation, as well as other provisions vital to renewable energy, renewable fuels, and energy efficiency and alternative fuel vehicles that expired at the end of 2016. As the gentleman from South Carolina noted, all of the above.

I hope we can act before the eleventh hour to extend these provisions.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude by reminding my colleagues that the United States Government invests a tremendous amount of money on energy policy through our Tax Code. These investments have helped to grow our economy and create good-paying jobs nationwide. Therefore, as we continue the discussions on tax reform, I hope and anticipate Chairman BRADY will consider focusing on comprehensive, fully integrated energy strategy reform as well.

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

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. RICE) for his work on this.

I rise today to keep the lights on for American nuclear energy.

America is being left behind in the nuclear energy race. Nuclear energy in the United States is lagging behind our competition. The four new generation reactors being built in South Carolina and Georgia are the first new reactor construction since the 1970s. The Watts Bar 2 reactor in Tennessee, which was first permitted in the 1970s, only recently came online in 2016.

Mr. Speaker, America needs to gets serious about nuclear energy. These new reactors not only keep our economy pumping with 24/7 base-load electricity, they are also the foundation for America's national security. A successful civilian nuclear energy sector is key to supporting America's military needs.

Nuclear needs to be approached holistically. From new production at plants like V.C. Summer in South Carolina, to treatment and disposal facilities at the Savannah River Site, it is in America's national security interest that policies keep all aspects of the nuclear life cycle competitive with the rest of the world.

Passing this legislation now will send a clear signal to the regulatory authorities at home and nations abroad that America is serious about national security. Without such a signal, the chances that the regulatory authorities disregard the tax credits for the purposes of evaluating the project are much higher, likely leading to the authorities not approving the continued construction of the plants.

The United States must not turn over leadership in nuclear technology to Russia and China. China's recent nuclear deals are with Sudan, South Africa, Kenya, Egypt, Argentina, and Great Britain.

Rosatom, which administers the former Soviet weapons complex, says it has received orders for 34 nuclear power reactors in 13 countries, including Iran. Together, Russia and China are constructing almost 30 new advanced nuclear units, whereas the four units at the V.C. Summer and Vogtle plants would be our first nuclear units in almost 40 years.

Nuclear energy is the cornerstone of American economic and national security. I urge my colleagues to not turn the lights out on nuclear energy, and to vote in favor of H.R. 1551.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), the assistant Democratic leader and my friend.

Mr. CLYBURN. I thank my friend, Mr. NEAL, for yielding and for his support of this bill. It is very important to the States of South Carolina and Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1551 will make two critical modifications to the nuclear production tax credit program. This bill will allow government-owned electric utilities and nonprofit electric cooperatives to utilize the credit, which current law restricts to for-profit utilities only. It will also remove the placed-in-service deadline for facilities to be completed.

Since the tax credit's original passage in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, four new advanced nuclear plants, the V.C. Summer site in South Carolina, and the Vogtle site in Georgia, have been licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and are under construction.

Both projects are partly owned by State or municipal-owned utilities or nonprofit electric cooperatives. These public power entities, which have taken the first steps in constructing new advanced nuclear facilities, should not be penalized, but should, instead, be treated similarly to the for-profit utilities for the purpose of these tax incentives.

The construction that is currently underway in South Carolina and Georgia employ over 12,000 skilled workers

and represent billions of dollars of investment. When complete, they will be the largest addition of carbon-free energy in either State and will replace older fossil fuel-emitting plants.

Recently, the contractor building both the South Carolina and Georgia facilities has entered into bankruptcy proceedings, raising the possibility of further delays in the completion of these projects. It is critical that the placed-in-service deadline be extended so that these projects, the first new advanced nuclear construction projects in this country in over 30 years, may be completed.

While Russia, China, and other countries around the world are investing in nuclear energy, we cannot afford to walk away from these important sources of clean energy for future generations.

The modifications in this bill do not expand the tax credit and, as such, have little additional cost to the taxpayer.

I want to thank my colleagues, TOM RICE and EARL BLUMENAUER, for sponsoring this legislation; and Chairman KEVIN BRADY and Ranking Member RICHARD NEAL for the support they have given to it.

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE).

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues for the comments that have been made regarding this very important piece of legislation.

We all know that securing American energy independence is absolutely critical to the future prosperity of this Nation, and nuclear power plays a major role in that mission.

At the Vogtle plant in Georgia, thousands of engineers and craftsmen, many of whom live in my district, are hard at work putting the United States at the forefront of advanced nuclear technology. The Vogtle plant and its sister plant in South Carolina, V.C. Summer, have four new, state-of-the-art reactors under construction. The clean, low-cost, safe energy that is produced from both Vogtle and V.C. Summer will pave the way for future reactors and mark a new era for nuclear power in the United States.

H.R. 1551 makes relatively small changes to already established tax credits, but this legislation will have an enormous impact on ensuring nuclear power remains a viable source of energy.

So I, again, just want to thank my good friend, Mr. RICE, for introducing this sincerely important piece of legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues here to support H.R. 1551.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to support this bill.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT), my friend.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, how very appropriate it is today that this Congress is interrupting consideration of child welfare and foster care bills in order to address a gift for the nuclear industry. An indifferent Congress that refuses to put an extra dime in addressing the deficiencies of our foster care system doesn't hesitate for a moment in giving a few more million dollars to the nuclear industry.

Isn't it amazing to hear what we will accomplish with a mere $16 million additional tax subsidy?

Our national security will be protected. This is the first concern I have heard here on the floor in months from a Republican about giving things to Russia and China. Maybe the better place to look than this bill is down the street at the White House, if the real concern is what we are giving to the Russia.

To hear supporters of this bill talk about the dangers to Georgia and South Carolina, you would think that Sherman's March on Atlanta, Georgia, and South Carolina was nothing compared to the harm this Congress would do if it failed to enact this bill.

Well, the devastation that faces consumers in these States has nothing to do with what Congress has or has not done, but it has to do with the nuclear industry seeking special treatment, much as it is seeking taxpayer subsidies here today.

□ 1645

It is an industry that has disregarded longstanding utility law to compel Georgians to pay higher electric bills for utility investments before they ever deliver one kilowatt of power. And it may, in fact, never get around to providing any power for all the money that is wasted on them.

This is a bill that is masquerading as an incentive for the future. A glorious new day for nuclear power. And yet it makes this tax credit available to 20-year-old nuclear technology and for last-century uranium mining.

This bill hardly matches its cover. It is true that $16 million of additional help to the nuclear industry is a mere footnote compared to the billions of taxpayer dollars, taxpayer resources, that have been lavished on this industry in the past.

In Georgia, the nuclear power industry literally turned decades of utility law upside down in demanding that electric ratepayers pay for what stockholders traditionally have paid for. Even after doing that, Westinghouse, a once distinguished American company, a blue ribbon company, went belly up. It has been nuked, and so have those local utility ratepayers.

As The New York Times reported recently:

''Many of the company's injuries are self-inflicted. . . . ''

''Bankruptcy will make it harder for Westinghouse's business partners to collect money they are owed by the nuclear-plant maker.''

''Now, it is unclear whether the company will be able to complete any of its projects, which in the United States are about 3 years late and billions over budget.''

''The cost estimates are already running $1 billion to $1.3 billion higher than originally expected, according to a recent report from Morgan Stanley, and could eventually exceed $8 billion . . . '' right onto the shoulders of those ratepayers in Georgia and South Carolina.

Of course, you would have thought, after the disaster at Fukushima and the many questions raised about nuclear power in Japan, that Congress would be rethinking nuclear power as a panacea. But even if you overlook this human disaster and the dangers to health and safety, a recognition that when the nuclear industry makes a mistake it is a mistake that lasts forever, if you just look at the economics alone, this kind of tax subsidy is unjustified.

With an ample amount of natural gas coming on the market, with so much renewable energy, nuclear simply has not made economic sense, and the history of this particular legislation demonstrates that.

When this tax break was originally set up back in 2005, there were some 32 nuclear plants that were going to take advantage of it, and it hasn't been because of the failure of Congress that they didn't. Out of that 32, exactly four have even begun to be built, and not one of them, not a single one of them, has been completed in over a decade and a half.

After this record of miserable failures, there is good reason to ask why taxpayers should be called on to give even more.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from 13 environmental groups expressing opposition to the legislation.

JUNE 20, 2017.

Re Opposition to H.R. 1551—amending tax credit provisions for ''advanced'' nuclear power.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN AND MINORITY LEADER PELOSI: On behalf of our millions of members we are writing to register our strong opposition to H.R. 1551 that would eliminate the placed-in-service date for the nuclear production tax credit, which is currently January 1, 2021. It would also allow public power companies to receive the benefit of the federal production tax credit even though they pay no taxes.

Despite H.R. 1551's misleading title, the production tax credit it extends is not designated solely for new, supposed ''advanced'' nuclear technologies. Rather, reactor designs that were approved over twenty years ago are eligible as described in the bill analysis by the Joint Committee on Taxation, ''An advanced nuclear facility is any nuclear facility for the production of electricity, the reactor design for which was approved after 1993 by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.''

The nuclear industry is once again demonstrating that it is not only dirty and dangerous but that it is also not cost competitive. Despite promises that this time would be different, the four Toshiba-Westinghouse AP1000 nuclear reactors under construction in the U.S., two at Southern Company's

Plant Vogtle in Georgia and two at SCANA's V.C. Summer plant in South Carolina, have yet again shown that the nuclear industry is incapable of building new reactors within budget or on time even with significant federal and state financial incentives and new, streamlined federal licensing processes.

Reports issued in recent weeks show that the costs of these projects are out of control, and falling further and further behind schedule. Both are approximately 40% complete in terms of construction, yet have already more than doubled in cost and projected construction time. When construction started in 2009, Vogtle 3 and 4 were projected to cost a total of $14 billion and to begin generating electricity in 2016 and 2017, respectively. Eight years later, the reactors may not be completed until 2022 and 2023, if ever, and at an estimated total project cost of $29 billion. Summer 2 and 3 were projected to cost $11 billion, but overruns have pushed the total to at least $22.9 billion. Consequently, utility customers in both states are suffering as they are paying in advance for the financing costs associated with the projects far longer than initially predicted and will ultimately face increasing bills because of the projects' costs overruns.

H.R. 1551 would unfairly reward Southern Company and SCANA Corp. for not being able to complete these projects on time, providing them each with more than $1 billion in taxpayer-provided handouts to shield their shareholders from the financial responsibility of pursuing inherently risky, uneconomical projects. Perhaps even worse, eliminating the placed-in-service date will provide an incentive for yet other utilities to make the same mistakes.

The purpose of tax incentives, whether for nuclear, renewable energy, or other technologies, is to support innovation and technological leadership in the energy sector and to drive the commercialization of promising new technologies. When the nuclear production tax credit was created in 2005, Congress hoped to support a revival of nuclear reactor construction. Only four out of thirty-two reactors proposed since 2005 ever began construction, and the vast majority of the rest have been cancelled or indefinitely shelved.

The failures to bring any of the four reactors online within the fifteen-year period of the tax credit program demonstrates that the technology is an even greater failure than the first generation of reactors, and it will never be widely commercialized. It is simply not a justified or worthy investment of taxpayers' money to grant the owners of these reactors the extraordinary relief of billions of dollars in subsidies for projects that hold no promise for the U.S. energy sector. It should not be forgotten that Southern Company's expansion of Plant Vogtle has already received substantial taxpayer support through the $8.3 billion in federal nuclear loan guarantees and the public/private cost-sharing support during the permitting and licensing process.

Finally, we oppose H.R. 1551 because the legislation establishes an expensive precedent by creating brand-new tax credit value for any not-for-profit project partners that can only be transferred to all for-profit project partners. Both the Vogtle and Summer projects feature a combination of both for-profit and not-for-profit utilities. Not-for-profit utilities, such as rural cooperatives, municipal or state-owned utilities, have no federal tax liability and therefore are not entitled to tax credits. But under H.R. 1551, the tax credit is made available for not-for-profit entities that can only be transferred to the project's for-profit partners. Furthermore, H.R. 1551 specifies that rural cooperatives may treat tax credit transfers as funds collected for ''the sole purpose of meeting losses and expenses''—that is, as a form of debt relief, for which production tax credits were not intended. These measures amount to a brand-new, taxpayer-shouldered giveaway for both Southern Company and SCANA Corp.

Furthermore, the definition of ''eligible partners'' that can receive the tax credits from the not-for-profit partner(s) is troubling as it ''includes any person who designed or constructed the nuclear power plant, participates in the provision of nuclear steam or nuclear fuel to the power plant, or has an ownership interest in the facility.'' Providing tax credits to reactor suppliers or the uranium mining industry is objectionable and goes beyond the original intent of the law to provide incentives to actual nuclear utilities that were among the first to pursue new nuclear generation.

The rationales provided for eliminating the placed-in-service date for the nuclear production tax credit are irrelevant and have no merit:

''The cost of H.R. 1551 is minimal.'' The cost of the nuclear production tax credits is at least $5.2 billion. Due to both eliminating the placed-in-service date and by permitting qualified public entities to transfer credits to an eligible project partner, the latter provision would actually increase the cost of the tax credits by allowing non-profit, tax-exempt owners of reactors to take a large federal tax credit. State and municipal utilities and rural cooperatives are major owners of both the Vogtle and Summer projects: rural cooperatives own 54.3% of the Vogtle 3 and 4 reactors; and Santee Cooper owns 45% of the Summer 2 and 3 reactors. By permitting these tax-exempt entities to transfer tax credits to private sector partners, H.R. 1551 would double the anticipated amount of the tax credits for the Summer and Vogtle projects. The credits are valued at $18 per megawatt-hour of electricity generated for the first eight years. This would amount to about $160 million per year for each reactor—$1.3 billion each, or $5.2 billion for all four reactors. Taxpayers stand to avoid a $5.2 billion expense if none of the reactors come online before the tax credits expire at the end of 2020. By eliminating the placed-in-service date, H.R. 1551 could cost taxpayers billions of dollars for a failed technology.

''The tax credits are essential to the completion of the Vogtle and Summer projects.'' It is not clear that the tax credits will have any effect on the outcome of the Vogtle and Summer projects at this point. Each of the reactors under construction is now $5 billion to $7 billion over budget. Even $1.3 billion in tax credits is not enough offset such massive cost overruns; and, in/ any case, the benefits of the production tax credit were assumed when the utilities began building the reactors. If the utilities determine to complete the reactors despite the cost overruns, the value of the tax credits will not be a decisive factor.

''The tax credits are essential to maintaining U.S. leadership in the global nuclear industry.'' Extending the nuclear production tax credit will do nothing to promote U.S. leadership in nuclear technology or reactor exports. The tax credits themselves will derive to the domestic utilities that will own and operate the Vogtle and Summer reactors, not the manufacturers that design, export, and build reactors. The nuclear divisions of Westinghouse and General Electric are the only two U.S.-based companies actively involved in the global reactor market, but both are now owned by Japanese corporations (Toshiba and Hitachi). As a result of Westinghouse's bankruptcy, Toshiba has determined not to build any more new reactors, and not to continue supporting the AP1000 reactor design. GE-Hitachi's prospects are no better. The company has only two reactors in construction globally (both in Japan and long-delayed).

''A viable commercial nuclear power industry is necessary to support the nation's defense nuclear complex.'' This would be a hypocritical reason to provide a subsidy to reactors, and could prove dangerous to peace and security domestically and globally. The U.S. is under international treaty obligations to maintain a strict separation of civilian and military applications of nuclear technology. Historically, the U.S. government's purpose in promoting commercial nuclear power was to encourage the peaceful application of atomic energy, not to advance nuclear weapons. If the U.S. is perceived as promoting civilian nuclear power as a means of bolstering our nuclear weapons program, then it will undermine our credibility in the nonproliferation arena. It could also encourage enemies to view nuclear power plants as extensions of our military establishment, and hence as legitimate targets in armed conflict.

We strongly oppose this bill and urge you to vote against this undeserved industry bailout. We urge Congress to oppose this provision and instead focus on low- or no-carbon energy choices that can be deployed affordably in the near-term, at low risk, that will lead us to a clean and sustainable future.

Sincerely,

Beyond Nuclear, Center for Biological Diversity, Clean Water Action, Environment America, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, League of Conservation Voters, Natural Resources Defense Council, Nuclear Information And Resource Service, Public Citizens, Sierra Club, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is an important additional concern raised by our colleague Mr. NEAL already.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. NEAL. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. DOGGETT. And that is the fact that there are so many other additional measures that our colleagues' bipartisan efforts that are pending in our committee on energy-efficient residential property, on fuel cells, on small wind energy, on geothermal heat pumps, to mention only a few. These represent forms of energy and energy conservation that will help us address climate change while achieving our energy objectives.

Mr. Speaker, instead of today's measure, our focus should be on safe, healthy forms of energy instead of an industry that costs too much and poses too much danger to humans.

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1551, legislation supported by Republicans and Democrats, focused on strengthening America's energy security.

This bill is sponsored and led by Congressman TOM RICE, and it clarifies an

existing law dealing with tax credits for nuclear energy production and making sure these credits work effectively for America. It addresses an urgent problem that now poses a threat to America's energy security and, by extension, our national security.

As a result of an uncertainty with respect to the nuclear production tax credit, there is a risk of construction grinding to a halt on several cutting-edge nuclear power plants in our country. Meanwhile, our global competitors like Russia and China are pushing forward nuclear power to bolster their own energy sectors.

Nuclear power is critical to an all-of-the-above strategy for American energy independence and our national security. It is urgent that we take action now to solve this issue in our Tax Code and provide the certainty that our energy innovators need to continue moving forward with construction. That is exactly what Congressman RICE's bill will do.

To be clear, I would rather be standing here today to announce that this important bill is part of overall tax reform. But the fact is that our focus on that important goal doesn't prevent us from acting to solve urgent problems in existing law like this.

The fact is this bill is not what Washington calls a tax extender. That circus isn't coming back to town. This bill is a solution to a serious and immediate problem in our Tax Code that threatens our energy security. That is why we are moving it forward right now.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman RICE for his leadership on H.R. 1551 and the strong support from the South Carolina and Georgia delegations, all who have weighed in on this. And as we continue working with President Trump in the Senate to deliver comprehensive tax reform this year, we should pass this bill now, provide greater certainty for our nuclear energy innovators.

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

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman RICE for his introduction of this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, President Trump and I agree on many issues facing our Nation today. We share our number one priority: national security. Energy independence is critical to our mutual mission to safeguard the United States. That is why I stand before my colleagues in the Nation today in support of H.R. 1551 to modify the nuclear production tax credit.

Enacted in 2005, the Energy Policy Act provided production tax credits for reactors with a deadline of 2020. When the law was enacted, Congress did not anticipate the sunset date would place a hardship on energy producers. As every businessowner knows, the unexpected happens in the real world.

My district is leading the way in the expansion of our Nation's nuclear energy resources, constructing two of the first nuclear reactors in the United States in more than 30 years. In fact, the 12th District of Georgia will have more than 75 percent of the nuclear generating capacity of the Southern Company.

Also, because Georgia has been ranked as the number one place to locate your business for the last 4 years is because we enjoy extremely low power rates.

In an unfortunate turn of events, Westinghouse filed for bankruptcy, which could result in the nuclear units coming online at Plant Vogtle a little later than 2020. H.R. 1551 will assist our Nation's energy producers to complete Plant Vogtle's units 3 and 4. Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely critical. This change will not cost the taxpayer an additional dime.

You may ask: Why is this a national security issue? As it has been mentioned, China and Russia continue to make heavy investments in nuclear energy. We cannot send a signal to the rest of the world that nondemocratic countries are leading the way in nuclear production and that America is not investing in our own energy independence.

Mr. Speaker, Plant Vogtle is critical to provide clean low-cost energy to Georgians. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this critical important legislation.

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

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD).

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise in support of H.R. 1551, and I want to thank Mr. RICE for his hard work on this bill and the way he shepherded it through the legislative process. I think it is awfully important for a number of different reasons. I think it is important for the reason of the environment.

I come from the low country of South Carolina, and we are seeing firsthand sea level rise and its effect. We can have a huge debate on what is causing that, what is not causing that. But in the meantime, there is a clear scientific consensus on the idea of increased CO_2 emissions being tied to this notion of global warming, which very much impacts my congressional district. It impacts a lot of places around the world.

So I think that there is no perfect energy source out there, in fairness to my colleague. But of the available choices out there, I think that something that does address the CO_2 emission question is awfully important, and nuclear does.

I think it is also important from the standpoint of base load in terms of energy in this country and its importance in terms of competitiveness around the world.

Gordon Sullivan wrote a book entitled ''Hope is not a Method,'' and he talked about we may hope for a whole host of different breakthroughs in terms of alternatives, and I do hope that they come through, whether that is solar or tidal or who knows what. I think that there are emerging technologies there, but, in the meantime, we have to handle this issue of base load from the standpoint of our ability to compete with the rest of the world in terms of baseline energy as it relates to business and it relates to, frankly, the ability to cool one's house in the warm air of South Carolina, or I guess the southwest these days.

I think it is also important from the standpoint of energy independence. This idea of domestic production becomes incredibly important given the way in which we are dealing with a whole host of different places around the globe that at times don't want what is best for America but want what is best for their region to the exclusion, at times, of what is best for America.

Mr. Speaker, this idea of energy independence, I think, is also an important consideration into H.R. 1551. It is for that reason that I come by for a second to thank TOM RICE for his hard work in shepherding this bill forward.

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

Mr. Speaker, in reference to the previous gentleman's comments, it is helpful for the acknowledgment that there is broad agreement among scientists as to how global warming is occurring. There is a suggestion that it is because of problems that have been generated by man- and womankind. I think that President Obama said clearly all of the above as part of the solution.

So the suggestion that we have had on this side as this legislation advances is also to use the pulpit of the Ways and Means Committee to move forward with advancing meaningful job creation in terms of alternative and renewable energy as well, and creating greater energy efficiencies.

I would think that there should be an opportunity in this House to find some common agreements on legislation, similar to what we are witnessing today, on the renewable front as well. Greater energy efficiency for all of us should be of paramount concern.

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

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I cannot overstate the importance this legislation represents to the future of nuclear energy production in the United States.

As the Ways and Means Committee noted when it approved this same measure last year, while the committee continues to work on comprehensive tax reform as a critical means of promoting economic growth and job creation, it is important to provide immediate clarity and certainty on tax issues affecting American businesses, and this legislation will provide just that.

I would also like to thank Chairman BRADY for his continued support of H.R. 1551, as well as the bipartisan support we received when this bill was voted out of committee by voice vote last week.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for continued bipartisan support from my colleagues here in the House in passing this legislation, not just because it makes commonsense changes to the credit but because of the extreme sense of urgency to provide certainty for our nuclear industry.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. RICE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1551, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1700

MODERNIZING THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE ACT

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2742) to amend title IV of the Social Security Act to require States to adopt an electronic system to help expedite the placement of children in foster care or guardianship, or for adoption, across State lines, and to provide funding to aid States in developing such a system, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2742

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) when a child in foster care cannot return safely home, the child deserves to be placed in a setting that is best for that child, regardless of whether it is in the child's State or another State;

(2) the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) was established in 1960 to provide a uniform legal framework for the placement of children across State lines in foster and adoptive homes;

(3) frequently, children waiting to be placed with an adoptive family, relative, or foster parent in another State spend more time waiting for this to occur than children who are placed with an adoptive, family, relative, or foster parent in the same State, because of the outdated, administratively burdensome ICPC process;

(4) no child should have to wait longer to be placed in a loving home simply because the child must cross a State line;

(5) the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) was launched in August 2014 in Indiana, Nevada, Florida, South Carolina, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia, has since expanded into Illinois, Virginia, Rhode Island, California, Alaska, Nebraska, and Georgia, and is expected to be expanded into additional States to improve the administrative process by which children are placed with families across State lines;

(6) States using this electronic interstate case-processing system have reduced administrative costs and the amount of staff time required to process these cases, and caseworkers can spend more time helping children instead of copying and mailing paperwork between States;

(7) since NEICE was launched, placement time has decreased by 30 percent for interstate foster care placements; and

(8) on average, States using this electronic interstate case-processing system have been able to reduce from 24 business days to 13 business days the time it takes to identify a family for a child and prepare the paperwork required to start the ICPC process.

SEC. 3. STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 471(a)(25) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)(25)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''provide'' and insert ''provides''; and

(2) by inserting '', which in the case of a State other than the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa, not later than October 1, 2027, shall include the use of an electronic interstate case-processing system'' before the 1st semicolon.

(b) EXEMPTION OF INDIAN TRIBES.—Section 479B(c) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 679c(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) INAPPLICABILITY OF STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT TO HAVE IN EFFECT PROCEDURES PROVIDING FOR THE USE AN ELECTRONIC INTERSTATE CASE-PROCESSING SYSTEM.—The requirement in section 471(a)(25) that a State plan provide that the State shall have in effect procedures providing for the use of an electronic interstate case-processing system shall not apply to an Indian tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortium that elects to operate a program under this part.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the 1st day of the 1st calendar quarter beginning on or after the date of the enactment of this Act, and shall apply to payments under part E of title IV of the Social Security Act for calendar quarters beginning on or after such date.

(2) DELAY PERMITTED IF STATE LEGISLATION REQUIRED.—If the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines that State legislation (other than legislation appropriating funds) is required in order for a State plan developed pursuant to part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to meet the additional requirement imposed by the amendments made by subsection (a), the plan shall not be regarded as failing to meet any of the additional requirements before the 1st day of the 1st calendar quarter beginning after the first regular session of the State legislature that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act. For purposes of the preceding sentence, if the State has a 2-year legislative session, each year of the session is deemed to be a separate regular session of the State legislature.

SEC. 4. FUNDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ELECTRONIC INTERSTATE CASE-PROCESSING SYSTEM TO EXPEDITE THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE OR GUARDIANSHIP, OR FOR ADOPTION.

Section 437 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 629g) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(g) FUNDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ELECTRONIC INTERSTATE CASE-PROCESSING SYSTEM TO EXPEDITE THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE OR GUARDIANSHIP, OR FOR ADOPTION.—

''(1) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this subsection is to facilitate the development of an electronic interstate case-processing system for the exchange of data and documents to expedite the placements of children in foster, guardianship, or adoptive homes across State lines.

''(2) REQUIREMENTS.—A State that seeks funding under this subsection shall submit to the Secretary the following information:

''(A) A description of the goals and outcomes to be achieved, which goals and outcomes must result in—

''(i) reducing the time it takes for a child to be provided with a safe and appropriate permanent living arrangement across State lines;

''(ii) improving administrative processes and reducing costs in the foster care system; and

''(iii) the secure exchange of relevant case files and other necessary materials in real time, and timely communications and placement decisions regarding interstate placements of children.

''(B) A description of the activities to be funded in whole or in part with the funds, including the sequencing of the activities.

''(C) A description of the strategies for integrating programs and services for children who are placed across State lines.

''(D) Such other information as the Secretary may require.

''(3) FUNDING AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may provide funds to a State that complies with paragraph (2). In providing funds under this section, the Secretary shall prioritize States that are not yet connected with the electronic interstate case-processing system referred to in paragraph (1).

''(4) USE OF FUNDS.—A State to which funding is provided under this subsection shall use the funding to support the State in connecting with, or enhancing or expediting services provided under, the electronic interstate case-processing system referred to in paragraph (1).

''(5) EVALUATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the final year in which funds are awarded under this subsection, the Secretary shall submit to the Congress, and make available to the general public by posting on a website, a report that contains the following information:

''(A) How using the electronic interstate case-processing system developed pursuant to paragraph (4) has changed the time it takes for children to be placed across State lines.

''(B) The number of cases subject to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children that were processed through the electronic interstate case-processing system, and the number of interstate child placement cases that were processed outside the electronic interstate case-processing system, by each State in each year.

''(C) The progress made by States in implementing the electronic interstate case-processing system.

''(D) How using the electronic interstate case-processing system has affected various metrics related to child safety and well-being, including the time it takes for children to be placed across State lines.

''(E) How using the electronic interstate case-processing system has affected administrative costs and caseworker time spent on placing children across State lines.

''(6) DATA INTEGRATION.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretariat for the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children and the States, shall assess how the

electronic interstate case-processing system developed pursuant to paragraph (4) could be used to better serve and protect children that come to the attention of the child welfare system, by—

''(A) connecting the system with other data systems (such as systems operated by State law enforcement and judicial agencies, systems operated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the purposes of the Innocence Lost National Initiative, and other systems);

''(B) simplifying and improving reporting related to paragraphs (34) and (35) of section 471(a) regarding children or youth who have been identified as being a sex trafficking victim or children missing from foster care; and

''(C) improving the ability of States to quickly comply with background check requirements of section 471(a)(20), including checks of child abuse and neglect registries as required by section 471(a)(20)(B).''.

SEC. 5. CONTINUATION OF DISCRETIONARY FUNDING TO PROMOTE SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES.

Section 437(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 629g(a)) is amended by striking ''2016'' and inserting ''2018''.

SEC. 6. RESERVATION OF FUNDS TO IMPROVE THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN.

Section 437(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 629g(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) IMPROVING THE INTERSTATE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN.—The Secretary shall reserve $5,000,000 of the amount made available for fiscal year 2018 for providing funding under subsection (g), and the amount so reserved shall remain available through fiscal year 2022.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2742, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 2742, Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act, which I introduced along with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS), my friend.

We know full well the importance of a stable home environment for a child's development and success later in life. Unfortunately, we don't live in an ideal world. We have seen too many instances when abuse, neglect, physical or mental illness, addiction, incarceration, or death necessitates removing a child from their home.

Right now, in my State of Indiana, there are more than 10,000 children in the foster care system than there were 18 months ago. This is due in large part to the opioid epidemic that has swept across our country. Our child welfare system is under unprecedented strain.

Yet, in spite of this great need for foster care and adoption, if a child needs to be placed in another State, caseworkers from both States must literally print and fill out hundreds of pages of paperwork and mail them back and forth. This cumbersome process takes months, and just one missing page can set it back even further. These are precious months that an at-risk child is stuck in limbo, waiting for the certainty of a more permanent home. It is time to bring this process into the 21st century.

Luckily, there is an effort underway already to do just that. In November 2013, five States, including my home State of Indiana, and the District of Columbia, launched the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise, or NEICE. This is a cloud-based electronic system that allows for the electronic exchange of data between States. It started as a pilot project, but the results have been crystal clear: placement wait times dropped by a month and a half, States spent less time and money on copying and mailing, and caseworkers saved valuable time.

NEICE is now effective in 16 States, including Mr. DAVIS' home State of Illinois, but we can't stop at 16. As it stands today, if a child in my district in South Bend, Indiana, needed to be placed with their grandparents just 11 miles away in Niles, Michigan, the two States would have to undertake that arduous paperwork process because Michigan is not a part of NEICE yet. All States need to be a part of this system in order to realize its full benefits.

That is where the bill before us comes in. H.R. 2742 represents a very important investment in the future of at-risk youth. It requires States to join the NEICE system by October 1, 2027, and sets aside $5 million in existing Federal funds to facilitate States in joining or expanding their services under NEICE.

That money doesn't come without strings. States must apply for the funds and submit detailed plans. The Secretary of Health and Human Services will have to submit periodic reports to Congress so that we can monitor progress as States join and ensure that this program continues to cut wait times for children and administrative costs for States.

In the 114th Congress, this legislation passed the House of Representatives, but, unfortunately, did not come up for a vote in the Senate. It is our hope that we can cross the finish line this year and help at-risk youth find their forever home more quickly.

I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) for being a great partner in introducing this legislation. I would like to thank Senators Young, Grassley, and Gillibrand for introducing companion legislation in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I enter into the RECORD a list of 17 organizations that wrote in support of H.R. 2742.

1. American Academy of Adoption Attorneys/American Academy of Assisted Reproductive Technology Attorneys
2. American Academy of Pediatrics
3. American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
4. American Public Human Services Association
5. California County Welfare Directors Association
6. Child Advocates, Indianapolis, IN
7. Child Welfare League of America
8. Children's Home Society of America
9. First Focus
10. Generations United
11. Indiana Department of Child Services
12. March of Dimes
13. National Association of Counties
14. National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
15. Partnership for Strong Families
16. The Villages of Indiana
17. Voice for Adoption

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on this important bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I strongly support H.R. 2742, the Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act.

Cross-State placement of youth in foster care is particularly salient to children living with kinship caregivers. Given that my congressional district has one of the highest percentages of grandparent caregivers in the Nation, I am pleased to join with Congresswoman WALORSKI in leading this important legislation.

This bill helps reduce the barriers and delays that continue to exist when the best new home for a child is in a different State than the unsafe home the child had to leave. Removing barriers that delay or prevent interstate child placement is a longtime bipartisan goal within Congress.

This bill addresses an important factor in those delays: the ability of State computer systems to link up to process the paperwork. The current paper-based system is antiquated and slow.

As part of an HHS pilot project, seven States, and the District of Columbia, currently participate in the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise, or NEICE, an online tool that allows State office systems to talk to each other and process interstate placements more quickly. I am, indeed, proud that Illinois is one of those States.

An early evaluation found that this system reduced waiting times for affected children by about one-third. Ten of the States have already announced plans to join the exchange over the next 2 years. H.R. 2742 would accelerate the number of participating States in the short run and ensure that all States participate in the long run. The more States that join, the more it speeds up the process for everyone.

The director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

often emphasizes that we need to operate in ''kid time'' and not ''adult time,'' meaning that we need to recognize the urgency of restoring permanency for children in child welfare rather than allowing adult bureaucracy to impede permanency.

Modernizing the technology to increase efficiencies and quicken placements is common sense and respects the urgency of finding permanent, loving homes for children.

This is a good bill, and I thank Congresswoman WALORSKI and her staff for their excellent work. Our States are joined together, so we join with this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT), an outstanding legislator.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I salute all of those who are here today offering the bills—this one, and the four other related bills—that are being considered; particularly, Mr. DAVIS, who now holds the position as ranking Democrat on the Human Resources Subcommittee, a job that I have held for the last several years; and Ms. BASS, who has so ably led our Foster Care Caucus. I think it is unfortunate that they are here; unfortunate because all of this business should have been resolved last year.

All five of these modest bills would already be helping children today but for the way the so-called Family First Prevention Services Act was bungled last year. Each of these five bills were a part of it. But, unfortunately, families, and particularly families caring for foster children, have not, and are still not, among the first priorities of this Congress.

Of course, here in the House, there were many speeches. We had extensive hearings year after year concerning foster children and the horrors of child abuse. But speeches alone can't do the job.

There are also many people of goodwill who genuinely care about this foster care problem in both parties. Mrs. WALORSKI is certainly one of those individuals.

But all of us encountered a big problem last year in the Ways and Means Committee when the Family First Prevention Services Act came up. It was the same problem we faced in the last Congress when Senator WYDEN and I offered a larger version of the same piece of legislation.

The Ways and Means Committee majority leadership objects to adding a dime of additional revenue to accompany our speeches. The majority rejected my recommendation for a tax compliance measure to simply require the reporting of alimony payments. If you get alimony, it is a form of income, but there is no report required. This is not an increased tax. It is a way of avoiding tax evasion. And it would have raised the revenues necessary to fund the additional Family First prevention services.

When this bill reached the Senate, the House's decision to reject that approach, or any other reasonable pay-for, was, instead, relying on what you could call basically a ''rob Peter to pay Paul'' approach by cutting funds in support of adoptions and shifting funds from one part of the foster care system to another part. That, unfortunately, became the excuse in the Senate to block the bill from being passed. I have to say that my home State of Texas, under Federal court order, to correct its many unconstitutional abuses in the foster care system, wrongfully led the way in blocking the Family First bill.

As to the particular bills that we have up today, this one recognizes how mobile our society is and how much we need to be able to go across the country in addressing this problem.

The earlier bill that we considered concerning children who age out of the foster system that Ms. BASS sponsored—really important—we heard time and again about the challenges that those children face when they are, essentially, dumped out on the street at age 18 or age 21, depending on which State they are in; and challenges particularly for young women who find themselves in that situation without adequate preparation or adult help.

This bill that we considered addressed the primary problem of limited Federal investment in helping these vulnerable older youth prepare for independence. I don't have any objection to it or to any of the bills that are being considered today. I object only to the ideological insistence of some in the majority that any additional revenue from any source, no matter how reasonable, cannot be placed in a deficient foster care system, which too many of our States will not fix.

And today's changes do not appear to add any actual new resources to foster care, and, indeed, they are likely to be overwhelmed by one cut after another that President Trump is proposing, particularly the Medicaid cuts that are being forced through this Congress, that are very important to foster youth and to all children.

So in this Congress—so indifferent to the education and social service and health needs of children of all types across our country—perhaps only taking a little step is the best we can expect to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children in our society.

But I think all of us must be committed to work together to find a day when we are willing to take truly meaningful action before, rather than after, children—more children—are needlessly lost.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS).

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2742, the Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act.

Children who cannot be safely returned home deserve to be placed in the best setting possible for them, regardless of the State where the setting is located; and no child should have to wait to move to that best setting because it is across the State line.

□ 1715

Separation from a parent or long-term caregiver is always traumatic for a child. Even if relatives come forward right away, it may take months to get licensed, months in which the child may bond with the foster family. When the relative lives in another State, the licensing process can often take as long as 6 months, so that might mean 6 months in foster care. Sometimes our well-intentioned efforts to protect children actually do them more harm.

H.R. 2742 provides States with resources to automate this process so that social workers no longer have to photocopy documents and submit them on paper through a succession of offices.

Last year, the National Foster Youth Institute organized a listening tour in Representative VICKY HARTZLER's district; and during a meeting with child welfare professionals, they described the challenges they face when relatives are identified in different States and they are unable to quickly place the child with family and must keep the child in foster care. The judges, social workers, and families specifically requested Members of Congress to change the law and asked the National Foster Youth Institute to please advocate for change. I look forward to communicating with Representative HARTZLER and her constituents about this legislation.

I ask my colleagues to support the legislation sponsored by Representatives WALORSKI and DAVIS, H.R. 2742.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, but I will say that my staff and I have been delightfully pleased to work with Representative WALORSKI and her staff in preparing this very commonsense, good legislation. I strongly support it and urge its passage.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to close with the words from someone on the ground living this every day. Sharon Pierce is the president and CEO of The Villages of Indiana, the largest not-for-profit child and family services provider in my State and a supporter of H.R. 2742: ''The NEICE system is going to be invaluable in helping both the public and private sector child welfare agencies reduce considerably the length of time

a child needs to wait for a forever family.''

This isn't just a good government bill, Mr. Speaker. Sure, we are reducing costs and paperwork and we can attach all sorts of numbers and dollar figures to that, but the most important thing we are doing here is we are giving at-risk youth a more permanent home sooner. We are giving them hope sooner. We are giving them a chance to actually thrive sooner.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2742.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PARTNERSHIP GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AFFECTED BY PARENTAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE ACT

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2834) to improve the well-being of, and improve permanency outcomes for, children and families affected by heroin, opioids, and other substance abuse, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2834

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Partnership Grants to Strengthen Families Affected by Parental Substance Abuse Act''.

SEC. 2. ENHANCEMENTS TO GRANTS TO IMPROVE WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES AFFECTED BY SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

Section 437(f) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 629g(f)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking ''INCREASE THE WELL-BEING OF, AND TO IMPROVE THE PERMANENCY OUTCOMES FOR, CHILDREN AFFECTED BY'' and inserting ''IMPLEMENT IV–E PREVENTION SERVICES, AND IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING OF, AND IMPROVE PERMANENCY OUTCOMES FOR, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AFFECTED BY HEROIN, OPIOIDS, AND OTHER'';

(2) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

''(2) REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'regional partnership' means a collaborative agreement (which may be established on an interstate, State, or intrastate basis) entered into by the following:

''(A) MANDATORY PARTNERS FOR ALL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS.—

''(i) The State child welfare agency that is responsible for the administration of the State plan under this part and part E.

''(ii) The State agency responsible for administering the substance abuse prevention and treatment block grant provided under subpart II of part B of title XIX of the Public Health Service Act.

''(B) MANDATORY PARTNERS FOR PARTNERSHIP GRANTS PROPOSING TO SERVE CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS.—If the partnership proposes to serve children in out-of-home placements, the Juvenile Court or Administrative Office of the Court that is most appropriate to oversee the administration of court programs in the region to address the population of families who come to the attention of the court due to child abuse or neglect.

''(C) OPTIONAL PARTNERS.—At the option of the partnership, any of the following:

''(i) An Indian tribe or tribal consortium.

''(ii) Nonprofit child welfare service providers.

''(iii) For-profit child welfare service providers.

''(iv) Community health service providers, including substance abuse treatment providers.

''(v) Community mental health providers.

''(vi) Local law enforcement agencies.

''(vii) School personnel.

''(viii) Tribal child welfare agencies (or a consortia of the agencies).

''(ix) Any other providers, agencies, personnel, officials, or entities that are related to the provision of child and family services under a State plan approved under this subpart.

''(D) EXCEPTION FOR REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WHERE THE LEAD APPLICANT IS AN INDIAN TRIBE OR TRIBAL CONSORTIA.—If an Indian tribe or tribal consortium enters into a regional partnership for purposes of this subsection, the Indian tribe or tribal consortium—

''(i) may (but is not required to) include the State child welfare agency as a partner in the collaborative agreement;

''(ii) may not enter into a collaborative agreement only with tribal child welfare agencies (or a consortium of the agencies); and

''(iii) if the condition described in paragraph (2)(B) applies, may include tribal court organizations in lieu of other judicial partners.'';

(3) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''$500,000 and not more than $1,000,000'' and inserting ''$250,000 and not more than $1,000,000'';

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in the subparagraph heading, by inserting ''; PLANNING'' after ''APPROVAL'';

(ii) in clause (i), by striking ''clause (ii)'' and inserting ''clauses (ii) and (iii)''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(iii) SUFFICIENT PLANNING.—A grant awarded under this subsection shall be disbursed in two phases: a planning phase (not to exceed 2 years) and an implementation phase. The total disbursement to a grantee for the planning phase may not exceed $250,000, and may not exceed the total anticipated funding for the implementation phase.''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) LIMITATION ON PAYMENT FOR A FISCAL YEAR.—No payment shall be made under subparagraph (A) or (C) for a fiscal year until the Secretary determines that the eligible partnership has made sufficient progress in meeting the goals of the grant and that the members of the eligible partnership are coordinating to a reasonable degree with the other members of the eligible partnership.'';

(4) in paragraph (4)—

(A) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in clause (i), by inserting '', parents, and families'' after ''children'';

(ii) in clause (ii), by striking ''safety and permanence for such children; and'' and inserting ''safe, permanent caregiving relationships for the children;'';

(iii) in clause (iii), by striking ''or'' and inserting ''increase reunification rates for children who have been placed in out-of-home care, or decrease''; and

(iv) by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (v) and inserting after clause (ii) the following:

''(iii) improve the substance abuse treatment outcomes for parents including retention in treatment and successful completion of treatment;

''(iv) facilitate the implementation, delivery, and effectiveness of prevention services and programs under section 471(e); and'';

(B) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''where appropriate,''; and

(C) by striking subparagraphs (E) and (F) and inserting the following:

''(E) A description of a plan for sustaining the services provided by or activities funded under the grant after the conclusion of the grant period, including through the use of prevention services and programs under section 471(e) and other funds provided to the State for child welfare and substance abuse prevention and treatment services.

''(F) Additional information needed by the Secretary to determine that the proposed activities and implementation will be consistent with research or evaluations showing which practices and approaches are most effective.'';

(5) in paragraph (5)(A), by striking ''abuse treatment'' and inserting ''use disorder treatment including medication assisted treatment and in-home substance abuse disorder treatment and recovery'';

(6) in paragraph (7)—

(A) by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (C); and

(B) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (E) and inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

''(D) demonstrate a track record of successful collaboration among child welfare, substance abuse disorder treatment and mental health agencies; and'';

(7) in paragraph (8)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking ''establish indicators that will be'' and inserting ''review indicators that are''; and

(ii) by striking ''in using funds made available under such grants to achieve the purpose of this subsection'' and inserting ''and establish a set of core indicators related to child safety, parental recovery, parenting capacity, and family well-being. In developing the core indicators, to the extent possible, indicators shall be made consistent with the outcome measures described in section 471(e)(6)''; and

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting ''base the performance measures on lessons learned from prior rounds of regional partnership grants under this subsection, and'' before ''consult''; and

(ii) by striking clauses (iii) and (iv) and inserting the following:

''(iii) Other stakeholders or constituencies as determined by the Secretary.''; and

(8) in paragraph (9)(A), by striking clause (i) and inserting the following:

''(i) SEMIANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than September 30 of each fiscal year in which a recipient of a grant under this subsection is paid funds under the grant, and every 6 months thereafter, the grant recipient shall submit to the Secretary a report on the services provided and activities carried out during the reporting period, progress made in achieving the goals of the program, the number of children, adults, and families receiving services, and such additional information as the Secretary determines is necessary. The report due not later than September 30 of the last such fiscal year shall include, at a minimum, data on each of the performance

indicators included in the evaluation of the regional partnership.''.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on October 1, 2017.

(b) TRANSITION RULE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a State plan under part B of title IV of the Social Security Act which the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines requires State legislation (other than legislation appropriating funds) in order for the plan to meet the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by this Act, the State plan shall not be regarded as failing to comply with the requirements of such part solely on the basis of the failure of the plan to meet such additional requirements before the first day of the first calendar quarter beginning after the close of the first regular session of the State legislature that begins after the date of enactment of this Act. For purposes of the previous sentence, in the case of a State that has a 2-year legislative session, each year of the session shall be deemed to be a separate regular session of the State legislature.

(2) APPLICATION TO PROGRAMS OPERATED BY INDIAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS.—In the case of an Indian tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortium which the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines requires time to take action necessary to comply with the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by this Act (whether the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium has a plan under section 479B of the Social Security Act or a cooperative agreement or contract entered into with a State), the Secretary shall provide the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium with such additional time as the Secretary determines is necessary for the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium to take the action to comply with the additional requirements before being regarded as failing to comply with the requirements.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Dakota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2834, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from South Dakota?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Partnership Grants to Strengthen Families Affected by Parental Substance Abuse Act. I applaud Mr. DAVIS for all of the excellent work he has done on this issue.

Most substantiated child abuse and neglect cases involve substance abuse by a parent or a guardian. This is something we are seeing all too often in places like my home State of South Dakota. Substance abuse, especially alcohol and meth, result in far too many instances of child abuse, domestic abuse, and other kinds of violent crime and behavior.

Historically, a lack of coordination and collaboration has hindered the ability of those working in the fields of child welfare and substance abuse, and even the courts, from fully supporting families in substance abuse crisis.

Families involved with child welfare have complex needs. No two cases are alike. It is for this reason that improving outcomes for parents and children require a coordinated effort among all systems.

This bill strengthens the Regional Partnership Grants program, which provides funding to State and regional grantees seeking to provide evidence-based services to prevent child abuse and neglect related to substance abuse. Most importantly, this bill updates the RPG program to specifically address the opioid and heroin epidemics.

By ensuring better coordination, this bill will also encourage States to address the well-being of the family as a whole, using evidence-based approaches to help parents and children at the same time, so many children can stay safely at home with their families.

Finally, this bill is noncontroversial and it is bipartisan. Provisions in this bill were contained in the Family First Prevention Services Act last Congress, which passed the House by a voice vote. The Family First Act, as you recall, was supported by over 500 State and local organizations representing a wide range of practitioners and advocacy organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to stand with Mr. DAVIS in supporting this bill today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I strongly support H.R. 2834, the Partnership Grants to Strengthen Families Affected by Parental Substance Abuse Act.

I am pleased to join with Congresswoman NOEM in leading this bill to strengthen families by addressing parental substance abuse and decreasing the number of children entering foster care. Our bill is common sense. It takes the research lessons from the smaller scale Regional Partnership Grants and expands those efforts to the State level.

We know that substance abuse underlies a substantial percentage of child welfare cases, affecting between one-third to two-thirds of children in care. Aside from neglect, alcohol or other drug use is the number one reason for removal from the home. In 2014, over 77,000 youths were removed from their homes due to drug abuse.

What is exciting is that we have strong empirical evidence that working with parents experiencing substance abuse significantly helps children and families; specifically, working with these families helps children to experience fewer days in foster care, higher reunification rates, less recurrence of child maltreatment, and better permanency over time.

H.R. 2834 provides the opportunity to scale up these successes from smaller, targeted interventions into full State interventions, while building the research to better inform Federal policy overall.

My home State of Illinois has led the Nation in addressing substance abuse issues in child welfare. We know that we need to do more to address this problem, but we know what works and we know we can work bipartisanly to support families in addressing substance abuse so that we can increase permanency and safety.

When I ask foster youth what policymakers could do to make child welfare better, they almost always say: ''You could have helped my mom and dad.'' That is what we do today.

I urge passage of this important legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California, (Ms. BASS).

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2834, the Partnership Grants to Strengthen Families Affected by Parental Substance Abuse Act.

This piece of legislation is responsive to countless pleas of youth and families seeking necessary assistance and support without fracturing critical family bonds and relationships.

The majority of children who are removed from home are actually removed for neglect and not physical or sexual abuse. Over 60 percent of children are removed for neglect, and neglect is secondary to substance abuse, mental health issues, and abject poverty.

In the 1990s, when the crack cocaine epidemic hit, we didn't understand much about addiction, and so we were angry. We punished the mothers. We imprisoned the mothers. We took the children away, and we didn't realize that actually not addressing the underlying substance abuse issue would really be more harmful to the children than removing them and putting them into foster care.

Now that we are experiencing another epidemic related to drugs, both with meth and with heroin, at least our knowledge base has grown a lot. We have drug courts. We have evidence-based treatments. We have a lot of ways that we can address families.

One of the things that we have learned is that, if you can put the entire family in treatment, then, that way, one, the parents are not separated from their children, the children can get help, and the parents can get help as well.

What often happens if you remove the child from the parent is that you set the parent up to relapse or to never actually go into treatment because they will cycle into depression, and they will continue their cycle of addiction.

We have had many children who actually wound up growing up in foster care because their parents were removed ask us, why didn't we help the family, why didn't we help their parents. Sadly, what has happened to many of these children, when they grow up, they continue the same cycle of going into depression, winding up in addiction.

Over the years, the National Foster Youth Institute in conjunction with the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth have organized many different delegations and trips around the country looking at the different foster care systems. Our very first listening tour was in Los Angeles, and we visited a program called SHIELDS for Families.

SHIELDS for Families is a very large drug treatment program that has functioned for over 20 years by keeping the entire family together, and some of these families can remain in residential care for as long as a year. They have been able to reduce the number of children who were removed and go into the foster care system because they provide treatment for the family as a whole.

This bill would modify the award criteria for Health and Human Services to consider whether a partnership has a track record of selective collaboration among child welfare, substance abuse disorder treatment, and mental health agencies. Simply put, this bill is designed to keep families together.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2834.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, over a decade of research shows the successes of helping families involved in the child welfare system who struggle with substance abuse. Through this research, we know that there are seven common ingredients that help improve families' outcomes: a system of identifying families, earlier access to assessment and treatment services, increased management of recovery services and compliance, increased judicial oversight, responses to participant behavior based on proven contingency management approaches, collaborative approaches across service systems and courts, and improved family-centered services and repair of parent-child relationships.

□ 1730

Again, Mr. Speaker, it has been a pleasure for my staff and I to have the opportunity to work with Mrs. NOEM and her staff in preparing this legislation.

And I might note that on Saturday of this past week, a group of us in Illinois took two busloads of children to a special program run by the Illinois Department of Corrections at the Sheridan Correctional Center to see their fathers, who were all involved in a special program established for individuals who were incarcerated for crimes dealing with substance and who, themselves, were substance users. This experience was so exciting in terms of these individuals finding help, and their children being able to interact with them, even though they were incarcerated.

So someone asked me what was I going to do for Father's Day, and I told them after we returned that I have had my Father's Day experience. If we can help these individuals to rid themselves of the tremendous habits and difficulty that they have of substance use, then Father's Day would be good enough.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM), and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I, again, want to applaud Mr. DAVIS for all of his work on this issue. I know he is passionate and has a big heart for our children, especially those that are in difficult situations such as we are discussing today.

This bill will help us protect the fundamental element of our society, and that is the family. It will keep families together. It will empower courts and child welfare workers to coordinate for the good of children, and I am proud to support this bill.

I ask for the support of this legislation that is before us, Mr. Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2834, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES IN SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT ACT

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2857) to support foster care maintenance payments for children with parents in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2857

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act''.

SEC. 2. FOSTER CARE MAINTENANCE PAYMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH PARENTS IN A LICENSED RESIDENTIAL FAMILY-BASED TREATMENT FACILITY FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 472 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 672) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)(C), by striking ''or'' and inserting '', with a parent residing in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility, but only to the extent permitted under subsection (j), or in a''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(j) CHILDREN PLACED WITH A PARENT RESIDING IN A LICENSED RESIDENTIAL FAMILY-BASED TREATMENT FACILITY FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this section, a child who is eligible for foster care maintenance payments under this section shall be eligible for the payments for a period of not more than 12 months during which the child is placed with a parent who is in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse, but only if—

''(A) the recommendation for the placement is specified in the child's case plan before the placement;

''(B) the treatment facility provides, as part of the treatment for substance abuse, parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling; and

''(C) the substance abuse treatment, parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling is provided under an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma and in accordance with recognized principles of a trauma-informed approach and trauma-specific interventions to address the consequences of trauma and facilitate healing.

''(2) PAYMENT AMOUNT.—The amount the State may receive under section 474(a)(1) for a child placed with a parent who is in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse shall not exceed the amount the State would otherwise be eligible to receive under such section based on where the child would be appropriately placed in a setting described in section 472(a)(2)(C) if such treatment setting were not available.

''(3) APPLICATION.—With respect to children for whom foster care maintenance payments are made under paragraph (1), only the children who satisfy the requirements of paragraphs (1)(B) and (3) of subsection (a) shall be considered to be children with respect to whom foster care maintenance payments are made under this section for purposes of subsection (h) or section 473(b)(3)(B).''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 474(a)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 674(a)(1)) is amended by inserting ''subject to section 472(j),'' before ''an amount equal to the Federal'' the first place it appears.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) EFFECTIVE DATES.—Subject to subsection (b), the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on October 1, 2017.

(b) TRANSITION RULE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a State plan under part E of title IV of the Social Security Act which the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines requires State legislation (other than legislation appropriating funds) in order for the plan to meet the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by this Act, the State plan shall not be regarded as failing to comply with the requirements of such part solely on the basis of the failure of the plan to meet such additional requirements before the first day of the first calendar quarter beginning after the close of the first regular session of the State legislature that begins after the date of enactment of this Act. For purposes of the previous sentence, in the case of a State that has a 2-year legislative session, each year of the session shall be deemed to be a separate regular session of the State legislature.

(2) APPLICATION TO PROGRAMS OPERATED BY INDIAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS.—In the case of an Indian tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortium which the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines requires time to take action necessary to comply with the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by this Act (whether the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium has a plan under section 479B of the Social Security Act or a cooperative agreement or contract entered into with a State), the Secretary shall provide the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium with such additional time as the Secretary determines is necessary for the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium to take the action to comply with the additional requirements before being regarded as failing to comply with the requirements.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Dakota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2857, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from South Dakota?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, the Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act, which I have cosponsored with my colleague, Ms. JUDY CHU from California.

Across the country, opioid abuse has reached epidemic proportions. In my home State of South Dakota, drug use tears families apart. It results in gang activity, domestic abuse, and other kinds of violence, including many of our Native American communities throughout the State.

Congress has worked to provide first responders and healthcare providers with tools they need to address this crisis, but we need to do more. We need to do more to ensure the stability of families affected by these terrible drugs.

The Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act provides much-needed support to families fighting to endure through substance abuse. The bill permits Federal foster care payments for children in foster care who are placed with a parent in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for a period of up to 12 months.

Programs that address parental substance abuse by housing families together have been found to be highly effective in supporting parent-child bonding and reducing substance abuse relapses. Unfortunately, these programs aren't utilized to their fullest extent.

This bill ensures that States incur little to no additional cost if a child is safely placed with a parent in a family substance abuse treatment program, rather than separating the child from their parent and placing the parent in an individual program.

I would remind my colleagues that provisions in this bill were included in the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016, which passed the House by voice vote and received support from over 500 different State and local groups representing a wide range of practitioners and advocacy organizations. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 2857, the Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act.

Substance abuse has had a devastating impact on families in the U.S. Between 60 to 80 percent of substantiated child abuse and neglect cases involve substance use by a custodial parent or guardian.

Early access to substance use treatment improves parental, family, and child-focused outcomes. However, treatment access can come at the cost of removing a child from their parents' care. This separation disrupts opportunities for mothers and children to develop emotional bonds, increasing the likelihood of childhood emotional and behavior problems.

Although research shows that keeping children in a parent's care while they seek treatment has benefits to the parent and the child, access to parent-child treatment centers have been limited. To address this concern, a significant number of programs in Illinois and nationally have led the way in family substance abuse treatment.

One example in my congressional district is the Haymarket Center, with a 16-bed pregnant and postpartum program that allows patients to bring up to two children with them. Using evidence-based practices for trauma, family reunification and children's development, the Haymarket Center has demonstrated significant positive outcomes through an independent evaluation.

For example, women experienced significant declines in substance use at both 3- and 6-month follow-ups; improvements in mental and physical health; less victimization, homelessness and criminal activity; increased safe and healthy pregnancies, and improved birth outcomes.

In addition, the Haymarket Center has expanded its residential treatment center services to include a responsible fatherhood program, which they document as playing a crucial part in achieving strong outcomes.

Another example is on what we in Chicago call the South Side of Chicago and the West Side of Chicago and the North Side of Chicago and the East Side of Chicago, but on the South Side of Chicago, the Harriet Tubman Program, which is a 16-bed facility that can accommodate up to 10 children under the age of 5. Women who participate in these programs remain in the program longer and have lower rates of recidivism.

There is also The Women's Treatment Center on the West Side. This center has a pregnant and postpartum women's program for up to 12 women and up to 12 children, as well as a residential rehab for up to 14 women and up to 23 children. All of these programs provide real assistance to strengthen real families.

H.R. 2857 is common sense. These family-based treatment programs have demonstrated success, lower relapse rates, decreased attachment trauma for children, and they build families and health.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the passage of this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, having no other speakers, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JUDY CHU), who is a sponsor of this legislation.

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2857, the Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act. I am pleased to cosponsor this bipartisan bill with Congresswoman KRISTI NOEM. This important legislation would encourage States to prioritize keeping families together when a parent is receiving substance abuse treatment.

Under current law, States cannot receive Federal reimbursement if they choose to place both a parent and child in a family substance abuse treatment program. However, if that child is separated from their parent and placed with a foster family, the State can receive a match in Federal funding of 50 percent or more. This discrepancy effectively creates an incentive to separate children from their parents when one is receiving substance abuse treatment.

However, studies have shown that keeping children in the care of their parents while they seek treatment can increase family bonding, child attachment, and family functioning, all while minimizing the trauma of separation for children.

Today, solutions to parental drug abuse that prioritize the family are increasingly necessary as the opioid epidemic continues to place unprecedented strains on our communities. According to one estimate, drug overdoses may now be the leading cause of death among Americans under the age of 50. And as more parents require substance abuse treatment, more children are placed into foster care. In fact, studies found that between one-third and two-thirds of children enter foster care at least partly because of parental substance abuse.

Now, we know that foster care does wonders for many children every day, but it may not be the best match for every child, and the decision should not come down to cost.

In my district of Los Angeles, for instance, we have a program called the Exodus program, where formerly homeless families live in an on-site apartment complex and receive comprehensive services, including substance abuse treatment, counseling, child development, and family reunification services. Over the last 7 years, more than 80 percent of enrolled families have completed the program, and 95 percent have been able to keep their families together.

Even though we know that parent-child substance abuse models like Exodus have shown promising results, current law does not financially incentivize States to utilize these programs where they are available.

The Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act would address this problem by ensuring that if parents and children are placed in these programs and stay together, the State can receive the full Federal match for the child's living costs. States would retain full authority to decide which placement is best, but that consideration will now be based on what is best for the child, not what is most affordable for the State.

States should be given the option to use family-based treatment options without risking the loss of Federal foster care reimbursement. I urge my colleagues to consider our Nation's families and how this legislation may impact those with heads of household who are struggling with addiction. We can heal them without creating new trauma or pain for their children.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2857.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, having no other speakers, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS).

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2857, to support foster care maintenance payments for children with parents in a licensed residential facility.

Last month, when the National Foster Youth Institute sponsored Foster Youth Shadow Day, several of the youth, in a townhall meeting that we had, described their parents' challenges with substance abuse. One young lady said that both of her parents were addicted to heroin, and that she was taken into court and, in front of her, the judge said to her parents: ''If you don't clean up, we're going to take your children away.''

□ 1745

After she left court, she was taken away. She was removed from her parents. Ultimately, her parents continued to use, and, sadly, both of them died. This young woman grew up feeling guilty and feeling that part of the reason why her parents passed away was because she was used as leverage, and that if her parents had been kept together in drug treatment along with her maybe she wouldn't be an orphan today and her parents would have lived and she wouldn't have had to grow up in foster care. H.R. 2857 will allow programs like SHIELDS for Families that does address parental substance abuse and keeps families together to have the resources to expand their programs.

Today, we heard five bills that addressed challenges in the child welfare system. We know that there is a lot more that needs to be done, but today we passed bills addressing substance abuse, relative caregivers, we identified and addressed barriers to placement, and I am hoping that one next step we could take would be to extend the kinship navigator programs so that organizations like Community Coalition can continue to provide support to relatives and expand their Kinship in Action program.

As we improve various parts of the system, at some point we need to address the structural problem with how the system is financed. Right now, we have to remove a child and break up a family in order to have the resources to help the child. We know much more now. We know what leads a parent to neglect the child: substance abuse, mental health issues, poverty. We need to continue to reform the system and provide the resources to prevent a crisis. When problems are identified, why should we wait for the neglect to occur?

Once again, I want to thank Chairman BRADY, Ranking Member NEAL, and all of the sponsors of the legislation today, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2857.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I want to commend Representative NOEM and all of the cosponsors of this important bill. These are programs that have been proven to work. They are what are called evidence based, where the research demonstrates that, with them, individuals have been able to improve the quality of not only their lives, but certainly the lives of their children and the lives of everyone with whom they come into contact.

I agree that today has been a tremendous day for the Ways and Means Committee and also a tremendous day for the people of the United States of America, where we have come together with five bills that will be passed at the end of the day dealing with the needs, hopes, and aspirations of our vulnerable population of children. You really can't have a better day than that.

And so again, I commend Chairman BRADY, Ranking Member NEAL, and all of the Members for their participation, engagement, and involvement.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, today I want to thank all of my colleagues for working with me on this legislation and collaborating on the Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act that is before us today.

This is a critical step in addressing the needs that we have in our communities with the urgent opioid and methamphetamine crisis in our country while protecting the foundation of our society, which is the family.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the support of this legislation that is before us today, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2857, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2484) to ensure that the United States promotes the meaningful participation of women in mediation and negotiation processes seeking to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2484

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Around the world, women remain underrepresented in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict peace building efforts.

(2) Women in conflict-affected regions have achieved significant success in—

(A) moderating violent extremism;

(B) countering terrorism;

(C) resolving disputes through nonviolent mediation and negotiation; and

(D) stabilizing societies by enhancing the effectiveness of security services, peacekeeping efforts, institutions, and decision-making processes.

(3) Research suggests that peace negotiations are more likely to succeed and to result in durable peace agreements when women participate in the peace process.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and conflict resolution processes helps to promote more inclusive and democratic societies and is critical to

the long-term stability of countries and regions;

(2) the political participation, and leadership of women in fragile environments, particularly during democratic transitions, is critical to sustaining lasting democratic institutions; and

(3) the United States should be a global leader in promoting the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, management, and resolution, and post-conflict relief and recovery efforts.

SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It shall be the policy of the United States to promote the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of overseas conflict prevention, management, and resolution, and post-conflict relief and recovery efforts, reinforced through diplomatic efforts and programs that—

(1) integrate the perspectives and interests of affected women into conflict-prevention activities and strategies;

(2) encourage partner governments to adopt plans to improve the meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes and decision-making institutions;

(3) promote the physical safety, economic security, and dignity of women and girls;

(4) support the equal access of women to aid distribution mechanisms and services;

(5) collect and analyze gender data for the purpose of developing and enhancing early warning systems of conflict and violence;

(6) adjust policies and programs to improve outcomes in gender equality and the empowerment of women; and

(7) monitor, analyze, and evaluate the efforts related to each strategy submitted under section 5 and the impact of such efforts.

SEC. 5. UNITED STATES STRATEGY TO PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE BUILDING.

(a) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and again four years thereafter, the President, in consultation with the heads of the relevant Federal departments and agencies, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees and make publicly available a single government-wide strategy, to be known as the Women, Peace, and Security Strategy, that provides a detailed description of how the United States intends to fulfill the policy objectives in section 4. The strategy shall—

(1) support and be aligned with plans developed by other countries to improve the meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes, conflict prevention, peace building, transitional processes, and decision-making institutions; and

(2) include specific and measurable goals, benchmarks, performance metrics, timetables, and monitoring and evaluation plans to ensure the accountability and effectiveness of all policies and initiatives carried out under the strategy.

(b) SPECIFIC PLANS FOR DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.—Each strategy under subsection (a) shall include a specific implementation plan from each of the relevant Federal departments and agencies that describes—

(1) the anticipated contributions of the department or agency, including technical, financial, and in-kind contributions, to implement the strategy; and

(2) the efforts of the department or agency to ensure that the policies and initiatives carried out pursuant to the strategy are designed to achieve maximum impact and long-term sustainability.

(c) COORDINATION.—The President should promote the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, in coordination and consultation with international partners, including, as appropriate, multilateral organizations, stakeholders, and other relevant international organizations, particularly in situations in which the direct engagement of the United States Government is not appropriate or advisable.

(d) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the President, in implementing each strategy submitted under subsection (a), should—

(1) provide technical assistance, training, and logistical support to female negotiators, mediators, peace builders, and stakeholders;

(2) address security-related barriers to the meaningful participation of women;

(3) encourage increased participation of women in existing programs funded by the United States Government that provide training to foreign nationals regarding law enforcement, the rule of law, or professional military education;

(4) support appropriate local organizations, especially women's peace building organizations;

(5) support the training, education, and mobilization of men and boys as partners in support of the meaningful participation of women;

(6) encourage the development of transitional justice and accountability mechanisms that are inclusive of the experiences and perspectives of women and girls;

(7) expand and apply gender analysis, as appropriate, to improve program design and targeting; and

(8) conduct assessments that include the perspectives of women regarding new initiatives in support of peace negotiations, transitional justice and accountability, efforts to counter violent extremism, or security sector reform.

SEC. 6. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE BUILDING.

(a) FOREIGN SERVICE.—The Secretary of State, in conjunction with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall ensure that all appropriate personnel (including special envoys, members of mediation or negotiation teams, relevant members of the civil service or Foreign Service, and contractors) responsible for or deploying to countries or regions considered to be at risk of, undergoing, or emerging from violent conflict obtain training, as appropriate, in the following areas, each of which shall include a focus on women and ensuring meaningful participation by women:

(1) Conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution.

(2) Protecting civilians from violence, exploitation, and trafficking in persons.

(3) International human rights law and international humanitarian law.

(b) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that relevant personnel receive training, as appropriate, in the following areas:

(1) Training in conflict prevention, peace processes, mitigation, resolution, and security initiatives that specifically addresses the importance of meaningful participation by women.

(2) Gender considerations and meaningful participation by women, including training regarding—

(A) international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as relevant; and

(B) protecting civilians from violence, exploitation, and trafficking in persons.

(3) Effective strategies and best practices for ensuring meaningful participation by women.

SEC. 7. CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development may establish guidelines or take other steps to ensure overseas United States personnel of the Department of State or the United States Agency for International Development, as the case may be, consult with appropriate stakeholders, including local women, youth, ethnic and religious minorities, and other politically underrepresented or marginalized populations, regarding United States efforts to—

(1) prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict; and

(2) enhance the success of mediation and negotiation processes by ensuring the meaningful participation of women.

(b) COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION.—The Secretary of State should work with international, regional, national, and local organizations to increase the meaningful participation of women in international peacekeeping operations, and should promote training that provides international peacekeeping personnel with the substantive knowledge and skills needed to ensure effective physical security and meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and peace building.

SEC. 8. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.

(a) BRIEFING.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the first submission of a strategy required under section 5, the Secretary of State, in conjunction with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and the Secretary of Defense, shall brief the appropriate congressional committees on existing, enhanced, or newly established training carried out pursuant to section 6.

(b) REPORT ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY STRATEGY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the submission of each strategy required under section 5, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that—

(1) summarizes and evaluates the implementation of such strategy and the impact of United States diplomatic efforts and foreign assistance programs, projects, and activities to promote the meaningful participation of women;

(2) describes the nature and extent of the coordination among the relevant Federal departments and agencies on the implementation of such strategy;

(3) outlines the monitoring and evaluation tools, mechanisms, and common indicators to assess progress made on the policy objectives set forth in section 4; and

(4) describes the existing, enhanced, or newly established training carried out pursuant to section 6.

SEC. 9. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) RELEVANT FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.—The term ''relevant Federal departments and agencies'' means—

(A) the United States Agency for International Development;

(B) the Department of State;

(C) the Department of Defense;

(D) the Department of Homeland Security; and

(E) any other department or agency specified by the President for purposes of this Act.

(3) STAKEHOLDERS.—The term ''stakeholders'' means nongovernmental and private sector entities engaged in or affected by conflict prevention and stabilization, peace building, protection, security, transition initiatives, humanitarian response, or related efforts.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD on H.R. 2484.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Women, Peace, and Security Act, H.R. 2484.

I want to recognize Representatives KRISTI NOEM and JAN SCHAKOWSKY. I want to recognize the two of them for their bipartisan effort in putting together this legislation, this important piece of legislation. I think it is going to have a great impact.

I also want to thank Mr. ENGEL for his important leadership.

Our consideration of this measure is really the culmination of many years of bipartisan work by Members of the House, including Representative JAN SCHAKOWSKY and Representative KRISTI NOEM, and by our prior administration officials, as well, who have worked on this, and many advocates—many advocates—who want to see better, more sustainable solutions to ending wars, to combating terrorism, and to improving human rights around the world. What we are seeing today is that women's participation is really essential to confronting these fundamental challenges.

Last year, the Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing where we heard powerful testimony about the importance of including women in peace negotiations and in the security negotiations and security institutions that have been set up around the globe. Women, of course, have the fundamental human right to have their voices heard in discussions affecting their lives and their families' lives, and that is a case in and of itself that we must continue to make.

But women's participation is also critical to realizing better outcomes with respect to these negotiations. Simply put, when women are at the negotiating table and it affects their community, peace is more likely. Compelling research shows that peace agreements are much more likely to be reached, and certainly more likely to last, when women's groups are genuinely involved.

Women peacemakers often press warring parties to move beyond mere power-sharing agreements—which, of course, benefit only a small percentage of fighters—to more comprehensive and longer term accords which benefit the civilian population as a whole.

We have seen this play out from Colombia to Rwanda, to Sri Lanka, where women's groups have pushed for practical solutions to deescalate and resolve the conflict, and certainly, in Northern Ireland, where, indisputably, the bravery and perseverance in the face of reprisal and pressure led women on both sides of that conflict to stay engaged until there was a lasting peace; at least, until today, there is a lasting peace in Northern Ireland, and that is because of their involvement.

Efforts to keep the peace through policing and peacemaking missions also—this is an additional point—benefit from women's participation because it leads to better crime reporting and higher levels of trust within the communities they serve.

Women are essential to confronting one of the greatest national security threats of our time, and that is the spread of violent extremism because, if we think about it, women, of course, are truly on the front lines of this fight. They possess unique insights into the community, into their families, and are capable of gathering information often that men cannot or do not see. Yet their input is frequently overlooked, and I would just give one example, of many.

Activist Wazhma Frogh in Afghanistan recalls when women from a small Afghan village tried desperately to warn a government official that young men in their community were being recruited by Islamist militants at the local weddings, the minister laughed them off. He said: The militants that we are fighting are much too sophisticated to go and recruit at the weddings here in the community. Well, of course, a month later, unfortunately, some of those same young men that had been recruited attacked a bus, killing 32 civilians.

My committee has heard similar stories from women around the world who want to reclaim their communities from the spread of radical ideologies. We must acknowledge women as partners in this fight, and that is why the legislation before us today recognizes that it is in our national interest to promote women's participation in resolving violence and conflict.

This concept has been building support for some time. The Bush administration was right to press hard for women's participation in peace negotiations and political processes in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere, and the Obama administration expanded on these programs to require a governmentwide approach to women's inclusion in conflict resolution overseas.

Today, this bipartisan legislation before us builds on these efforts. It will continue to require a governmentwide strategy to promote women's participation, along with specific goals and benchmarks and regular reporting to Congress in order to gauge progress.

It also requires that appropriate State, USAID, and Defense Department personnel receive training in how to facilitate women's participation in conflict resolution, security initiatives, and efforts to protect civilians from violence and to protect them from exploitation.

I urge all Members to support this measure's passage.

I again thank KRISTI NOEM and JAN SCHAKOWSKY for their good work on this bill.

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

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 12, 2017.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 2484, the ''Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017.'' There are certain provisions in the bill which fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services.

In the interest of permitting your committee to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this important legislation, I am willing to waive this committee's further consideration of H.R. 2484. I do so with the understanding that by waiving consideration of the bill, the Committee on Armed Services does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the legislation which fall within its Rule X jurisdiction.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this matter and others between our respective committees.

Sincerely,
WILLIAM M. ''MAC'' THORNBERRY,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 12, 2017.

Hon. WILLIAM M. ''MAC'' THORNBERRY,
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H.R. 2484, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, and for agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of that bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to consideration by the House.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 2484 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with your Committee

as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure.

I want to thank the bill's authors, Representative SCHAKOWSKY and Representative NOEM, for their years' worth of work on this measure. I also want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for helping move it forward.

Wherever there are conflicts around the world, women and girls face particular vulnerabilities, but they also possess unique abilities to bring peace and prosperity to their communities.

Research has shown that getting women involved in conflict resolution and peace building leads to better outcomes. That is why the Obama administration launched its executive order on Women, Peace, and Security in 2011 to make sure women had a seat at the table when it came to conflict prevention and resolution.

Thanks to the Obama administration's efforts, the United States has worked to include women in conflict prevention, negotiation, and resolution. We have promoted efforts to enhance the physical and economic security of women around the world, and we have sought to break through the barriers that have stopped women from being full participants in peace processes.

□ 1800

The bill we are considering will make these policies permanent. It would build on what the Obama administration has accomplished by making sure agency personnel across our government are fully trained on the unique strengths women bring to conflict prevention and resolution. It would also require annual reporting so Congress can stay apprised of these efforts.

Making this strategy permanent is absolutely imperative. It is important that we fully recognize and appreciate how women's participation can help make our foreign policy stronger.

I am pleased to support this measure, and I urge all my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM), a member of the Committee on Ways and Means and the author of this important bill.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, you can't hardly turn on the TV today or open a newspaper, scroll through your news feed without learning of another outbreak of violence around the globe. Especially in a world as volatile and insecure as ours is today, we have a responsibility to take full advantage of proven peace-building tactics. This includes involving women in conflict prevention and resolution.

Research covering conflicts from Northern Ireland to Africa has shown that peace agreements are 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years when women are involved. Even knowing this, women are many times left out during negotiations.

The truth is that conflict knows no gender, just as peace should know no gender. With that said, women are many times impacted by conflict in different ways than their male counterparts.

ISIL, for instance, has used human trafficking and sex slavery, which disproportionately impacts women, as an income-generating business for their terrorist activities. Women need to be able to play a major role in addressing this and finding solutions to combat it.

Moreover, in many war-torn countries, women control large segments of the economy. In fact, women are the sole income earners in nearly one-third of all households worldwide. While their husbands and sons are serving as soldiers, women are running the markets, the schools, other public and private institutions. By virtue of that, they are running the local economy and have an unmistakable voice in community discussions. Their understanding can prove invaluable when mitigating conflict and building peace.

Particularly in areas where increased stability creates greater security for the United States, we must make sure that the work that we are doing produces lasting results.

I am confident the Women, Peace, and Security Act and the accountability it provides will help produce sustainable outcomes for Americans, and that also touches on our national security.

While our U.S. Government, in recent years, has made efforts to include women in peace negotiations, the bipartisan Women, Peace, and Security Act better ensures that women have a seat at the table during these discussions through meaningful congressional oversight. It is but one instrument in a toolbox our military and diplomatic leaders can use when looking at producing long-term results, and leaders can use it when looking to produce peace, but it is still a tool that we should not ignore.

I am grateful to my colleagues: Representative JAN SCHAKOWSKY for all of her passionate work on this issue; Chairman ED ROYCE and Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL for their efforts on this legislation as well.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), the coauthor of this bill, a true advocate for women, and my colleague.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Congressman JOAQUIN CASTRO, for yielding to me.

I am so proud to rise in support of H.R. 2484, the Women, Peace, and Security Act, which I introduced along with my partner, KRISTI NOEM. We have been working on this bill for quite a while.

I want to really thank Chairman ED ROYCE for not only his eloquent words today and his clear description about why this is so important, but for working closely with us to make this day a reality. I am hopeful that we will be able to go through the Senate and get this bill finally enacted.

The Women, Peace, and Security Act promotes the participation of women in the peace process and is a step forward for our security and our economic prosperity as well. When women are involved in peace negotiations, a peace agreement is more likely to last. In fact, the International Peace Institute found that a peace agreement is 35 percent more likely to last for at least 15 years if women participate in drafting the agreement. The study also found that with each 5 percent increase in women's participation in the political process, a nation is five times less likely to use violence when faced with international crisis or conflict.

When women and girls are equal partners in all aspects of decision-making, countries are more likely to be peaceful and economically prosperous.

Despite the strong evidence in favor of women's political participation, women remain underrepresented in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and the post-conflict peace-building efforts that are happening around the world, and the United States can help to change that.

The Women, Peace, and Security Act will build upon the 2011 National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, which made clear that the meaningful inclusion of women in peace and security processes is imperative for national and global security. And you heard how in Northern Ireland and all the way to Rwanda, the participation of women has been absolutely essential.

Our legislation establishes women's participation as a permanent element of U.S. foreign policy. It would encourage the United States to assist women mediators and negotiators by addressing barriers to their equal and secure participation in the peace process.

It would institute comprehensive training modules on the protection, rights, and specific needs of women in conflict and require the administration to evaluate the impact of U.S. foreign assistance on women's meaningful participation.

In addition, Women, Peace, and Security Act would require the President to report to Congress its strategy to promote women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution, and it would empower Congress to exercise oversight of that strategy's implementation.

The United States plays a crucial role in encouraging peace agreements all over the world. By making sure

that we bring women into the peace process, we can improve national and global security.

So, once again, I just want to thank Congresswoman NOEM, my partner on this bipartisan legislation, as well as Chairman ED ROYCE and Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL, for their support. I want to thank the many advocacy groups who have been persistent throughout these years in bringing it to us, the evidence of the success of women when women participate in the peace process.

So I thank the gentleman again for yielding.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, seeing no other speakers on my side, I am prepared to close as long as there are no other speakers on the majority side.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank, once again, Chairman ED ROYCE, Ranking Member ENGEL, and Representatives SCHAKOWSKY and NOEM for their hard work.

I again urge a ''yes'' vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, from Liberia to Northern Ireland, to, frankly, all over the planet, we have watched women play pivotal roles in pushing their governments, in pushing combatants and politicians to bring an end to conflict.

In recent years, we have seen armed conflicts flare around the world, producing the largest number of refugees on record. Efforts to negotiate an end to these conflicts are more important than ever. We know that when women are included in these discussions, we are more likely to see an enduring peace.

As a witness at our hearing on women's participation explained: ''Including women is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do.''

The legislation before us today will strengthen U.S. efforts to promote the inclusion of women in peace negotiations in order to create more sustainable agreements and more stable partners for the United States and for the U.S. allies.

So, again, I want to thank Representatives NOEM and SCHAKOWSKY for their bipartisan work. I also want to particularly thank the staff on both sides of the aisle who have worked so hard over the past couple of years, including Jessica Kelch, Cassandra Varanka, Brittany Comins, Elizabeth Cunningham, and Janice Kaguyutan. We appreciate all of your good work.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I ask for an ''aye'' vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2484, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 which expresses that the United States should be a global leader in promoting the meaningful participation of women in efforts directed at conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

This bill directs the President to develop and submit to Congress a Women, Peace, and Security Strategy that will:

1. Be aligned with other nations' plans to improve and encourage women to participate in peace and security over processes, conflict prevention, peace building, and decision making; and

2. Lay out goals and evaluation plans to measure strategy effectiveness.

Additionally, H.R. 2484 directs that employees and contractors of the Department of State, Department of Defense, and the U.S. Agency for International Development that personnel deployed to countries or regions at risk or emerging from violent conflict be provided training in conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution.

This training will allow those deployed to these regions to collaborate and support women who live in these conflict ridden communities to develop peace and security strategies.

As a member of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, I understand the importance of women's security and its role in conflict prevention and resolution.

This is why in the 114th Congress I introduced H. Res. 528 that seeks to create a Victims of Terror Protection Fund for the displaced refugees, migrants and victims of Boko Haram's terror in the region, many of which are women and children.

One reason women play such a critical role in the peacebuilding process is because they constitute half of every community.

Educating women and men to work in tandem is an imperative step toward instilling peace in communities and mending broken bonds.

An important aspect of H.R. 2484 is the inclusion of training personnel who work firsthand in these conflicted regions regarding international human rights laws and the protection of trafficked people.

Nearly 21 million people have fallen victim to human trafficking globally, and more than half of them are women and girls.

These numbers are staggering, and victims who have been liberated from this awful slavery require special consideration and support to overcome the horrors they have experienced with the aid of women peacekeepers.

Women serve as incredible advocates for peace as central caretakers of the family and have already played prominent roles in peace processes in the Horn of Africa.

Overall, H.R. 2484 makes an important contribution by requiring the agencies that focus abroad to collaborate on incorporating women in the peacebuilding processes.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2484, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words in support of Representative KRISTI NOEM's Women, Peace and Security Act (H.R. 2484). Among other things, it highlights the role women must play in peacemaking.

In the limited time we have, I would just like to highlight the role of one woman who served as a peacemaker, whom I have had the opportunity to get to know—Nuala O'Loan, who served as the Police Ombudsman in Northern Ireland from 2000 to 2007, and someone who has contributed to our understanding in the Congress as she twice testified at hearings held on the Northern Ireland peace process.

Baroness O'Loan—she was made a Dame of the British Empire and a member of the House of Lords in recognition for her role in the cause of peace—had the difficult task of looking into how the police handled the Omagh bombing. That bombing, by a splinter group of the Irish Republican Army, was intended to reignite sectarian tension and stop the movement towards peace that was memorialized in the Good Friday Agreement. The bomb was indiscriminate, however, killing both Protestant and Catholic alike, and helped underscore the need for peace.

In the ensuing years, Baroness O'Loan became known as an even-handed intermediary. Indeed, she was so even-handed that she was criticized by extremists on both sides, and her retirement party was boycotted by hardliners from the Unionist and Republican camps. On the other hand, the average citizen, whether Protestant or Catholic, supported her in her role as Police Ombudsman in roughly equal numbers, something that was borne out by independent polling.

Nuala O'Loan is but one example of a woman serving as peacemaker. There are many more Nualas around the world, and I applaud Congresswoman NOEM for encouraging us to recognize the role these women play in helping bring a little light to the darkness.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2484.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SECURING OUR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD ACT

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 1238) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendments thereto, and concur in the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

❶On page 4, lines 1 and 2, strike ❲relating to food and agriculture❳ and insert *''or the Secretary of Health and Human Services''*.

❷On page 4, strike line 3 and all that follows through the end of the matter following line 6 and insert the following:

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended—

(1) by striking the items relating to sections 523, 524, 525, 526, and 527; and

(2) by inserting after the item relating to section 522 the following:

''Sec. 523. Guidance and recommendations.

''Sec. 524. Voluntary private sector preparedness accreditation and certification program.

''Sec. 525. Acceptance of gifts.

''Sec. 526. Integrated public alert and warning system modernization.

''Sec. 527. National planning and education.

''Sec. 528. Coordination of Department of Homeland Security efforts related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism.''.

Mr. KATKO (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the original request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TRAVELER REDRESS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2132) to require the implementation of a redress process and review of the Transportation Security Administration's intelligence-based screening rules for aviation security, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2132

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Traveler Redress Improvement Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF REDRESS PROCESS AND REVIEW OF THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION'S INTELLIGENCE-BASED SCREENING RULES FOR AVIATION SECURITY.

(a) REDRESS PROCESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall, using existing resources, systems, and processes, ensure the availability of the Department of Homeland Security Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (DHS TRIP) redress process to adjudicate inquiries for individuals who—

(A) are citizens of the United States or aliens lawfully admitted for permanent residence;

(B) have filed an inquiry with DHS TRIP after receiving enhanced screening at an airport passenger security checkpoint more than three times in any 60-day period; and

(C) believe they have been wrongly identified as being a threat to aviation security.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the implementation of the redress process required under paragraph (1).

(b) PRIVACY IMPACT REVIEW AND UPDATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall review and update the Privacy Impact Assessment for the Secure Flight programs to ensure such Assessment accurately reflects the operation of such programs.

(2) PUBLIC DISSEMINATION.—The Secure Flight Privacy Impact Assessment review required under paragraph (1) shall be published on a publically accessible Internet webpage of the Transportation Security Administration and submitted to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(c) TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION RULE REVIEW AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS.—

(1) RULE REVIEW.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and every 120 days thereafter, the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Intelligence Analysis of the Transportation Security Administration, in coordination with the entities specified in paragraph (2), shall conduct a comprehensive review of the Transportation Security Administration's intelligence-based screening rules.

(2) NOTIFICATION PROCESS.—Not later than 48 hours after changing, updating, implementing, or suspending a Transportation Security Administration intelligence-based screening rule, the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Intelligence Analysis of the Transportation Security Administration shall notify the following entities of any such change, update, implementation, or suspension, as the case may be:

(A) The Office of Civil Rights and Liberties of the Transportation Security Administration.

(B) The Office of the Ombudsman of the Administration.

(C) The Office of Traveler Engagement of the Administration.

(D) The Office of Civil Rights and Liberties of the Department of Homeland Security.

(E) The Office of Chief Counsel of the Administration.

(F) The Office of General Counsel of the Department.

(G) The Privacy Office of the Administration.

(H) The Privacy Office of the Department.

(I) The Federal Air Marshal Service.

(J) The Traveler Redress Inquiry Program of the Department.

(d) FEDERAL AIR MARSHAL SERVICE COORDINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall ensure that the Transportation Security Administration's intelligence-based screening rules are incorporated in the risk analysis conducted during the Federal Air Marshal mission scheduling process.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on how the Transportation Security Administration's intelligence-based screening rules are incorporated in the risk analysis conducted during the Federal Air Marshal mission scheduling process.

(e) GAO REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a study on the Transportation Security Administration's intelligence-based screening rules and the effectiveness of such rules in identifying and mitigating potential threats to aviation security. Such study shall also examine coordination between the Transportation Security Administration, the Department of Homeland Security, and other relevant partners relating to changing, updating, implementing, or suspending such rules as necessary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this legislation seeks to expand the Department of Homeland Security's Traveler Redress Inquiry Program, commonly referred to as TRIP, to assist travelers who feel that they have been repeatedly selected for enhanced screening in an unfair manner.

Currently, the TRIP process only provides redress to individuals who have been placed on the no-fly list. However, for reasons unknown to the individual, they can be perpetually selected for enhanced screening without any opportunity to correct the record, if he or she fails, that this is due to an error.

This issue first came to our attention when an individual who works for a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization alerted the committee that he had been subject to enhanced pat-downs by TSA agents every time he traveled through an airport for over 3 years.

Although he twice submitted inquiries to the Department of Homeland Security through the TRIP process, he remained unable to obtain information as to why he was currently getting flagged as a potential security threat at the airport.

As you can imagine, this can cause a great deal of stress and worry for someone who feels that they have been targeted by the U.S. Government for unknown reasons.

After continued prodding of TSA by my subcommittee staff, this individual, a U.S. citizen, was cleared by Homeland Security and is now able to travel hassle free.

Unfortunately, this example is not an isolated case. Several weeks ago, a member of the committee staff also was repeatedly selected for enhanced

screening on multiple flights after traveling to the Middle East as part of an official congressional staff delegation.

When my staff looked into this case, the staffer had been mistakenly flagged for enhanced screening due to erroneous information that was entered into the Terrorist Screening Database, or TSDB.

As these anecdotes demonstrate, Homeland Security needs to establish a formal mechanism to handle these cases. My legislation requires the Department to do just that.

I would like to thank Chairman MCCAUL, Congressmen King and Vela, and Congresswoman WATSON COLEMAN for their support of this bipartisan legislation. I thank the Speaker for allowing today's consideration of the bill, and I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

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

□ 1815

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2132, the Traveler Redress Improvement Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, the American flying public has seen many changes in how aviation security is handled since the devastating morning of September 11, 2001. Among the most prominent changes has been the screening of passenger names against the so-called no-fly list that contains the information on tens of thousands of people who are deemed by our intelligence and law enforcement community as threats to aviation.

H.R. 2132 seeks to ensure a traveler, who has repeatedly received enhanced security screening at Transportation Security Administration checkpoints and believes they have wrongly been identified as posing a threat to aviation security, can receive timely redress from the Department of Homeland Security's Traveler Redress Inquiry Program, or DHS TRIP program.

Specifically, this bill directs TSA to ensure that an individual who has received enhanced screening from TSA more than three times in a 60-day period can access the Department's redress process.

This bipartisan bill, which was unanimously approved by the Homeland Security Committee on May 3, is informed by the committee's oversight finding. As such, I support the bill and urge my colleagues to join me in passing this measure to increase transparency and accountability on behalf of travelers.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, H.R. 2132, the Traveler Redress Improvement Act of 2017, would improve DHS redress processes for passengers who have repeatedly been selected for enhanced security screening and feel they have been wrongly identified as posing a threat to aviation security.

While TSA has a duty to protect classified and sensitive information from those who wish to do us harm, we must ensure TSA's operations are transparent as they can be for the vast majority of passengers who are simply trying to travel from point A to point B with as little stress as possible.

Before I yield back, I thank Subcommittee Chairman KATKO and Ranking Member WATSON COLEMAN for their long and enduring work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Before I close, I want to note briefly that this is yet another bill that has come out of Homeland Security that has been done so in a purely bipartisan manner. I think that serves as an example of how Congress can abide, going forward, in getting things done, big issues and small. There are no small issues when it comes to terrorism, but we seem to be united in our quest to make this country as safe as we can.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues once again to support H.R. 2132, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, I rise in support of H.R. 2132, "Traveler Redress Improvement Act of 2017," which requires the implementation of a redress process and review of the Transportation Security Administration's intelligence-based screening rules for aviation security.

The DHS Traveler Redress Inquiry Program (DHS TRIP) provides a redress process for individuals who have been denied or delayed airline boarding, entry into or exit from the United States at a port of entry or border crossing, or have been repeatedly referred for additional (secondary) screening.

I thank the Committee for accepting the Jackson Lee Amendment to H.R. 2132, which extends the time for GAO to submit its report from 180 days to one year.

The Jackson Lee Amendment gives GAO additional time to do its work after TSA concludes its work on the Privacy Impact Assessment for the Secure Flight program.

In 2015, there were 178 days when TSA screened more than 2 million passengers in a single day.

George Bush International and William P. Hobby Airports are essential hubs for domestic and international air travel for Houston and the region.

Nearly 40 million passengers traveled through Bush International Airport (IAH) and an additional 10 million traveled through William P. Hobby (HOU).

Persons who routinely undergo secondary screening or incur delays in boarding flights only have the DHS TRIP as their sole means of redress.

DHS TRIP is a single point of contact for individuals who have inquiries or seek resolution regarding travel difficulties that may be caused by watch list issues, screening problems at ports of entry, and situations where travelers believe they have been unfairly or incorrectly delayed, denied boarding or identified for additional screening at our nation's transportation hubs.

H.R. 2132 requires TSA, to report within 18o days on the implementation of the redress process to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

TSA is also required to review and update the Privacy Impact Assessment Act for the Secure Flight programs in order to make sure this assessment reflects the operation of the DHS TRIP.

As an added measure to ensure DHS TRIP has the most up to date information, the TSA Assistant Administrator of the Office of Intelligence Analysis must conduct a comprehensive review of TSA's intelligence-based screening rules every 120 days.

Once this review is completed, the Office of Intelligence Analysis of TSA has 48 hours to notify relevant DHS offices if there is any change, update, implementation, or suspension of any rule or method.

Reviewing the screening rules allows TSA to keep the methods that are used for security as up to date as possible and to ensure that air travelers are treated fairly.

I am a strong proponent of privacy, civil liberties, and due process.

The Federal Privacy Act assures that when agencies use electronic databases to collect, retain, process, or make decisions regarding-U.S. citizens that their privacy is protected.

I ask my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to vote in support of H.R. 2132.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2132, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORTING EFFICIENTLY TO PROPER OFFICIALS IN RESPONSE TO TERRORISM ACT OF 2017

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 625) to provide for joint reports by relevant Federal agencies to Congress regarding incidents of terrorism, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 625

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Reporting Efficiently to Proper Officials in Response to Terrorism Act of 2017" or the "REPORT Act".

SEC. 2. DUTY TO REPORT.

(a) DUTY IMPOSED.—Whenever an act of terrorism occurs in the United States, it shall be the duty of the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and, as appropriate, the head of the National Counterterrorism Center, to submit, within one year of the completion of the investigation concerning such act by the primary

Government agency conducting such investigation, an unclassified report (which may be accompanied by a classified annex) to Congress concerning such act.

(b) CONTENT OF REPORTS.—A report under this section shall—

(1) include a statement of the facts of the act of terrorism referred to in subsection (a), as known at the time of the report;

(2) identify any gaps in national security that could be addressed to prevent future acts of terrorism; and

(3) any recommendations for additional measures that could be taken to improve homeland security, including potential changes in law enforcement practices or changes in law, with particular attention to changes that could help prevent future acts of terrorism.

(c) EXCEPTION.—The duty established under subsection (a) shall not apply in instances in which the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or the head of the National Counterterrorism Center determines that the information required to be reported could jeopardize an ongoing investigation or prosecution. In such instances, the Secretary shall notify Congress of such prior to the first anniversary of the completion of the investigation described in such subsection.

(d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''act of terrorism'' has the meaning given such term in section 3077 of title 18, United States Code.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, Congress has an obligation to ensure that our national counterterrorism programs and policies are as effective as possible. At every opportunity, we should assess gaps and weaknesses and work to find opportunities for improvement.

For example, the committee's investigation into the 2013 tragic Boston Marathon bombings revealed a series of weaknesses we have worked to correct; and many of the recent attacks, including the San Bernardino and Garland shootings, the Orlando Pulse nightclub attack, and other small-scale plots have each prompted review, reflection, and action.

The REPORT Act will provide valuable assistance in this work by requiring the Department of Homeland Security, in coordination with other Federal officials, to submit a report to Congress on incidents of terrorism within 1 year of completion of the investigation.

Importantly, this report will provide Congress with the facts of the incident, a review of security gaps, and recommendations to improve homeland security efforts.

As the committee has learned over the years, it can often be a challenge to obtain timely and comprehensive sharing of information by the executive branch in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. While perhaps understandable, the REPORT Act, offered by Congressman AGUILAR, will help ensure that Congress receives the information it needs. This is a valuable addition, and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman AGUILAR for introducing this important legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 625, the Reporting Efficiently to Proper Officials in Response to Terrorism Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, the REPORT Act creates an important new congressional oversight process with respect to incidents of terrorism on U.S. soil. H.R. 625 requires the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, the FBI, and, as appropriate, the National Counterterrorism Center, to submit an unclassified report, which may be accompanied by a classified annex, to Congress within a year of the completion of an investigation of an act of terrorism.

The report to Congress must outline the facts and information related to the terrorist act but may also discuss national security gaps that come to light in the investigation that may be addressed by changes in law enforcement practices or changes in the law.

The gentleman from California (Mr. AGUILAR), introduced the REPORT Act to ensure that this body has the benefit of learning, long after the press attention has moved to other matters, the facts surrounding terrorist incidents.

The legislation is informed by the gentleman's experience as the representative for San Bernardino, California, which, of course, was the target of a vicious December 2015 attack that resulted in the death of 14 innocent victims.

I would note that, in order to protect any ongoing investigation or prosecution, the congressional notification can be waived if doing so presents a danger of interference to any ongoing terrorist investigation.

As a cosponsor of H.R. 625, I strongly believe that this legislation will enhance our ability as Members of Congress to help heal our communities after an attack and help prevent future terrorist attacks to keep Americans safe.

I urge my House colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. AGUILAR).

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Reporting Efficiently to Proper Officials in Response to Terrorism Act, or the REPORT Act.

I introduced the REPORT Act a year after the San Bernardino terrorist attack. Our community has seen more than its fair share of gun violence, but this terrorist mass shooting claimed 14 lives, injured another 22 people, and shook my community. In the days and weeks after, we pledged to do all we could to prevent another attack like this from happening ever again. This is what this bill seeks to do.

The REPORT Act requires the Department of Homeland Security to submit a report to Congress when a terror attack occurs in the United States. Under the bill, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the United States Attorney General, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the head of the National Counterterrorism Center will produce a report detailing the attack and how to prevent future attacks.

The idea is to have a uniform after-action report following a terrorist attack here in the United States. There is currently no legal requirement to create such a report. Specifically, this report will include policy recommendations for lawmakers to make our communities safer and to prevent the next San Bernardino, Boston, New York, or Orlando.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bipartisan bill. It also has the support of regional leaders in communities impacted by acts of terror. It has been endorsed by my region's law enforcement community: San Bernardino Police Chief Jarrod Burguan and Sheriff John McMahon. Chief Burguan and Sheriff McMahon are my community's law enforcement leaders who led the heroic response on December 2, 2015, and stopped the violent rampage, preventing further loss of life.

The REPORT Act is a commonsense bill that will empower lawmakers with the facts they need to create meaningful laws to thwart future attacks of terror.

This bill is for the 14 killed and 22 injured in San Bernardino. It is for my community. It is also for every American city touched by these heinous acts of terrorism.

We can and must work together to protect our homeland, and I believe this is a smart, bipartisan step to achieve that.

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

Mr. Speaker, in closing, H.R. 625 is an important piece of legislation that has strong support on both sides of the aisle.

Effective communication and unity of effort is critical immediately following a terrorist attack. It is our duty as Members of Congress to give law enforcement space to do their investigation but then, when the facts are known, to get them and then use that knowledge to inform policymaking. H.R. 625 seeks to do just that. As such,

I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 625.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 625, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, I rise in support of H.R. 625, the Reporting Efficiently to Proper Officials in Response to Terrorism Act of 2017, or the "REPORT Act."

The REPORT Act bridges an information and preparedness gap that has for too long clouded the information Congress receives about acts of terrorism that happen in our homeland.

The REPORT Act requires the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Attorney General, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and, if appropriate, the head of the National Counterterrorism Center, to submit an unclassified report to Congress, within one year of the completion of an investigation of act of terrorism in the United States.

This report will include a statement of the facts regarding the act of terrorism; identify any possible national security gaps that could prevent future acts of terrorism, and any recommendations for additional homeland security improvement measures.

The report will help Congress to enact legislation to effectively address security gaps in our national security efforts.

The REPORT Act fosters accountability, collaboration, and preparedness.

Acts of terror and violence have been at the forefront of the American collective memory for more than a decade now.

Americans have become accustomed to hearing about attacks all across our homeland and around the world.

The Bookings Institute labeled 2016 as the year of the "Lone Wolf" terrorist.

Radicalized individuals acting on their own pose a strategic and institutional threat to our national security.

This phenomenon requires us to think creatively and collectively to be prepared to address the idiosyncratic aspects of this new wave of terror.

The REPORT Act relies on our current security structure to prepare us for the future.

Attacks such as the attack on LGBT people of color in Pulse, the attacks in the City of San Bernardino, and recent attacks in London highlight the importance of collaboration and sharing of knowledge to prevent more attacks from happening.

This common sense bill relies on our current expertise to prepare for the future.

Mr. Speaker, we share the responsibility with the President to keep Americans safe and this bill is a step towards improving the way we go about protecting the American people.

I support the REPORT Act and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 625, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1873, ELECTRICITY RELIABILITY AND FOREST PROTECTION ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1654, WATER SUPPLY PERMITTING COORDINATION ACT

Mr. NEWHOUSE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115–186) on the resolution (H. Res. 392) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1873) to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands by facilitating vegetation management on such lands, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1654) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate Federal and State permitting processes related to the construction of new surface water storage projects on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to designate the Bureau of Reclamation as the lead agency for permit processing, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

□ 1830

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 2847, by the yeas and nays, and

H.R. 2866, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The second electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

IMPROVING SERVICES FOR OLDER YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2847) to make improvements to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and related provisions, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 391, nays 8, not voting 31, as follows:

[Roll No. 309]

YEAS—391

Abraham
Adams
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guthrie
Hanabusa
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo

Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pittenger
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson Coleman
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—8

Amash
Biggs
Brat
Buck
Labrador
McClintock
Sanford
Yoho

NOT VOTING—31

Aderholt
Barton
Brooks (AL)
Cicilline
Cummings
Fudge
Gabbard
Gutiérrez
Himes
Johnson, Sam
Kennedy
Larsen (WA)
Lewis (GA)
Lowenthal
Marchant
Napolitano
Pelosi
Pingree
Posey
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rohrabacher
Sánchez
Scalise
Shea-Porter
Smith (NJ)
Speier
Wagner
Waters, Maxine
Weber (TX)
Wilson (FL)

□ 1851

Ms. FOXX changed her vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REDUCING UNNECESSARY BARRIERS FOR RELATIVE FOSTER PARENTS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2866) to review and improve licensing standards for placement in a relative foster family home, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 382, nays 19, not voting 29, as follows:

[Roll No. 310]

YEAS—382

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Bacon
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Bridenstine
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Scalise
Shea-Porter
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Wagner
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Wilson (FL)

□ 1900

Mr. POE of Texas changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on rollcall No. 310.

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on rollcall No. 310.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY MORALE, RECOGNITION, LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2283) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to improve morale within the Department of Homeland Security workforce by conferring new responsibilities to the Chief Human Capital Officer, establishing an employee engagement steering committee, requiring action plans, and authorizing an annual employee award program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2283

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Department of Homeland Security Morale, Recognition, Learning and Engagement Act of 2017'' or the ''DHS MORALE Act''.

SEC. 2. CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES.

Section 704 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 344) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by inserting '', including with respect to leader development and employee engagement,'' after ''policies'';

(ii) by striking ''and in line'' and inserting '', in line''; and

(iii) by inserting ''and informed by best practices within the Federal government and the private sector,'' after ''priorities,'';

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''develop performance measures to provide a basis for monitoring and evaluating'' and inserting ''evaluate, on an ongoing basis,'';

(C) in paragraph (3), by inserting ''that, to the extent practicable, are informed by employee feedback,'' after ''policies'';

(D) in paragraph (4), by inserting ''including leader development and employee engagement programs,'' before ''in coordination'';

(E) in paragraph (5), by inserting before the semicolon at the end the following: ''that is informed by an assessment, carried out by the Chief Human Capital Officer, of the learning and developmental needs of employees in supervisory and non-supervisory roles across the Department and appropriate workforce planning initiatives'';

(F) by redesignating paragraphs (9) and (10) as paragraphs (11) and (12), respectively; and

(G) by inserting after paragraph (8) the following new paragraphs:

''(9) maintain a catalogue of available employee development opportunities, including the Homeland Security Rotation Program pursuant to section 844, departmental leadership development programs, interagency development programs, and other rotational programs;

''(10) ensure that employee discipline and adverse action programs comply with the requirements of all pertinent laws, rules, regulations, and Federal guidance, and ensure due process for employees;'';

(2) by redesignating subsections (d) and (e) as subsections (e) and (f), respectively;

(3) by inserting after subsection (c) the following new subsection:

''(d) CHIEF LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT OFFICER.—The Chief Human Capital Officer may designate an employee of the Department to serve as a Chief Learning and Engagement Officer to assist the Chief Human Capital Officer in carrying out this section.'';

and

(4) in subsection (e), as so redesignated—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) as paragraphs (5), (6), and (7), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraphs:

''(2) information on employee development opportunities catalogued pursuant to paragraph (9) of subsection (b) and any available data on participation rates, attrition rates, and impacts on retention and employee satisfaction;

''(3) information on the progress of Department-wide strategic workforce planning efforts as determined under paragraph (2) of subsection (b);

''(4) information on the activities of the steering committee established pursuant to section 710(a), including the number of meeting, types of materials developed and distributed, and recommendations made to the Secretary;''.

SEC. 3. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE AND ACTION PLAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title VII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 341 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 710. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT.

''(a) STEERING COMMITTEE.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary shall establish an employee engagement steering committee, including representatives from operational components, headquarters, and field personnel, including supervisory and non-supervisory personnel, and employee labor organizations that represent Department employees, and chaired by the Under Secretary for Management, to carry out the following activities:

''(1) Identify factors that have a negative impact on employee engagement, morale, and communications within the Department, such as perceptions about limitations on career progression, mobility, or development opportunities, collected through employee feedback platforms, including through annual employee surveys, questionnaires, and other communications, as appropriate.

''(2) Identify, develop, and distribute initiatives and best practices to improve employee engagement, morale, and communications within the Department, including through annual employee surveys, questionnaires, and other communications, as appropriate.

''(3) Monitor efforts of each component to address employee engagement, morale, and communications based on employee feedback provided through annual employee surveys, questionnaires, and other communications, as appropriate.

''(4) Advise the Secretary on efforts to improve employee engagement, morale, and communications within specific components and across the Department.

''(5) Conduct regular meetings and report, not less than once per quarter, to the Under Secretary for Management, the head of each component, and the Secretary on Department-wide efforts to improve employee engagement, morale, and communications.

''(b) ACTION PLAN; REPORTING.—The Secretary, acting through the Chief Human Capital Officer, shall—

''(1) not later than 120 days after the date of the establishment of the steering committee under subsection (a), issue a Department-wide employee engagement action plan, reflecting input from the employee engagement steering committee established pursuant to subsection (a) and employee feedback provided through annual employee surveys, questionnaires, and other communications in accordance with paragraph (1) of such subsection, to execute strategies to improve employee engagement, morale, and communications within the Department; and

''(2) require the head of each component to—

''(A) develop and implement a component-specific employee engagement plan to advance the action plan required under paragraph (1) that includes performance measures and objectives, is informed by employee feedback provided through annual employee surveys, questionnaires, and other communications, as appropriate, and sets forth how employees and, where applicable, their labor representatives are to be integrated in developing programs and initiatives;

''(B) monitor progress on implementation of such action plan; and

''(C) provide to the Chief Human Capital Officer and the steering committee quarterly reports on actions planned and progress made under this paragraph.

''(c) TERMINATION.—This section shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date of the enactment of this section.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 709 the following new item:

''Sec. 710. Employee engagement.''.

(c) SUBMISSIONS TO CONGRESS.—

(1) DEPARTMENT-WIDE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Chief Human Capital Officer of the Department of Homeland Security, shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate the Department-wide employee engagement action plan required under subsection (b)(1) of section 710 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as added by subsection (a) of this section) not later than 30 days after the issuance of such plan under such subsection (b)(1).

(2) COMPONENT-SPECIFIC EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PLANS.—Each head of a component of the Department of Homeland Security shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate the component-specific employee engagement plan of each such component required under subsection (b)(2) of section 710 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as added by subsection (a) of this section) not later than 30 days after the issuance of each such plan under such subsection (b)(2).

SEC. 4. ANNUAL EMPLOYEE AWARD PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title VII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 341 et seq.), as amended by section 3 of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 711. ANNUAL EMPLOYEE AWARD PROGRAM.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may establish an annual employee award program to recognize Department employees or groups of employees for significant contributions to the achievement of the Department's goals and missions. If such a program is established, the Secretary shall—

''(1) establish within such program categories of awards, each with specific criteria, that emphasizes honoring employees who are at the non-supervisory level;

''(2) publicize within the Department how any employee or group of employees may be nominated for an award;

''(3) establish an internal review board comprised of representatives from Department components, headquarters, and field

personnel to submit to the Secretary award recommendations regarding specific employees or groups of employees;

''(4) select recipients from the pool of nominees submitted by the internal review board under paragraph (3) and convene a ceremony at which employees or groups of employees receive such awards from the Secretary; and

''(5) publicize such program within the Department.

''(b) INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD.—The internal review board described in subsection (a)(3) shall, when carrying out its function under such subsection, consult with representatives from operational components and headquarters, including supervisory and non-supervisory personnel, and employee labor organizations that represent Department employees.

''(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section may be construed to authorize additional funds to carry out the requirements of this section or to require the Secretary to provide monetary bonuses to recipients of an award under this section.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended by section 3 of this Act, is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 710 the following new item:

''Sec. 711. Annual employee award program.''.

SEC. 5. INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act or the issuance of a report by the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security on the extent to which the Department has an equitable and consistent disciplinary process, whichever is later, but in no case later than one year after such date of enactment, the Comptroller General of the United States shall utilize, if available, such report and investigate whether the application of discipline and adverse actions are administered in an equitable and consistent manner that results in the same or substantially similar disciplinary outcomes across the Department for misconduct by a non-supervisory or supervisor employee who engaged in the same or substantially similar misconduct.

(b) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out the investigation described in subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall consult with the employee engagement steering committee established pursuant to subsection (b)(1) of section 710 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as added by section 3(a) of this Act).

(c) ACTION BY UNDER SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT.—Upon completion of the investigation described in subsection (a), the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security shall review the findings and recommendations of such investigation and implement a plan, in consultation with the employee engagement steering committee established pursuant to subsection (b)(1) of section 710 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, to correct any relevant deficiencies identified by the Comptroller General of the United States. The Under Secretary for Management shall direct the employee engagement steering committee to review such plan to inform committee activities and action plans authorized under such section 710.

SEC. 5. PROHIBITION ON NEW FUNDING.

No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act and the amendments made by this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2283. According to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, after 6 straight years of decline, DHS improved by 3 percentage points in 2016, from 53 percent in 2015 to 56 percent. However, since its inception, DHS has consistently reported low employee job satisfaction and today remains last out of large agencies in employee satisfaction.

According to the FEVS, the Department slightly improved its overall response rate to about 50 percent in 2016. Former Secretary Jeh Johnson attributed much of the success to the Department's employee engagement steering committee and efforts he and other leaders have made in strengthening employee morale and engagement. H.R. 2283 seeks to codify many of these efforts.

The purpose of H.R. 2283 is to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to improve morale within the Department of Homeland Security workforce by conferring new responsibilities to the Chief Human Capital Officer, establishing an employee engagement steering committee, requiring action plans, and authorizing an annual employee award program.

The security of our homeland depends on focused, efficient, and dedicated individuals who feel confident and empowered in the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. THOMPSON for introducing this legislation and for working in such a bipartisan manner on it. I urge all my colleagues to support this commonsense, thoughtful legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2283, the Department of Homeland Security Morale, Recognition, Learning and Engagement Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, since its inception in 2003, the Department of Homeland Security has faced a number of challenges, one of the most prominent being managing a workforce of more than 240,000 employees.

I am pleased to see that, after 6 straight years of decline, DHS employee engagement and participation scores have improved by 3 percentage points each in the latest Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. However, DHS still ranks amongst the lowest of Federal agencies in employee morale.

It has been a personal priority of mine to examine the root cause of DHS's longstanding employee morale problems and find ways to move the Department in a positive direction.

My legislation, the DHS MORALE Act, does just that by authorizing DHS-wide employee engagement, leadership development, rotational opportunities, as well as an employee engagement steering committee.

Additionally, H.R. 2283 authorizes an annual employee award program to recognize employees who make significant contributions to the Department's operations.

Finally, H.R. 2283 adds transparency and fairness to DHS's disciplinary process by directing an independent, Department-wide review of how discipline is applied by components.

This legislation, which is cosponsored by every Democratic member of the committee, has received tremendous support from the labor organization representing the DHS workforce.

I include these letters of support in the RECORD.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL–CIO,
May 1, 2017.

Hon. MICHAEL MCCAUL,
Chairman, House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, Washington, DC.

Hon. BENNIE THOMPSON,
Ranking Member, House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL AND RANKING MEMBER THOMPSON: On behalf of the 80,000 employees at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) represented by the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, I express our union's support for the DHS Morale, Recognition, Learning and Engagement Act of 2017, or the DHS MORALE Act. The DHS MORALE Act accurately recognizes that the contributions of the DHS workers and their unions are essential to addressing serious and sustained morale issues.

Each year reports and surveys confirm the sad state of morale among DHS employees who are on the front lines of national security. Given the diversity in mission, duties, and experience, their direct input is necessary to address issues of importance to their colleagues, including fair treatment and that their voices are heard by management. Steps to resolve these issues will enable the workforce to better serve the public.

The DHS MORALE Act is a good first step in resolving institutional issues that hamper the workforce that protects the homeland. AFGE supports these efforts.

Sincerely,

J. DAVID COX, SR.,
National President.

NATIONAL BORDER PATROL COUNCIL,
April 17, 2017.

Hon. BENNIE THOMPSON,
Committee on Homeland Security, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER THOMPSON: On behalf of the members of the National Border Patrol Council, I write to support your legislation, ''The Department of Homeland Security Morale, Recognition, Learning, and Engagement Act of 2017.'' Your bill is a step

forward to improve employee morale amongst Border Patrol Agents.

We are especially pleased that the bill addresses two issues requiring immediate attention, accountability and mobility. An independent audit of DHS disciplinary processes would end DHS's current penchant for punishing line agents more severely than managers for the same offense. A uniform and transparent system would hold those accountable for violations of law and policy, while also ensuring due process for employees and accountability from the top down.

The proposed Employee Engagement Steering Committee would give line agents another tool to express limitations on issues such as career progression and mobility to CBP management. Too often, newly hired agents are promised they will be able to move from a duty location to another after a few years. Unfortunately, that just isn't the case. Many are effectively stuck in a location and end up leaving the agency altogether out of frustration. Simply put, the lack of current employee engagement causes the Border Patrol to lose good agents, and consequentially, threatens the security of the border.

I appreciate your leadership to protect the rights of federal employees and look forward to continuing to work with you to find a solution. Thank you for your efforts and for considering our comments.

With kindest regard I am,

BRANDON JUDD,
President, National Border Patrol Council

THE NATIONAL TREASURY EMPLOYEES UNION,
April 21, 2017.

Hon. BENNIE THOMPSON,
Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representative, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER THOMPSON: On behalf of the 25,000 Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers and trade enforcement specialists at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) who are stationed at 328 land, sea and air ports of entry represented by the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), I am writing to thank you for introducing the ''Department of Homeland Security Morale, Recognition, Learning and Engagement Act of 2017'' or the ''DHS MORALE Act.''

Low morale has been a consistent challenge at DHS. Factors that contribute to low morale are echoed in the 2016 Office of Personnel Management's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. Though DHS has made some gains in 2016, it remains the lowest ranked large agency for employee engagement, global satisfaction and inclusiveness.

The DHS MORALE Act proposes to improve morale within the DHS workforce by conferring new responsibilities to the Chief Human Capital Officer, establishing an employee engagement steering committee, requiring action plans and authorizing an annual employee award program.

Even though the major factors contributing to low morale at CBP ports of entry are insufficient staffing and resources, the provisions in the DHS MORALE Act will help address non-staffing issues that affect employee morale by improving frontline employee engagement and establishing an annual awards program that emphasizes honoring non-supervisory employees. Importantly, your bill ensures that the perspective of frontline employees is considered by, and fully integrated into the Department's workforce activities.

NTEU greatly appreciates your leadership on this important issue and stands ready to work with you to pass this legislation.

Sincerely,

ANTHONY M. REARDON,
National President.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. My legislation sends a positive message to the DHS workforce that their contributions to the DHS mission are valued and they have not been forgotten as they endure new stresses and challenges under the Trump administration.

My legislation is intended to advance greater employee engagement, leadership development, and workforce planning at the Department of Homeland Security. This legislation seeks to equip DHS leaders, such as the Chief Human Capital Officer, with the necessary tools to promote employee engagement, learning, and morale.

The MORALE Act was unanimously approved by the full committee on May 3, and for good reason. It has wide bipartisan support.

Given the criticality of the DHS mission and the increasingly scarce availability of resources, it is essential that the DHS workforce be prioritized, as they are responsible for carrying out a diverse range of programs to make our country safe.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 2283.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2283, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, I rise in support of H.R. 2283, the ''Department of Homeland Security Morale, Recognition, Learning and Engagement Act,'' which will amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002.

This bill requires the Chief Human Capital Officer to develop and implement policies related to leadership development, employee engagement, and career progression.

The CHCO must evaluate strategic workforce planning efforts, identify methods for managing and overseeing human capital programs, and maintain a catalogue of available employee development opportunities.

It is imperative that employees be aware of the opportunities available for them no matter what their current title or role may be.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will also authorize the Chief Learning and Engagement Officer to assist the Chief Human Capital Officer on employee development and will also authorize the Employee Engagement Steering Committee.

The Employee Engagement Steering Committee will be comprised of representatives from across the Department as well as representatives from employee labor organizations.

Having a committee that is representative of the Department's workforce will ensure that a diverse voice is representative in any decisions made that will affect employees.

The Steering Committee will identify factors that have a negative impact on employee engagement and morale and will monitor components' efforts in addressing morale.

The Component heads are tasked with developing and implementing a component-specific action plan that addresses employee engagement and advances the overall Department action plan.

This bill will authorize the Secretary to establish an annual employee awards program to recognize non-supervisory DHS employees who have made significant contributions to the Department.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will also require the Secretary to provide an independent assessment of DHS programs to Congress.

Congress must ensure that programs are working in the way that they were created to.

This bill is endorsed by the National Border Patrol Council, the National Treasury Employees Union, and the American Federation of Government Employees.

These organizations have recognized that this bill is a step forward in the right direction which helps employees of the Department have a higher morale.

DHS was ranked low in best places to work in a recent poll conducted.

Recognition and employee engagement is important to reduce turnover, improve team culture, and increase employee performance.

I urge my colleagues to also support this bill and help create a Department of Homeland Security that is professional, efficient, effective, and employee friendly.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2283, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STREAMLINING DHS OVERHEAD ACT

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2190) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's real property portfolio, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2190

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Streamlining DHS Overhead Act''.

SEC. 2. LONG TERM REAL PROPERTY STRATEGIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title VII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 341 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new sections:

''SEC. 710. CHIEF FACILITIES AND LOGISTICS OFFICER.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—There is a Chief Facilities and Logistics Officer of the Department who shall report directly to the Under Secretary for Management. The Chief Facilities

and Logistics Officer shall be career reserved for a member of the senior executive service.

''(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Chief Facilities and Logistics Officer shall—

''(1) develop policies and procedures and provide program oversight to manage real property, facilities, personal property, mobile assets, equipment, and other material resources of the Department;

''(2) manage and execute, in consultation with the component heads, mission support services within the National Capital Region for real property, facilities, and other common headquarters and field activities for the Department; and

''(3) provide tactical and transactional services for the Department, including transportation, facility operations, and maintenance.

''SEC. 711. LONG TERM REAL PROPERTY STRATEGIES.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—

''(1) FIRST STRATEGY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Under Secretary for Management shall develop an initial 5-year regional real property strategy for the Department that covers the five fiscal years immediately following such date of enactment. Such strategy shall be geographically organized, as designated by the Under Secretary for Management.

''(2) SECOND STRATEGY.—Not later than the first day of the fourth fiscal year covered by the first strategy under paragraph (1), the Under Secretary for Management shall develop a second 5-year real property strategy for the Department that covers the five fiscal years immediately following the conclusion of such first strategy.

''(b) REQUIREMENTS.—

''(1) INITIAL STRATEGY.—The initial 5-year strategy developed in accordance with paragraph (1) of subsection (a) shall—

''(A) identify opportunities to consolidate real property, optimize the usage of Federal assets, and decrease the number of commercial leases and square footage within the Department's real property portfolio;

''(B) provide alternate housing and consolidation plans to increase efficiency through joint use of Department spaces while decreasing the cost of leased space;

''(C) concentrate on geographical areas with a significant Department presence, as identified by the Under Secretary for Management;

''(D) examine the establishment of central Department locations in each such geographical region and the co-location of Department components based on the mission sets and responsibilities of such components;

''(E) identify opportunities to reduce overhead costs through co-location or consolidation of real property interests or mission support activities, such as shared mail screening and processing, centralized transportation and shuttle services, regional transit benefit programs, common contracting for custodial and other services, and leveraging strategic sourcing contracts and sharing of specialized facilities, such as training facilities and resources;

''(F) manage the current Department Workspace Standard for Office Space in accordance with the Department office workspace design process to develop the most efficient and effective spaces within the workspace standard usable square foot ranges for all leased for office space entered into on or after the date of the enactment of this section, including the renewal of any leases for office space existing as of such date;

''(G) define, based on square footage, what constitutes a major real property acquisition;

''(H) prioritize actions to be taken to improve the operations and management of the Department's real property inventory, based on life-cycle cost estimations, in consultation with component heads; and

''(I) include any additional information determined appropriate or relevant by the Under Secretary for Management.

''(2) SECOND STRATEGY.—The second 5-year strategy developed in accordance with paragraph (2) of subsection (a) shall include information required in subparagraphs (A), (B), (C), (E), (F), (G), (H), and (I) of paragraph (1) and information on the effectiveness of implementation efforts pursuant to the Department-wide policy required in accordance with subsection (c), including—

''(A) the impact of such implementation on departmental operations and costs; and

''(B) the degree to which the Department established central Department locations and co-located Department components pursuant to the results of the examination required by subparagraph (D) of paragraph (1).

''(c) IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES.—Not later than 90 days after the development of each of the regional real property strategies developed in accordance with subsection (a), the Under Secretary for Management shall develop or update, as applicable, a Department-wide policy implementing such strategies.

''(d) CERTIFICATIONS.—Subject to subsection (g)(3), the implementation policies developed pursuant to subsection (c) shall require component heads to certify to the Under Secretary for Management that such heads have complied with the requirements specified in subsection (b) before making any major real property decision or recommendation, as defined by the Under Secretary, including matters related to new leased space, renewing any existing leases, or agreeing to extend or newly occupy any Federal space or new construction, in accordance with the applicable regional real property strategy developed in accordance with subsection (a).

''(e) UNDERUTILIZED SPACE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The implementing policies developed pursuant to subsection (c) shall require component heads, acting through regional property managers under subsection (f), to annually report to the Under Secretary for Management on underutilized space and identify space that may be made available for use, as applicable, by other components or Federal agencies.

''(2) EXCEPTION.—The Under Secretary for Management may grant an exception to the workspace standard usable square foot ranges described in subsection (b)(1)(F) for specific office locations at which a reduction or elimination of otherwise underutilized space would negatively impact a component's ability to execute its mission based on readiness performance measures or would increase the cost of such space.

''(3) UNDERUTILIZED SPACE DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'underutilized space' means any space with respect to which utilization is greater than the workplace standard usable square foot ranges pursuant to subsection (b)(1)(F).

''(f) COMPONENT RESPONSIBILITIES.—

''(1) REGIONAL PROPERTY MANAGERS.—Each component head shall identify a senior career employee of each such component for each geographic region included in the regional real property strategies developed in accordance with subsection (a) to serve as each such component's regional property manager. Each such regional property manager shall serve as a single point of contact for Department headquarters and other Department components for all real property matters relating to each such component within the region in which each such component is located, and provide data and any other support necessary for the DHS Regional Mission Support Coordinator strategic asset and portfolio planning and execution.

''(2) DATA.—Regional property managers under paragraph (1) shall provide annually to the Under Secretary for Management, via a standardized and centralized system, data on each component's real property holdings, as specified by the Undersecretary for Management, including relating to underutilized space under subsection (e) (as such term is defined in such subsection), total square footage leased, annual cost, and total number of staff, for each geographic region included in the regional real property strategies developed in accordance with subsection (a).

''(g) ONGOING OVERSIGHT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary for Management shall monitor components' adherence to the regional real property strategies developed in accordance with subsection (a) and the implementation policies developed pursuant to subsection (c).

''(2) ANNUAL REVIEW.—The Under Secretary for Management shall annually review the data submitted pursuant to subsection (f)(2) to ensure all underutilized space (as such term is defined in subsection (e)) is properly identified.

''(3) CERTIFICATION REVIEW.—The Under Secretary for Management shall review, and if appropriate, approve, component certifications under subsection (d) before such components may make any major real property decision, including matters related to new leased space, renewing any existing leases, or agreeing to extend or newly occupy any Federal space or new construction, in accordance with the applicable regional real property strategy developed in accordance with subsection (a).

''(4) CONGRESSIONAL REPORTING.—The Under Secretary for Management shall annually provide information to the Committee on Homeland Security and Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, and the Inspector General of the Department on the Department's real property portfolio, including information relating to the following:

''(A) A summary of the Department's real property holdings in each region described in the regional strategies developed in accordance with subsection (a), and for each such property, information including the total square footage leased, the total cost, the total number of staff at each such property, and the square foot per person utilization rate for office space (and whether or not such conforms with the workspace standard usable square foot ranges established pursuant to subsection (b)(1)(F)).

''(B) An accounting of all underutilized space (as such term is defined in subsection (e)).

''(C) An accounting of all instances in which the Department or its components consolidated their real property holdings or co-located with another entity within the Department.

''(D) A list of all certifications provided pursuant to subsection (d) and all such certifications approved pursuant to paragraph (3) of this subsection.

''(5) INSPECTOR GENERAL REVIEW.—Not later than 120 days after the last day of the fifth fiscal year covered in each of the initial and second regional real property strategies developed in accordance with subsection (a), the Inspector General of the Department

shall review the information submitted pursuant to paragraph (4) and issue findings regarding the effectiveness of the implementation of the Department-wide policy and oversight efforts of the management of real property facilities, personal property, mobile assets, equipment and the Department's other material resources as required under this section.''.

(b) REPORTING.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate copies of the regional strategies developed in accordance with section 710(a) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as added by subsection (a) of this section) not later than 90 days after the date of the development of each such strategy.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 709 the following new items:

''Sec. 710. Chief Facilities and Logistics Officer.

''Sec. 711. Long term real property strategies.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2190, the Streamlining DHS Overhead Act.

Despite being the Nation's third largest Federal department, the Department of Homeland Security continues to struggle with challenges from its integration of 22 different Federal departments and agencies.

One example of these challenges is the Department's management of its real estate portfolio. DHS pays $2 billion a year to occupy more than 100 million square feet of space. Weak internal oversight and a lack of property management processes have further intensified the problem.

Collaboration and coordination is important in these instances, and doing nothing has led to a footprint larger than what DHS needs to carry out its mission.

This legislation directly addresses these challenges by mandating the development of regional real property strategies that focus on consolidating leases, where appropriate, to the mission. It also gives the Under Secretary for Management oversight tools to ensure DHS property is being managed efficiently.

Another important part of this legislation is its outlining of responsibilities for the Chief Facilities and Logistics Officer to achieve cost savings.

As we have seen from the 2-year majority staff investigation, increased accountability and promoting efficiency is needed so DHS can more effectively use its resources to focus on its mission of securing the homeland while also saving taxpayer funds.

Improving the Department's operation and promoting efficiencies within its real property portfolio is an issue that both sides of the aisle and the Department should be able to work together on.

H.R. 2190 is commonsense legislation. I urge my colleagues' support.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1915

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2190, the Streamlining DHS Overhead Act. Each year, the Department of Homeland Security spends nearly one-fourth of its entire budget on acquisitions.

DHS has a vast and diversified portfolio of assets and real property. Given the importance of these assets to DHS' mission, it is essential that DHS manage its real property investments efficiently and effectively. This legislation establishes a chief facilities and logistics officer to not only oversee real property, but to seek efficiencies in how the properties are managed.

H.R. 2190 also requires a 5-year regional real property strategy to help decisionmakers pinpoint opportunities to reduce overhead costs through co-location or consolidation efforts. This bipartisan bill was approved unanimously by the Committee on Homeland Security on May 3.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge passage of H.R. 2190, Streamlining DHS Overhead Act. Enactment of this legislation conveys our interest in ensuring that the Department makes smart choices when it comes to managing its vast real estate property portfolio.

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

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2190, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2190, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE AMERICAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to recognize George Logothetis, the CEO and chairman of the Libra Group, a private organization based in my congressional district that is dedicated to bolstering local communities through educational and business programs.

George is a visionary who recognizes the value of promoting startup businesses as a catalyst for financial self-sufficiency, economic development, and job creation. In 2015, George created the American Entrepreneurship Award, a nonprofit with one goal in mind: to make free enterprise accessible to every underserved community across our Nation.

This Friday, June 23, George will host AEA's annual awards ceremony in our home city of Miami, where George will announce the winners of the 2017 Business Plan Competition from Miami and the Bronx. The awardees will receive a cash prize as well as vital consultation and mentorship to get their new business ventures off the ground.

I would like to thank George for his leadership in promoting innovation, and I look forward to his future success, as well as the AEA's.

THE SENATE'S SECRET HEALTHCARE BILL

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

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Mr. Speaker, the healthcare bill the Senate leadership is writing has not been subjected to any public hearings or debate and, to this day, the contents of the bill remain a secret. This bill is being written by 13 men—Republican men. And because it is being written in secret, only those in the room have a say.

Under normal circumstances, every Senator would have the chance to read and debate a bill, just as we had in the House. But these are not normal circumstances.

As that secret committee reshapes our healthcare system behind closed doors, no woman has a seat at the table, no Democrat has a seat at the table, and 77 percent of Americans do not have a Senator at the table.

The Senate leadership has deprived nearly 250 million Americans of representation in the writing of this healthcare bill because they thought no one would notice. They will be proven wrong.

RECOGNIZING ALZHEIMER'S AND BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month. Alzheimer's is

the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States, and more than 5 million Americans are currently living with it. Every 66 seconds, someone in the United States cultivates the disease.

This disease is not only deadly, but it is also costly. Alzheimer's, as well as other forms of dementia, cost the Nation roughly $259 billion annually.

Our communities are stepping up. Last year, I joined the Walk 2 End Alzheimer's event at Target Field, where more than 12,000 people turned out for the cause. It is this passion that has led to initiatives like the Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act, of which I am a cosponsor. This is an important step in finding a cure through the forming of public-private partnerships to pursue different and new research opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, we are at a reflection point—an important reflection point for Alzheimer's research. The more commitment we put forward, the more progress that we will make in finding a cure. While we have made significant progress, we will not be satisfied until a cure has been found.

RECOGNIZING THE ST. PETE PRIDE PARADE

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

Mr. CRIST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the St. Pete Pride Parade for the significance to Pinellas County, Florida, and our LGBTQ community.

Every June, for the past 15 years, the St. Pete Pride Parade has brightened the streets of my hometown, leaving joy, love, and equality in its wake. It has become one of the largest pride celebrations in the country, hosting over 200,000 attendees last year alone; all possible, thanks to our large, diverse LGBTQ community and city leadership that understands this community as a source of our strength.

As we mark 1 year since the 49 souls were taken from us at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, this pride is much more than a celebration. It is a vibrant act of strength for a community that has endured persecution simply for being who they are and who they love.

As St. Pete looks forward to the celebration this weekend, I wish the community happy pride. Be loud and be proud because we are proud of you.

RECOGNIZING THE PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PAUL LYSKAVA

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the professional accomplishments of Paul Lyskava, who has served diligently as the executive director of the Pennsylvania Forest Products Association since 2002.

Paul has been instrumental in working closely with members of the forest products industry. Even through a recession, Paul worked to put the Commonwealth in a good position. Today, Pennsylvania is the leading hardwood lumber producing State in the Nation.

In 2015, Paul was the recipient of the Joseph T. Rothrock Conservationist of the Year Award, which recognizes actions and service that contribute to the continued conservation of Pennsylvania's forest resources in the spirit of Pennsylvania Forestry Association founder, Joseph T. Rothrock.

Never before has the award been presented to an individual that served in a capacity at all similar to Paul's. For the 4 years before he took the helm at the Pennsylvania Forest Products Association, Paul served as the executive director of the Pennsylvania Hardwoods Development Council.

On behalf of the people of Pennsylvania, I want to recognize Paul for all he has done for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

We are deeply grateful for your dedication and knowledge, Paul. Thank you, my friend.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

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

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of World Refugee Day.

We are facing the worst refugee crisis in history, with over 65 million refugees; half of them are children.

When I served on Active Duty in the U.S. Air Force, I participated in Operation Pacific Haven. The U.S. military went into northern Iraq. We extracted thousands of Kurdish refugees, brought them to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, and then sent most of them to the United States. We saved their lives, and, to this day, the Kurds remain one of America's strongest allies.

Helping refugees is not only the moral thing to do; it helps our national security. That is why I am honored to introduce bipartisan legislation with Representative ROS-LEHTINEN to promote the health, safety, and well-being of refugees.

LITTLE KIM THE TERRORIST

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, North Korea released Otto Warmbier last week after 17 months of imprisonment and torture. Otto returned home in a coma, never again to speak or see his parents. Yesterday, he died—murdered, actually—from brain damage because of the Korean beatings that he endured.

North Korea had humiliated Otto for allegedly stealing a pro-government placard, forcing him to publicly beg for forgiveness. Now, these are the tactics of terrorists.

We need to ramp up the pressure on North Korea. Three other Americans are still being held in North Korea for apparent political reasons. We must prioritize saving their lives.

It is time to call it like it is: designate North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism. Doing so would isolate the country and publicly categorize North Korea with many other rogue nations.

The House has already passed my bill to designate North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism. Now the Senate needs to do the same.

Little Kim has American blood on his hands. Give him and his outlaw regime the designation it deserves, a terrorist state.

And that is just the way it is.

TRUMPCARE IS FUNDAMENTALLY FLAWED

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, when President Trump calls your healthcare legislation mean and coldhearted, you know that it is time to reconsider your approach to the Nation's healthcare system. The President was referring, of course, to the House-passed TrumpCare legislation, which pulls the rug from under millions of Americans, raising their costs, gutting their protections, and, for many, taking away their coverage.

And while we do not know the extent of the damage the Senate Republicans' secret health bill would cause, we do know its consequences would be disastrous. We do know, for instance, that the Senate Republicans plan to gut essential health benefits and destroy the Medicaid expansion.

TrumpCare is fundamentally flawed. Higher costs, less coverage, fewer protections, that is the gift from the Republican Party to the American people. The bill would also destroy millions of jobs—nearly 14,000 jobs in my State of New Jersey next year alone.

TrumpCare is an ugly bill being advanced through an ugly process. Senate Republicans can hide the details from their bill, but they cannot hide that simple fact from the American people.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

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

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor World Refugee Day, a day that is very special to the famous city of Utica, New York, in the heart of the 22nd Congressional District, a place that I have represented and lived my entire life.

Utica was recognized recently as the home to refugees, and I am so honored

to be a part of this great tradition in Utica.

In quite an unusual portion of my background, I had the opportunity to spend time in the former Yugoslavia. I also was the sole employee at the former Yugoslav Consulate before the tragic war in Yugoslavia, which broke the country up in the early nineties.

As a part of my commitment to and interest in the people from Yugoslavia, I was instrumental in helping bring a huge number of Bosnian refugees to Utica, New York, back in the early nineties and into the late nineties. And I am so pleased that I was able to have the opportunity, with my family business, to create the very first Bosnian newspaper in Utica, known as Mostovi, which means bridges in Bosnian.

Today, the Bosnian refugees make up one of the largest, if not the largest, Bosnian refugee communities in the Nation. They have done a wonderful job in Utica in successfully starting businesses and contributing greatly to our community, along with many other refugees.

I just wanted to take this moment to recognize Utica and to thank our tremendous Bosnian refugees for their contributions to our Nation and especially to our community because without them, we would never see the prosperity and the growth that we have seen in our small-business community from their ingenuity and their kindness and their generosity to us.

□ 1930

SUPPORT OUR REFUGEES

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the United States has been a leader welcoming refugees for decades. Refugees seek our shores to escape war, political and religious persecution, and sometimes fear of imminent death. People flee danger seeking refuge and safety. As Americans, we should be the last to perpetuate an environment that causes refugees to live in a state of fear and terror right here in America.

I represent the residents of Clarkston, Georgia. As a refugee resettlement hub, Clarkston is often referred to as the most diverse square mile in America. Clarkston's refugees have established themselves as taxpayers; they have started thriving businesses; and 91 percent obtain jobs and become completely self-sufficient within 6 months of arriving in the U.S.

The great diversity and cultural richness that they bring to our communities has made the Fourth District a better place to live, work, and play. Today we show our support for refugees. Today we should all stand to send a message that we will continue our work to support refugees as they continue to boost local economies and contribute to our communities with their unique and enriching cultures.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, right now we are facing one of the greatest humanitarian crises of our time. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has reported that over 65 million people are currently displaced due to war, famine, persecution, or human rights violations. That is why, on World Refugee Day, we must resist the urge to close our doors when the world's most vulnerable need our support.

As a cornerstone of American global humanitarian leadership for nearly four decades, the United States' refugee program has resettled more than 3 million refugees. I was honored to welcome one of these refugees as my guest for President Trump's joint session to Congress earlier this year.

Bothina Matar and her family were forced out of their home in Syria, and after spending months in a Jordanian camp, were resettled in Dallas, Texas. Following a rigorous vetting process, the al Sharaa family successfully resettled, and they are rebuilding their lives while contributing greatly to our country and economy, just like refugees before them.

Our country is a welcoming place where we can both protect the American people and extend our hand to people who need it. Let us not forget that fact, Mr. Speaker.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on World Refugee Day, to share some facts on the United States Refugee Resettlement Program.

America's Refugee Resettlement Program is a small but powerful humanitarian expression of American values and founding principles. And just as important, it makes us safer.

Refugees go through vetting that is already extreme. If there is any doubt about a refugee's identity, he or she is not admitted. The process is so rigorous, there hasn't been a single fatal terrorist attack carried out by a refugee in the United States since the Refugee Act became law in 1980.

Americans across our great country support resettlement. America's faith communities are leading the call for America to stand by her principles and shelter the fleeing victims of our enemies, including the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany in my own 20th District of New York. That is because it speaks directly to American values of strength, inclusiveness, and compassion.

New Yorkers have played a vital role in the resettlement program, and refugees are positively contributing to communities across New York State and beyond. The United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants' Albany field office has helped resettle refugees from Afghanistan, from Burma, Iraq, Ukraine, and the Congo, just to name a few. Some of these refugees are single mothers seeking a better life for themselves and their children; others are families fleeing war and persecution.

We have the strength, the means, and the capacity to welcome these refugees with open arms. Let us stand with these huddled masses and remain a beacon of freedom around the world.

ELIMINATE NEW YORK STATE MEDICAID MANDATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from New York (Mr. FASO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, I rise this evening with my colleagues from upstate New York to discuss a matter that is extraordinarily important to all of the people throughout New York State, but particularly to those who reside in New York State outside of New York City.

New York State is one of the few States in America that requires a portion of its share of Medicaid costs, which is healthcare for the poor and the elderly, its share of Medicaid costs to be paid by local property taxpayers. It has now been 51 years that New York State, since the days of Governor Nelson Rockefeller, that New York State imposed this incredibly onerous burden on the local property taxpayers in our State.

In fact, in the entire United States of America, there is approximately $9.5 billion being spent by local governments on Medicaid costs which, in virtually every other State, are paid for by the State government—$9.5 billion. But in New York State, our taxpayers pay $7.2 billion of that $9.5 billion in Medicaid costs mandated by New York State, mandated by Albany.

This is an outrageous burden. The county property taxpayers—those are homeowners and commercial property taxpayers in our State—pay over $2.2 billion each year in property taxes, in mandated costs, over which the county governments have no control whatsoever.

So tonight, Mr. Speaker, I rise, and I am pleased to have organized this Special Order with my colleagues from

New York State, to discuss this dire situation that our taxpayers endure and what our recommended solution is.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I were successful in including in the American Health Care Act a provision which would, as of 2020, eliminate the ability of Albany to impose this burden on local homeowners and commercial property taxpayers. It would improve the real estate values in our State. It would be one more reason for people to stay in New York rather than to flee New York.

The thing that I hear from people over and over again in my district, in the 19th District in the Catskills and the Hudson Valley of New York, is their kids and grandchildren are being driven out of State because there are no jobs, and they are being driven out of State by high property taxes.

One of the reasons for those high property taxes is the New York State Medicaid mandate. So, with Mr. COLLINS, Mr. REED, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. ZELDIN, and Ms. STEFANIK, we were successful in including in the American Health Care Act a provision which would, as of 2020, eliminate this burden on local homeowners and require Albany to do what other States, the 49 other States, do, which is to take control of its own Medicaid system and not impose these burdens on the counties.

Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, you can see in the 11 counties that I represent in the Mid-Hudson and in the Catskills of New York State, over $224 million a year is coming out of homeowners' pockets, coming out of commercial real estate owners' pockets and going to pay for Albany's costs. We are ending that as of 2020 under the provision in the legislation that I have authored with Mr. COLLINS, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. REED, Mr. ZELDIN, and Ms. STEFANIK because we know that this burden is unjust and it is uncalled for.

So, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, I am delighted at this time to yield to the gentleman from western New York (Mr. REED), from the Southern Tier.

Mr. REED. Well, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank the gentlemen, Mr. FASO and Mr. COLLINS, for their leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, in my district, the 23rd Congressional District, where we sit on the border of the State of Pennsylvania, when you talk about the tax burden that is placed on my hardworking residents that are struggling, that are trying to pay utility bills, that are trying to pay for food to put on their tables, that are trying to take care of their families and put their kids through school, when you talk about a tax burden that is driven by the Medicaid shift in New York State to the local level, at our county level—a very unique circumstance across the country—to the tune of $145 million a year in each of the counties I represent, that type of burden is not sustainable.

I thank the leadership of Mr. FASO and Mr. COLLINS for looking for a solution in the American Health Care Act that will alleviate this, that will once and for all shift this burden from our hardworking citizens, our hardworking taxpayers in western New York back to where it belongs: to our State capital, our State capital where they have mandated, under the Federal Medicaid program, essentially every optional service that is authorized under the program; where you see numbers in New York State where we spend approximately $4,000 per enrollee versus California, another State that has invested tremendously in expanding Medicaid and Medicaid services, at $2,500; where you see reports that in New York State our average costs are 44 percent, in New York State, under Medicaid spending than the national average.

And then you look at small things that do add up: taxi services that are reimbursed under Medicaid in New York State to the tune of $2.20 a mile. Mr. Speaker, every hardworking resident in my district that is watching tonight knows that if they go to submit a mileage reimbursement to their employer or they go and try to get reimbursement from their local government that they work at, they are getting 55 cents or maybe 53.5 cents. That money adds up.

You also see a Medicaid program in New York that is ripe with waste, fraud, and abuse; and by putting that $145 million tax burden on our local taxpayers, our counties cannot address that waste, fraud, and abuse. That can only be done in our State capital. So I think it is only right that we put the burden on our State capital, who has the authority, the flexibility, and the ability to address these issues, to have to deal with this burden at the same time they can implement solutions.

If our Governor so chooses to make this type of waste, fraud, and abuse rampant through Medicaid, that is his choice. But he shouldn't put it on our backs, our local residents' backs, to the tune of $145 million of taxpayer dollars that they have no ability to address at the local level.

I also remember, vividly, a story from one of our first responders, an Olean firefighter who came in and talked about him being part of ObamaCare ambulance service where they would pick up individuals who would call for services and claim to be experiencing a medical emergency; and then as they delivered the patient to the hospital, that same patient would refuse service at the ER so they could go to the mall across the street—a ride in an ambulance that is paid for by our hardworking residents in western New York.

We are generous people. We don't mind helping people out. But when you put a burden like this on our backs and you don't give us the flexibility and ability to address these concerns, that is wrong. And what this amendment does, and I am proud to support it and stand here with my colleagues, is right this wrong once and for all and put the burden where it needs to be: in our State capital. Let our Governor own this and, hopefully, wise up and deal with it at that level and take this burden off our hardworking taxpayers.

Thank you, Mr. FASO and Mr. COLLINS for this leadership, and we are wholeheartedly behind you.

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. REED. I think he raises a very timely and very good point.

The fact is the level of government that designs the program, that confers the benefit, that says who is eligible should also be the level of government that has to go to its citizens and say: ''Here is why we need to raise the revenue to pay for that benefit.''

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But, indeed, what New York does is wholly different. What New York does is they simply say: Here is the benefit, and we are going to shift part of the cost of that benefit to taxpayers at the local level, to the homeowners and to the property taxpayers, and their county governments have nothing to say over how that program is run or operated or administered. They just have to send the bill to Albany once a month.

This is what we are seeking to address.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. COLLINS) who is from Erie County.

Mr. COLLINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud cosponsor of the Property Tax Reduction Act introduced by my colleague and friend from New York, Representative JOHN FASO.

I am committed to working to provide tax relief to my constituents, which is why Representative FASO and I worked to include a similar measure in the Affordable Health Care Act, and I urge the Senate and Leader MCCONNELL to include that measure in their healthcare bill.

The State of New York saddles its residents with the highest overall tax burden in the Nation. A main driver of this hardship remains New York's persistently exorbitant local property taxes, which are a symptom of irresponsible governing from Albany. Governor Cuomo continues to rely on New York counties to foot the bill for New York State's outrageous Cadillac Medicaid plan, which costs each recipient 44 percent more than the national average.

The Governor essentially runs up a tab and then demands that the counties find a way to pay the bill. This is an unconscionable shift of cost. The entity of government that spends taxpayers' money should be the entity that pays the bill. Instead, Governor Cuomo wants this scheme to continue shielding his outrageous spending and keeping his actions from public scrutiny. The Governor's sleight of hand costs the eight counties I represent over $470 million a year and my home county of Erie almost $204 million a

year—nearly 83 percent of the total county property tax.

The Property Tax Reduction Act will end this outrageous cost shift, hold Governor Cuomo accountable for the State's Medicaid spending, and deliver much-needed tax relief to the hardworking taxpayers in my district.

I want to thank my friend and colleague, Mr. FASO, for introducing this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Mr. COLLINS' strong support. As a former county executive in Erie County, you had that experience of having to write the check every month to Albany for a program and services that you had no control over. I very much appreciate it.

One of the ironies here is that New York State, with 19 million people, spends more on its Medicaid system than Texas and Florida combined. Those two States have more than double our population, yet we spend more than those two States—Texas and Florida—combined. It is no wonder so many New Yorkers have fled to places like Texas and Florida through the years.

So I appreciate Mr. COLLINS' consistent leadership on this issue from the time the gentleman was the county executive in Erie County.

Mr. COLLINS of New York. We should put it into perspective because New York spends too much on everything. Florida now has more people than New York. Florida's entire budget is $80 billion a year for more than 20 million people. New York, with fewer people, has a budget of $160 billion—you almost can't make this up—double Florida.

Now, a point that I have tried to make when you see what the position of New York is, there was a day New York had 45 Members of Congress. Congress is apportioned by population. Today, we have fallen from 45 to 27. We have lost 40 percent of our representation in New York because of the high tax burden. And I know, as sure as I am standing here, we are going to lose another seat, possibly two, in the Census coming up in 2020.

Now, contrast to Florida that doesn't have an income tax and has much lower property taxes, half of the budget of New York. When we had 45, they had 7 Members of Congress—45 versus 7. Today, they also have 27. In the next Census, they are going to grow from 28 to 29. You almost can't make this up. Certainly the property tax burden is a big thing that drives these people out of New York State.

They want to live there. People want their kids to be there. There was a day in Erie County—and I was the county executive—we had 1.25 million people in Erie County in 1972, 1973. We are down to 900,000. Forget about relative growth. We have actually lost 25 percent of our absolute population over the last 40 years because of the high tax burden in New York, so much so, they coined the phrase of our airport. They called it the Runway of Tears because the parents were watching their children and grandchildren fly off to Florida, to North Carolina, and to other States where there were jobs and opportunities—the Runway of Tears.

So anything we can do to help reduce that tax burden in New York and to let our kids come home and be able to afford to live in New York State, maybe one day again we will be the Empire State.

So I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this. Certainly I am going to be fighting side by side with the gentleman and the other New Yorkers to get this through.

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his support.

The fact of the matter is that New York has driven away so many people. In my 19th Congressional District, every single county has lost population in the last 5 years. School district populations are down 30, 40 percent. Part of the reason is because of a lack of jobs and high property taxes. What we are simply saying is there should be accountability.

When I ran for office last year, I promised the people of my district that I would introduce a measure, because then people would say: how can the Federal Government get involved in this question?

The reason is because the Federal law authorized the States to impose part of their costs on the counties or on the local governments. The fact is that only New York State did it to the degree that New York did. That is why it is going to require us to amend the Federal legislation to preclude New York from doing this.

We are giving Albany 2½ years to reform their program, to eliminate waste, and to make other priorities in its spending. There is no reason for cuts to hospitals or nursing homes, as Governor Cuomo has alleged falsely. What he needs to do is take full responsibility for this program, as most of the Governors in the 49 other States do, and then we will be able to relieve this burden on our local homeowners.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY), who was also elected with me in 2016, for her comments on this important matter.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman FASO for his leadership, and also for the great comments from Congressman COLLINS in the western New York district and for coming up with this really great piece of legislation.

It is no secret that New York residents pay among the highest taxes in the Nation. Combined State and local taxes consume over 13 percent of the average household income.

Decades of tax-and-spend policies have depleted the wallets of hardworking middle class families and forced many small businesses—including family farms; once a tradition in New York—into closure, and driven lifelong residents out of our State in record numbers forever. These burdensome taxes, coupled with crushing regulations, have led to the worst business climate in the country. Small businesses, which create over 70 percent of the new jobs, face the threat of extinction in New York.

Year after year, New York continues to be ranked the highest in out-migration in the entire Nation. Nearly 200,000 people have left the Empire State, and two of the worst hit regions—the Mohawk Valley and the southern tier—are located in the 22nd District. Additionally, the two largest cities in our district—Utica and Binghamton—are ranked last and second to last in economic growth.

Hardworking families and our job creators desperately need tax relief. That is why I am working with the New York delegation and the Republican congressional delegation to lead the charge by cosponsoring the Property Tax Reduction Act sponsored by Mr. FASO and Mr. COLLINS and cosponsored by the rest of us.

As a note, I would just like to mention that, as a former member of the State assembly, I did sponsor legislation very similar to the type of relief being proposed in this wonderful piece of legislation known as the Property Tax Reduction Act. That legislation was cosponsored in a bipartisan way with Democrats who also recognized the need to change the paradigm in New York State.

The Property Tax Reduction Act will bring the largest local mandate relief initiative to my area in my lifetime, potentially saving the taxpayers in the 22nd District more than $167 million annually in unfunded State Medicaid mandates. This bill relieves county governments from the burden forced upon them by Albany bureaucrats led by our Governor.

Currently, in New York State, the law requires approximately $2.3 billion, as was mentioned earlier, that is taken from our local county governments and given to the State for the Medicaid program. This amounts to about $140 million per week.

In 2015, Oneida County was forced to divert more than 80 percent of the property tax levies to subsidize Albany's bloated budgets. This amounts to $54.4 million annually in Oneida County losses every year to cover the cost of their share of Medicaid.

In Broome County, more than half of the county's $70 million in property tax revenue, about $37 million, was taken from the county last year and diverted to Albany—a loss of more than, as I said, $37 million. This is money that would otherwise go to reduce property taxes, fund our schools, make much-needed improvements to infrastructure, and support our first responders, among many other programs, that we need on a county level.

Combined property and sales tax rates as a percentage of value rank many of New York's counties among

the highest taxed counties in the Nation, with Oneida County being ranked 19 in the latest Tax Foundation survey. No other State in the country abuses its local governments and taxpayers quite like Albany does in order to fund its most expansive and really overly generous Medicaid programs in the Nation.

New York's Medicaid program has the highest incidents of fraud, abuse, and waste in the country. If other States can provide high-quality healthcare to vulnerable citizens without taking advantage of local taxpayers, so can New York. The imposition of over $2.5 billion in Medicaid costs on to the counties is nearly seven times costlier than what counties in California pay, despite having higher enrollments and expenditures.

The Property Tax Reduction Act requires Governor Cuomo and the State to pay its full share of the Medicaid program that it should be paying in full and that it also forces on to the county and local governments.

This bill does not propose cuts to the programs in the 22nd District. Rather, it requires Albany to put its fiscal house in order. It requires Albany to take stock of the money that it has been using, sending these unfunded mandates to our strapped local governments.

This legislation, as the sponsor has indicated, gives the State ample time to realign the budget, to rein in out-of-control spending, and to give the taxpayers relief once and for all at the county level.

If Governor Cuomo chooses to hurt the citizens by slashing programs that upstate New Yorkers want and need with a mammoth State budget that was over $152 billion this year for fiscal year 2017, that is his choice, not something that has been brought on by that act. His failed leadership continues to produce budgets laden with unconstitutional executive pork and wasteful spending.

In fact, let's just take a look at a couple of the items. Over $370 million in Albany's budget these past few years was spent on the corrupt and mismanaged StartUP New York program, which produced only one-third of the promised jobs. Over $1.3 billion in tax breaks have been handed over to Hollywood filmmakers in the last 2 years. In all, Albany spends over $8 billion in taxpayer money on a job-creation program with little results to show for it.

The bill will simply force the State to work over a period of several years to responsibly reduce the unfair and unreasonable Medicaid liability that has been forced on to our counties. Upstate New York is in desperate need of property tax relief.

This bill is the first step in making the relief a reality. County executives and local governments across the State have voiced their support of this legislation.

While hardworking families struggle, Albany sits idly by. That is why we are taking the lead on the Federal level to help revive our region and bring business and people back to beautiful upstate New York. By giving county governments a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reduce property taxes, this bill will save millions of dollars and hard-earned tax dollars for working families.

On behalf of the 22nd District, I just want to thank my colleagues for really taking the effort to bring this to the floor and showing true leadership in the face of difficult circumstances in finding a real solution, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for all of us as taxpayers in New York to finally have some relief, to grow our business community, and to find some kind of dynamism in our economy. I thank again the sponsors, Mr. FASO and Mr. COLLINS.

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Mr. FASO. I appreciate the gentlewoman's remarks and her strong support for this reform measure.

I would also point out that a 2015 report from the New York State Comptroller indicated $513 million in improper payments in the Medicaid program were identified. In the same report, the Comptroller questioned an additional $361 million in transactions that would require agency actions to reduce costs or recover funds.

In the past decade, the Office of Inspector General for the Federal Department of Health and Human Services found 10 specific instances in which New York State received improper Federal Medicaid payments in excess of $50 million, with six of those instances each exceeding over $170 million apiece.

So there is a lot of room in the New York State Medicaid program to reduce improper payments and outright fraud that we have seen. I know my colleague, Ms. TENNEY, from her experience in the State legislature, has seen firsthand what was going on with New York State's Medicaid system.

Part of the reason this has occurred is because Albany was able to spend someone else's money. The old iron rule of government and the iron rule of family budget is that it is always easier to spend someone else's money. What Albany has been doing for 51 years has been shifting part of its Medicaid responsibility from the State level down to the local level, and so Albany was less responsible.

This wasn't a Democrat or Republican thing, either. This happened under the Republican Governors. It happened under Democratic Governors. It is true, through the years, New York State has partially reduced the burden that was falling upon the county property taxpayers, but they have never eliminated it.

Do you know what? The leadership in Albany today shows no signs of ever taking steps to finally eliminate this.

In Ms. TENNEY's district, it is over $167 million a year in property tax relief. In my district, it is over $224 million. In Mr. COLLINS' district, it is close to $400 million. In Nassau County, it is over $300 million; in Suffolk County, over $300 million; Westchester County, over $200 million.

All throughout the State of New York, outside of New York City, the property taxpayers are being crushed. They are being driven away. Our jobs and our economy are being driven away, in part, because of Albany's Medicaid mandate.

We can change it by changing Federal law. That is what we are going to do. We have placed this provision in the healthcare legislation. It is my hope and expectation that it can be included in the final legislation that is passed. But regardless, I know Ms. TENNEY, Mr. REED, Mr. COLLINS, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. ZELDIN, and the rest of us will be fighting very hard to make sure that we can finally eliminate this injustice.

What Albany does is taxation without any representation. In my District, in Ulster County, almost half of their entire property tax levy goes to pay for Albany's Medicaid costs.

In Rensselaer County, about 57 percent of every nickel the county raises in property tax levy goes to pays for Albany's Medicaid costs, and they have no say over how those funds are expended, over how the program is operated. It is truly taxation without representation.

I yield to the gentlewoman if she has anything to add in conclusion.

Ms. TENNEY. I want to mention one thing that I think is really important. Both Congressman FASO and I served as members of the State Assembly prior to serving in Congress. One thing that we both know is that we are truly interested in helping people who are needy.

It isn't about the people who are truly needy; it is about the people who are abusing the system and taking resources that are desperately needed by our seniors and by people who really are, as I said, truly needy. This is a way of providing more resources to them without having the fraud, the abuse and waste, the mismanagement in Albany, and forcing Albany into being more fiscally conservative, protecting our counties so that we can provide those services for our communities.

I just want to make sure that we characterize that, because that is something that we all care about as people who take an oath of office, not just to uphold our Federal Constitution but also our State constitution. We take that seriously.

I know we are all committed to helping those people, but also remembering that we need to respect the taxpayers. The taxpayers need to have proper management of their funds.

I want to commend the gentleman for his work and efforts in making sure this comes to the floor and making sure we get this passed on the Federal

level, because it has been a struggle for all of us through many years. Having this come to reality is going to be, honestly, one of the greatest mandate relief packages that I have experienced in my lifetime, and I am grateful.

Mr. FASO. I thank the gentlewoman for her comments.

I would close, Mr. Speaker, simply by pointing out that New York State has among, depending on what the measure is, either the highest or second highest real property taxes in the entire Nation. We are the only State that imposes this type of burden on local homeowners, local property taxpayers.

If you look at the gross amount that people pay in their real estate taxes, the downstate counties—Westchester, Nassau, Suffolk, Rockland—pay the highest in gross amount. But if you calculate the property tax burden as a percentage of the home value, the counties in upstate New York; in western New York; along the southern tier; in the Mohawk Valley, where Ms. TENNEY lives; in the Catskills and Mid-Hudson, where I live; and in the Adirondacks, which Ms. STEFANIK represents, those counties are being crushed. Those homeowners are being crushed by the burden of real estate taxes.

A large part of that reason is this 50-year mandate that started under Nelson Rockefeller that has been imposed on New York homeowners, which is crushing them, driving them out of their homes, and this is what we are intending to stop.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the support of my colleagues here tonight, and I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of travel (airline) difficulties.

Mr. CORREA (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of flight diverted for airline issues.

Mr. CUMMINGS (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for June 12 through 23.

Ms. GABBARD (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today through June 23.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 782. An act to reauthorize the National Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, June 21, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

1714. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary of Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting the 2016 Armed Forces Retirement Home Accreditation Report, pursuant to 24 U.S.C. 418(e)(2); Public Law 101-510, Sec. 518(e)(2) (as amended by Public Law 110-181, Sec. 1422(f)); (122 Stat. 422); to the Committee on Armed Services.

1715. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 22-70, ''Early Learning Equity in Funding Amendment Act of 2017'', pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1716. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 22-71, ''Child Development Facilities Regulations Amendment Act of 2017'', pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1717. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 22-72, ''Child Care Study Act of 2017'', pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1718. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9524; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-049-AD; Amendment 39-18891; AD 2017-10-17] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1719. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Zodiac Seats California LLC Seating Systems [Docket No.: FAA-2016-5595; Directorate Identifier 2015-NM-087-AD; Amendment 39-18871; AD 2017-09-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1720. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Diamond Aircraft Industries GmbH Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0506; Directorate Identifier 2017-CE-019-AD; Amendment 39-18907; AD 2017-11-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1721. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce plc Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0114; Directorate Identifier 2017-NE-03-AD; Amendment 39-18880; AD 2017-10-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1722. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce Deutschland Ltd & Co KG Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0186; Directorate Identifier 2017-NE-07-AD; Amendment 39-18899; AD 2017-10-25] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1723. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-8849; Directorate Identifier 2015-NM-174-AD; Amendment 39-18892; AD 2017-10-18] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1724. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2015-8428; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-032-AD; Amendment 39-18898; AD 2017-10-24] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1725. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9413; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-104-AD; Amendment 39-18897; AD 2017-10-23] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1726. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-8179; Directorate Identifier 2015-NM-201-AD; Amendment 39-18913; AD 2017-11-14] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1727. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2015-0084; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-181-AD; Amendment 39-18879; AD 2017-10-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1728. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; NavWorx, Inc. Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast Universal Access Transceiver Units [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9226; Directorate Identifier 2016-SW-065-AD; Amendment 39-18910; AD 2017-11-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1729. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9075; Directorate Identifier

2016-NM-082-AD; Amendment 39-18890; AD 2017-10-16] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1730. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-8848; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-054-AD; Amendment 39-18895; AD 2017-10-21] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1731. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0124; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-166-AD; Amendment 39-18911; AD 2017-11-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1732. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Slingsby Aviation Ltd. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0048; Directorate Identifier 2016-CE-035-AD; Amendment 39-18876; AD 2017-10-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1733. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Piper Aircraft, Inc. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9550; Directorate Identifier 2016-CE-026-AD; Amendment 39-18894; AD 2017-10-20] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1734. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Embraer S.A. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9507; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-127-AD; Amendment 39-18878; AD 2017-10-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1735. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; DG Flugzeugbau GmbH Gliders [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0158; Directorate Identifier 2016-CE-040-AD; Amendment 39-18902; AD 2017-11-03) (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1736. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9438; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-109-AD; Amendment 39-18873; AD 2017-09-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1737. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Defense and Space S.A. (Formerly Known as Construcciones Aeronauticas, S.A.) Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0123; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-033-AD; Amendment 39-18889; AD 2017-10-15] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1738. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Safety Management System for Domestic, Flag and Supplemental Operations Certificate Holders; Technical Amendment [Docket No.: FAA-2009-0671; Amdt. No.: 5-1A] (RIN: 2120-AJ86) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1739. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — IFR Altitudes; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 31138; Amdt. No.: 533] received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1740. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace, Grass Range, MT [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0047; Airspace Docket No.: 17-ANM-1] received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1741. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Kyle-Oakley Field Airport, Murray, KY [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9443; Airspace Docket No.: 16-ASO-17] received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1742. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace, Bar Harbor, ME [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9285; Airspace Docket No.: 16-ANE-2] received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1743. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Proposed Amendment of Class D Airspace; Kingsville, TX [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9511; Airspace Docket No.: 16-ASW-20] received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. BRADY of Texas: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 1551. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for production from advanced nuclear power facilities; with an amendment (Rept. 115–183). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. MCCAUL: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 2190. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's real property portfolio, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115–184). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BRADY of Texas: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 2842. A bill to provide for the conduct of demonstration projects to test the effectiveness of subsidized employment for TANF recipients; with an amendment (Rept. 115–185). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. NEWHOUSE: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 392. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1873) to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands by facilitating vegetation management on such lands, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1654) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate Federal and State permitting processes related to the construction of new surface water storage projects on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to designate the Bureau of Reclamation as the lead agency for permit processing, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–186). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. WESTERMAN (for himself, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. LABRADOR, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. PETERSON, and Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS):

H.R. 2936. A bill to expedite under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and improve forest management activities on National Forest System lands, on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and on Tribal lands to return resilience to overgrown, fire-prone forested lands, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committees on Natural Resources, Education and the Workforce, and Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LAHOOD:

H.R. 2937. A bill to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to authorize partnerships between States and nongovernmental entities for the purpose of reclaiming and restoring land and water resources adversely affected by coal mining activities before August 3, 1977, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK (for himself, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. MACARTHUR, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania,

Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KNIGHT, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. COURTNEY):

H.R. 2938. A bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to remove barriers to access to residential substance use disorder treatment services under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. TIPTON (for himself, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. AMODEI, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. SIMPSON, and Mr. WESTERMAN):

H.R. 2939. A bill to prohibit the conditioning of any permit, lease, or other use agreement on the transfer of any water right to the United States by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BROOKS of Alabama:

H.R. 2940. A bill to allow Members of Congress to carry a concealed firearm anywhere in the United States, with certain exceptions; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ABRAHAM (for himself, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana, and Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana):

H.R. 2941. A bill to provide for the conveyance of certain National Forest System land within Kisatchie National Forest in the State of Louisiana; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Ms. DELAURO (for herself, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. TAKANO, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. POCAN, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. COHEN, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. TONKO, Ms. MOORE, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. BEYER, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. LEE, Mr. NADLER, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. KILMER, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. RUSH, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. MENG, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York):

H.R. 2942. A bill to permit employees to request changes to their work schedules without fear of retaliation and to ensure that employers consider these requests, and to require employers to provide more predictable and stable schedules for employees in certain occupations with evidence of unpredictable and unstable scheduling practices that negatively affect employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on House Administration, Oversight and Government Reform, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. BARRAGÁN (for herself, Mr. TURNER, Mr. DONOVAN, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. NORTON, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Ms. MENG, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. LEE, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. BACON, and Mr. POCAN):

H.R. 2943. A bill to provide grants for projects to acquire land and water for parks and other outdoor recreation purposes and to develop new or renovate existing outdoor recreation facilities; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. HUFFMAN (for himself, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. EVANS, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Ms. LEE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. MOULTON, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. POCAN, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. RUSH, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SIRES, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. WELCH, Mr. VELA, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. DINGELL, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. PANETTA, Ms. MCCOLLUM, and Mr. MCNERNEY):

H.R. 2944. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for in-State tuition rates for refugees and asylees; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia:

H.R. 2945. A bill to grant Members of Congress the right to carry a firearm anywhere in the United States, except in the United States Capitol; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LAMALFA (for himself and Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida):

H.R. 2946. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on heavy trucks and trailers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DUNN:

H.R. 2947. A bill to replace certain Coastal Barrier Resources System maps; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. STIVERS (for himself, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. POLIQUIN):

H.R. 2948. A bill to amend the S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008 to provide a temporary license for loan originators transitioning between employers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. PRICE of North Carolina (for himself and Mr. BYRNE):

H.R. 2949. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to authorize borrowers to separate joint consolidation loans; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. PEARCE:

H.R. 2950. A bill to amend section 200303 of title 54, United States Code, to ensure that amounts are made available for projects to provide recreational public access, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BABIN:

H.R. 2951. A bill to allow Members of Congress to carry a concealed handgun anywhere in the United States, with exceptions; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on House Administration, and Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. BASS (for herself, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. LEE, Ms. MOORE, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. TED LIEU of California, and Mr. LANGEVIN):

H.R. 2952. A bill to support the establishment or expansion and operation of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURGESS (for himself, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. TIPTON, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. BERA, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. BUCSHON, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, and Mr. SWALWELL of California):

H.R. 2953. A bill to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 respecting the scoring of preventive health savings; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. EMMER (for himself and Mr. LUETKEMEYER):

H.R. 2954. 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 Financial Services.

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 2955. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to permit the installation of pulsating light systems for high mounted stop lamps, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GOHMERT (for himself, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. JONES, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. OLSON, Mr. HARPER, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. CHABOT, and Mr. PALAZZO):

H.R. 2956. A bill to provide for parental notification and intervention in the case of an unemancipated minor seeking an abortion; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri (for himself and Mr. LOEBSACK):

H.R. 2957. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to provide for

enhanced payments to rural health care providers under the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California (for himself, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Ms. LEE, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. POLIS, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. ELLISON, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO):

H.R. 2958. A bill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the climate; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 2959. A bill to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to allow for parent mentors to be eligible to receive outreach and enrollment grants under the Children's Health Insurance Program under such title, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. MENG (for herself, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. NADLER, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, and Mrs. DAVIS of California):

H.R. 2960. A bill to direct the Secretary of Education to establish and carry out a grant program to make grants to eligible institutions to plan and implement programs that provide comprehensive support services and resources designed to increase transfer and graduation rates at community colleges, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. NORCROSS (for himself, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. WALZ, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and Mrs. DAVIS of California):

H.R. 2961. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve remedial education programs that train students in the competencies needed to succeed in higher education; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 2962. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, with respect to prohibiting the use of electronic cigarettes on passenger flights, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. POLIQUIN (for himself and Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia):

H.R. 2963. A bill to amend the Federal Home Loan Bank Act to provide investment authority to support rural infrastructure development, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mrs. RADEWAGEN:

H.R. 2964. A bill to amend the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 to stop a scheduled increase in the minimum wage applicable to American Samoa and to provide that any future increases in such minimum wage shall be determined by the Secretary of Labor; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. ROSS:

H.R. 2965. A bill to require all gas stations offering self-service to meet certain accessibility standards for individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUSH:

H.R. 2966. A bill to lift the trade embargo on Cuba, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, the Judiciary, Agriculture, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio (for himself, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H.R. 2967. A bill to amend the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to establish a grant program to appoint nutrition coordinators to oversee local school nutrition policies in local educational agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. SWALWELL of California (for himself, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, and Mr. MOULTON):

H.R. 2968. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to direct the Secretary of Education to provide each borrower with an individualized repayment guide; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. TAKANO (for himself and Mr. SCHNEIDER):

H.R. 2969. A bill to amend the Federal Assets Sale and Transfer Act of 2016 to allow the Federal Government to lease or sell abandoned or unused Federal civilian real properties for use as makerspaces, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ (for herself, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. VELA, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. LANCE, Mr. CONYERS, and Mr. LANGEVIN):

H.R. 2970. A bill to amend section 428K(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to include certain cultural workers, museum professionals, artistic professionals, arts and humanities professors, and music and arts educators among the individuals eligible for loan forgiveness for service in areas of national need; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. HASTINGS (for himself, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. SCHWEIKERT):

H. Res. 393. A resolution expressing support for addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict in a concurrent track with the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and commending Arab and Muslim-majority states that have improved bilateral relations with Israel; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. KAPTUR (for herself and Mr. COOK):

H. Res. 394. A resolution supporting international academic freedom and American universities abroad; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California (for himself, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. BERA, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. HULTGREN, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KEATING, Mr. KIND, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. NADLER, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. POCAN, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. SIRES, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SOTO, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. TONKO, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. BEYER, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. WELCH, Ms. TSONGAS, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. SERRANO, and Mrs. DAVIS of California):

H. Res. 395. A resolution reaffirming the leadership of the United States in promoting the safety, health, and well-being of refugees and displaced persons; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York introduced a bill (H.R. 2971) for the relief of Martin Martinez; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. WESTERMAN:

H.R. 2936.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2

By Mr. LAHOOD:

H.R. 2937.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2

By Mr. FITZPATRICK:

H.R. 2938.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section VIII, Clause I

By Mr. TIPTON:

H.R. 2939.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2

By Mr. BROOKS of Alabama:

H.R. 2940.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution & the 2nd Amendment to the Bill of Rights

By Mr. ABRAHAM:

H.R. 2941.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution of the United States.

By Ms. DELAURO:

H.R. 2942.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution and Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. BARRAGÁN:

H.R. 2943.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2: ''The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular state.''

Article I, Section 8: ''To make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces.''

By Mr. HUFFMAN:

H.R. 2944.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or office thereof.

By Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia:

H.R. 2945.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution that states that Congress shall have Power ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States . . .''

The Second Amendment to the United States Constitution which states that ''A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.''

By Mr. LAMALFA:

H.R. 2946.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8, Clause 1, of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. DUNN:

H.R. 2947.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. STIVERS:

H.R. 2948.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. PRICE of North Carolina:

H.R. 2949.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

As described in Article 1, Section 1, ''all legislative powers herin granted shall be vested in a Congrss of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.''

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution provides Congress with the authority to ''provide for the common Defense and general Welfare'' of Americans. In the Department of Education Organization (P.L. 96–88), Congress declared that ''the establishment of a Department of Education is in hte public interest, will promote the general welfare of the United States, and will enable the Federal Government to coordinate its education activities more effectively.'' The Department of Education's mission is to ''promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.''

By Mr. PEARCE:

H.R. 2950.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have the power to . . . make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or officer thereof.

By Mr. BABIN:

H.R. 2951.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Amendment 2: A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Article 1, Section 5–2: Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly Behaviour, and, with the Concurrence of two thirds, expel a Member.

By Ms. BASS:

H.R. 2952.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 allows Congress to make all laws ''which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution'' any ''other'' powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States.

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 2953.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8, Clause 1: The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mr. EMMER:

H.R. 2954.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 2955.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 1 of the Constitution.

By Mr. GOHMERT:

H.R. 2956.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

The Congress shall have Power . . . to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 2957.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 (General Welfare) and Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 (Commerce) of the Constitution.

The bill makes several changes to the way hospitals are regulated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This includes transaction between hospitals, CMS, and third parties, which constitutes commerce. Further, Medicare is considered to be constitutional as part of providing for the general welfare and therefore any changes to Medicare would fall under this provision as well.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California:

H.R. 2958.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, clause 3 of the Constitution

Article 1, Section 8, clause 1 of the Constitution

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 2959.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1.

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 2960.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. NORCROSS:

H.R. 2961.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 2962.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 3 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. POLIQUIN:

H.R. 2963.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes:'' as enumerated in Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mrs. RADEWAGEN:

H.R. 2964.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ROSS:

H.R. 2965.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. RUSH:

H.R. 2966.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: The Congress shall have Power . . . ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations . . . ''

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have Power . . . ''To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers . . . ''

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio:

H.R. 2967.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. SWALWELL of California:

H.R. 2968.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. TAKANO:

H.R. 2969.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ:

H.R. 2970.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

The Congress shall have Power to . . . provide for the . . . general Welfare of the United States; . . .

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 2971.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 15: Mr. KENNEDY.

H.R. 19: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 91: Mr. CLEAVER.
H.R. 93: Mr. LYNCH.
H.R. 149: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. EVANS, and Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 291: Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 299: Mr. DENT.
H.R. 303: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.
H.R. 313: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.
H.R. 350: Mrs. NOEM.
H.R. 351: Mr. JONES.
H.R. 361: Mr. ZELDIN.
H.R. 365: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa and Mr. LAMBORN.
H.R. 367: Mr. DEFAZIO and Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana.
H.R. 398: Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. TURNER, and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 435: Mr. CRIST, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.
H.R. 442: Mr. JONES.
H.R. 468: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida and Mr. SIRES.
H.R. 490: Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. COLE, and Mr. LONG.
H.R. 495: Mr. SMITH of Texas and Mr. SENSENBRENNER.
H.R. 535: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. TITUS, and Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 545: Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. POSEY, and Mr. HUIZENGA.
H.R. 632: Mr. POLIS.
H.R. 664: Ms. BONAMICI.
H.R. 671: Mr. ESPAILLAT.
H.R. 719: Mr. RATCLIFFE.
H.R. 721: Mr. VARGAS, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. DUNN.
H.R. 747: Mr. REED, Mr. WALZ, and Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 750: Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. ZELDIN, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 801: Mr. O'HALLERAN and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.
H.R. 807: Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. SCHNEIDER, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 820: Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. CLAY, and Mr. THOMPSON of California.
H.R. 828: Mr. DELANEY.
H.R. 830: Mr. CHABOT and Mr. POLIQUIN.
H.R. 846: Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. LYNCH, and Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H.R. 848: Mr. BRAT.
H.R. 849: Mr. TIBERI, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. VELA, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. MACARTHUR, and Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.
H.R. 860: Mr. CRAMER and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.
H.R. 866: Mr. RASKIN.
H.R. 873: Mrs. HARTZLER, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, and Ms. DELAURO.
H.R. 880: Mr. SENSENBRENNER and Mr. HILL.
H.R. 895: Mr. BIGGS.
H.R. 911: Ms. GABBARD and Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.R. 927: Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. BEATTY, and Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 959: Mr. FASO and Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.
H.R. 960: Mr. RASKIN.
H.R. 997: Mr. HARPER, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, and Mr. YOHO.
H.R. 1002: Mrs. COMSTOCK.
H.R. 1006: Mr. SCHIFF and Mr. SCHNEIDER.
H.R. 1017: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. CLAY, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. DELANEY, and Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 1057: Mrs. LOVE.
H.R. 1078: Mrs. LOVE and Ms. ROSEN.
H.R. 1090: Mr. SUOZZI.
H.R. 1092: Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 1094: Mr. FOSTER, Ms. LEE, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. RUSH, and Mr. CLAY.
H.R. 1114: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 1120: Mr. DONOVAN.
H.R. 1133: Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 1136: Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. GAETZ, and Mr. NUNES.
H.R. 1146: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. EVANS, and Ms. CLARKE of New York.
H.R. 1148: Mr. STEWART.
H.R. 1156: Mr. CORREA.
H.R. 1158: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1160: Ms. JAYAPAL.
H.R. 1163: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 1164: Mr. GOHMERT.
H.R. 1190: Mrs. BUSTOS.
H.R. 1212: Mr. ADERHOLT.
H.R. 1247: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska and Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 1267: Mr. FOSTER.
H.R. 1279: Mr. POLIS.
H.R. 1291: Mr. KIHUEN and Mr. NORCROSS.
H.R. 1298: Mr. AMODEI and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1316: Mr. BYRNE.
H.R. 1322: Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 1334: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama.
H.R. 1358: Mr. LARSEN of Washington and Mr. NORCROSS.
H.R. 1361: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mr. YODER, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. DEUTCH, and Mr. POLIQUIN.
H.R. 1392: Ms. ROSEN.
H.R. 1406: Mr. SCHWEIKERT and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.
H.R. 1437: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 1444: Mr. KILMER and Mr. FARENTHOLD.
H.R. 1456: Mr. DENHAM and Mr. ZELDIN.
H.R. 1457: Mr. SMITH of Texas.
H.R. 1472: Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. WELCH, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. VELA, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. KILMER.
H.R. 1474: Mr. NORCROSS.
H.R. 1487: Mr. PANETTA, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. HASTINGS, and Ms. CLARKE of New York.
H.R. 1528: Mr. COOK.
H.R. 1537: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. KING of Iowa, and Mr. GOSAR.
H.R. 1542: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
H.R. 1555: Mr. POLIS.
H.R. 1566: Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 1614: Mr. LARSEN of Washington.
H.R. 1626: Mr. EVANS, Mr. MOOLENAAR, and Mrs. NOEM.
H.R. 1639: Ms. JAYAPAL.
H.R. 1651: Mr. LOBIONDO and Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 1652: Mr. RASKIN.
H.R. 1661: Mr. PERLMUTTER.
H.R. 1666: Mr. SANFORD and Mr. AMASH.
H.R. 1669: Mr. COLE and Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 1676: Mr. GARAMENDI, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. KATKO, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, and Mr. MCNERNEY.
H.R. 1686: Mr. TIBERI.
H.R. 1722: Mr. AMODEI, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, and Mr. WOMACK.
H.R. 1739: Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 1741: Mr. OLSON.
H.R. 1802: Mr. CURBELO of Florida and Mr. ZELDIN.
H.R. 1815: Mr. SCHRADER.
H.R. 1833: Mr. RICHMOND and Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 1838: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. SENSENBRENNER.
H.R. 1861: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.
H.R. 1865: Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 1874: Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 1881: Mr. COLLINS of New York.
H.R. 1889: Mr. COHEN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, and Miss RICE of New York.
H.R. 1898: Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 1899: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 1904: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1911: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania and Ms. MENG.
H.R. 1928: Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.
H.R. 1953: Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 1960: Ms. CLARKE of New York.
H.R. 1997: Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mrs. LOWEY, and Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 2000: Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.R. 2001: Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.R. 2023: Mr. ABRAHAM.
H.R. 2073: Mr. SOTO.
H.R. 2077: Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. KATKO, and Mr. HARPER.
H.R. 2091: Mr. KATKO, Mr. MESSER, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 2092: Mr. KINZINGER, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. GOODLATTE, and Mr. HIGGINS of New York.
H.R. 2101: Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 2121: Mr. BARR, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
H.R. 2134: Mrs. WAGNER.
H.R. 2142: Mr. BUCHANAN.
H.R. 2149: Mrs. NOEM and Mr. WITTMAN.
H.R. 2151: Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. MOULTON, and Mr. THOMPSON of California.
H.R. 2158: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 2181: Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
H.R. 2197: Ms. MENG.
H.R. 2248: Ms. MCCOLLUM and Mr. GALLEGO.
H.R. 2272: Ms. ADAMS.
H.R. 2276: Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, and Mr. YODER.
H.R. 2286: Mr. BABIN.
H.R. 2307: Mrs. WALORSKI.
H.R. 2308: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 2315: Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. STEWART, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. POSEY, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, and Mr. GOWDY.
H.R. 2319: Mr. MEEKS.
H.R. 2327: Ms. BORDALLO and Mrs. RADEWAGEN.
H.R. 2340: Mr. O'HALLERAN.
H.R. 2351: Ms. PLASKETT.
H.R. 2358: Mr. KIHUEN and Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 2359: Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 2383: Mr. COMER and Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 2392: Mr. HIGGINS of New York and Ms. JUDY CHU of California.
H.R. 2437: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.
H.R. 2460: Mr. ISSA.
H.R. 2478: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. BACON, Mr. YODER, and Mr. WESTERMAN.
H.R. 2484: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
H.R. 2499: Ms. WILSON of Florida and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 2505: Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 2514: Mr. EVANS.
H.R. 2515: Mr. DEUTCH, Mrs. WALORSKI, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 2526: Mr. LAWSON of Florida and Mr. HASTINGS.
H.R. 2539: Mrs. LOWEY and Mr. LYNCH.
H.R. 2545: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. HECK, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 2578: Mr. RYAN of Ohio and Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 2584: Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. COLE, Mr. UPTON, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. DEUTCH, and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 2589: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 2594: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.
H.R. 2620: Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. GARRETT, and Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
H.R. 2628: Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 2657: Mr. POLIQUIN.
H.R. 2659: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and Mr. CICILLINE.

H.R. 2661: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 2663: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. MEEHAN, and Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 2670: Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 2676: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 2677: Mr. KHANNA.

H.R. 2678: Mr. COSTA.

H.R. 2688: Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 2715: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. RASKIN, and Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H.R. 2723: Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. BYRNE, and Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 2740: Mr. BEYER, Ms. MENG, Mr. COHEN, Mr. TAKANO, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. NADLER, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H.R. 2742: Ms. BASS, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mrs. LAWRENCE, and Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 2747: Mr. MEADOWS.

H.R. 2756: Mr. POCAN, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.

H.R. 2763: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico.

H.R. 2771: Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 2777: Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 2790: Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. HIMES, Mr. SOTO, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. PETERS, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mr. DEFAZIO.

H.R. 2797: Mr. O'HALLERAN and Mr. HARPER.

H.R. 2822: Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 2826: Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 2834: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas and Mr. KILMER.

H.R. 2840: Mr. DEFAZIO.

H.R. 2842: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 2845: Ms. BARRAGÁN.

H.R. 2851: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 2854: Mr. LEVIN, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 2858: Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 2870: Mr. TROTT.

H.R. 2877: Mr. EVANS.

H.R. 2878: Mr. DOGGETT.

H.R. 2881: Mr. LONG.

H.R. 2886: Ms. NORTON, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mr. SIRES.

H.R. 2908: Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. RUSH, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. CARBAJAL, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Ms. HANABUSA.

H.R. 2909: Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. YOHO, Mr. POSEY, Mr. BRAT, Mr. PALMER, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. BABIN, and Mr. DESJARLAIS.

H.R. 2911: Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. CUELLAR, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. SIRES, and Mr. CORREA.

H.R. 2918: Mr. MESSER and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.

H.R. 2924: Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 2930: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.J. Res. 33: Ms. JAYAPAL.

H.J. Res. 51: Mr. TIBERI, Mr. VELA, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.

H. Con. Res. 28: Mr. DENT.

H. Con. Res. 37: Mr. JONES.

H. Con. Res. 45: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H. Con. Res. 57: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.

H. Con. Res. 59: Mr. MCCLINTOCK.

H. Con. Res. 63: Ms. PLASKETT and Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H. Res. 15: Mr. BERA, Mrs. DEMINGS, and Mr. MARSHALL.

H. Res. 30: Mr. KATKO.

H. Res. 129: Mr. FOSTER and Mr. TURNER.

H. Res. 185: Mr. KINZINGER, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. DONOVAN, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. SIRES, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. ZELDIN, and Mr. YOHO.

H. Res. 188: Mr. POLIS.

H. Res. 218: Mr. BURGESS.

H. Res. 220: Ms. MENG, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, and Mr. DEUTCH.

H. Res. 252: Mr. PALLONE, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. CLAY, and Mr. HULTGREN.

H. Res. 257: Ms. MOORE.

H. Res. 276: Ms. MENG, Mr. FOSTER, and Ms. GRANGER.

H. Res. 313: Mr. LAWSON of Florida.

H. Res. 317: Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. RASKIN.

H. Res. 318: Mrs. NOEM.

H. Res. 319: Mr. KING of Iowa.

H. Res. 332: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H. Res. 351: Mr. ELLISON.

H. Res. 359: Ms. MENG, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. HASTINGS, and Mr. FOSTER.

H. Res. 390: Mr. RUIZ, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. NEAL, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. SIRES, Mrs. BEATTY, and Mr. JEFFRIES.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MR. BRADY OF TEXAS

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.R. 2742, the Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

OFFERED BY MR. BRADY OF TEXAS

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.R. 2834, the Partnership Grants to Strengthen Families Affected by Parental Substance Abuse Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

OFFERED BY MR. BRADY OF TEXAS

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

OFFERED BY MR. BRADY OF TEXAS

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.R. 2857, the Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

OFFERED BY MR. BRADY OF TEXAS

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.R. 2866, the Reducing Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

The amendment to be offered by Representative LAMALFA, or a designee, to H.R. 1654 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2017 No. 105

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Gracious Lord, who has given us life, we praise You for Your faithful reliability.

Bless our lawmakers today in the work they will do. May they seek in all their labors to please and glorify You as You fill them with Your grace. May they not become weary in doing what is right, knowing that in due season they will reap if they faint not.

Lord, let Your peace flood their hearts and help them to realize that it is by Your permission that they will breathe their next breath. May they permit life's problems to make them more dependent on Your guidance and strength.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we have been debating ObamaCare's failures and what to do about them for so many years now. We have heard so many distress stories from constituents who have been hurt. Thankfully, the Senate will soon have the chance to turn the page on this failed law.

As I said yesterday, the entire Senate Republican conference has been active and engaged on legislation to move beyond the failures of ObamaCare for quite some time. We have had many productive discussions on the way forward. We are united in our belief that the American people deserve better than ObamaCare's unsustainable status quo.

While it is disappointing that our Democratic colleagues decided early on that they didn't want to work seriously with us on finding solutions, Senate Republicans remain focused on the following: stabilizing insurance markets, which are collapsing under ObamaCare; improving the affordability of health insurance, which is spiking under ObamaCare; freeing Americans from ObamaCare's mandates, which force them to buy insurance they don't want; strengthening Medicaid for those who need it the most; and preserving access to care for patients with preexisting conditions.

Insurance markets are collapsing under ObamaCare. We want to stabilize them. ObamaCare's champions said that the law would bring more healthcare choices, but for far too many, just the opposite has occurred. In the years since ObamaCare's passage, we have read story after story about co-ops collapsing, insurers fleeing, families losing the plans they liked, and trusted doctors and hospitals slipping out of reach.

Today ObamaCare is nearing full collapse. Americans in nearly one of every two counties could find themselves left with just one option under ObamaCare next year—which of course really isn't a choice at all—or even worse, find themselves without any option, period. This long-term ObamaCare trend is not sustainable. We have to act, and we are.

Healthcare costs are spiking under ObamaCare. We want to improve affordability. ObamaCare's champions said that the law would make healthcare more affordable, but for too many just the opposite has occurred.

In the years since ObamaCare's passage, we have received so many calls and letters from families who have been hit with soaring out-of-pocket costs and skyrocketing premiums. In fact, a recent Health and Human Services report showed that premiums in the individual market rose by an average of 105 percent since the law was fully implemented in 2013.

Today the situation continues to spiral out of control. Americans in States across the country could find themselves facing more double-digit premium increases next year—as high as 30 percent, we learned just yesterday, in Washington State or 32 percent in North Carolina or 40 percent in Maine.

Another recent report found that nearly 2 million Americans who selected an ObamaCare plan ended up canceling their coverage after just a few weeks, and the most common reason they cited for doing so was that it was too expensive. This long-term ObamaCare trend is not sustainable. We have to act, and we are.

Americans are being forced to buy insurance they don't want under ObamaCare. We want to free them from that mandate. When ObamaCare's champions pushed their health law on the American people, they enacted onerous mandates that forced too many families into plans they didn't like or couldn't afford. In the years since ObamaCare's passage, we heard from Americans who decided it was simply more affordable for them to take their chance and pay the fine and go without insurance altogether.

Today ObamaCare's collapse is making the situation even more unfair. Insurance markets are collapsing, leaving Americans with fewer options. Health costs are spiking, making many of the remaining options even more expensive. That means Americans could

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

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be left trapped, forced by law to purchase ObamaCare insurance but left without the means to do so. This long-term ObamaCare trend is not sustainable. We have to act, and we are.

These are just a few of the major areas that Senate Republicans are focused on as we continue working on legislative solutions to move away from ObamaCare. In doing so, we will also work toward strengthening Medicaid and preserving access to care for patients with preexisting conditions—two areas of concern for many across the Nation.

I regret that Democrats announced early on that they did not want to be part of a serious bipartisan process to move past the failures of this law. Their ObamaCare law is collapsing all around us. It is hurting Americans. It will continue to hurt even more if we allow the unsustainable status quo to continue. So we have a responsibility to act, and Senate Republicans are working together, guided by the principles I mentioned, and acting on behalf of Americans, who deserve better than the status quo, better than continuing the pain of ObamaCare.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Mandelker nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we continue to make progress on legislation to clean up the mess left by the meltdown of ObamaCare, at least insofar as it affects the lives of millions of people who buy their insurance on the individual markets. These are individuals and small businesses that don't have the benefit of large employer healthcare plans, and they have been devastated by ObamaCare.

This is a rescue mission. ObamaCare is collapsing for millions of people, and we have to act in the interest of countless families and small businesses that are suffering tremendous harm.

I have told the stories myself; others have likewise told the stories. We have seen those reported in the media. For many people, healthcare costs, their insurance premiums are skyrocketing. We also know that because of the distortion in the insurance markets, many insurance companies are simply pulling out of counties and States around the country, so people have no choices when it comes to purchasing their healthcare on the exchanges. Of course, many people continue to lose access to their doctors.

We need to contrast this with what was promised when ObamaCare was passed. I know it sounds repetitive, but I am afraid that if we lose sight of what the promises were with ObamaCare, we can't actually calculate the tremendous harm and the deception that was involved in actually delivering on that promise.

President Obama said that if you liked your policy, you could keep it—not true. He said if you liked your doctor, you could keep your doctor—also not true. He also said that a family of four could see an average decrease in premiums of $2,500 a year—also not true.

What is the response of our Democratic friends? We saw last night that they took to the Senate floor, and they gave impassioned speeches.

First of all, they criticized the Republicans for coming forward to try to rescue the people who were being hurt by the failures of ObamaCare. They criticized us for that. Then they said that it was a secret bill after they had rejected every entreaty—every request—for them to work with us on a bipartisan basis to rescue the people who are being hurt by the failures of ObamaCare. They rejected that.

What did they do? They came to the Senate floor. They said that they hate the bill that they have not seen yet. Then they said: Oh, it is secret. So I guess it should be one or the other. Either they hate it because they know what is in it or it is secret. It cannot be both.

The fact is that we are working hard to meet our own internal deadline because we want to make sure that the people who will be hurt in 2018, when the insurance companies raise their premiums by digits—and they are in the process of getting those approved. It will occur in the July-August timeframe when insurance companies will have to calculate what the premium is that they will have to charge. Then they will have to go to the State regulators and get approval for that premium increase. What we are being told is that the 105-percent increase in premiums on the exchanges since 2013—that is right, a 105-percent increase—is going to go up 20 percent or more next year unless we come to the rescue of those who are being harmed by ObamaCare.

We would say to our Democratic colleagues: Please do not wear yourselves out by doing something that is going to accomplish nothing. Channel all of that energy and that passion into trying to do something that will actually help the people who are being hurt today by the failures of ObamaCare.

They went even further. They said, well, they may decide just to obstruct the Senate's business on other matters that are not healthcare related until they can see the bill, which they will get to see soon.

As soon as we see the final product, we will get it scored by the Congressional Budget Office. Then we will have, literally, a vote-arama, where there will be an opportunity to debate in a fulsome and comprehensive sort of way and an opportunity to offer dozens—if not hundreds—of amendments to the bill, and we will vote. We will vote, as that is what we do.

There is nothing happening in secret here. In the fullness of time, we will all see the product we have been working on. As a result of their refusal to work with us, we have been working on it the best we can to try to accomplish something better than the failed status quo of ObamaCare.

We are told that they may obstruct the Senate's other business, including committee work. That is unrelated to the healthcare debate but, I guess, is just their lashing out in trying to find some way that they can make life a little more difficult here in the Senate with regard to our accomplishing other important work as well.

I happen to serve on the Senate Intelligence Committee. One of the things that we are doing is a comprehensive investigation of Russia's active measures undertaken during the last election. We have a committee meeting this afternoon.

Are Democrats really going to obstruct the Senate Intelligence Committee's work in conducting and completing its investigation into Russian activities in the 2016 election? Are they really going to do that? It strikes me as nuts.

On Thursday, for example, we also have a Judiciary Committee meeting that is scheduled to consider a critically important bill that I introduced with my colleague from Minnesota, Senator KLOBUCHAR, to help fight human trafficking.

Are Democrats going to obstruct our ability to conduct our business and block our consideration of bills involving human trafficking and providing relief for the victims?

This bill reauthorizes key programs that support survivors, and it provides

additional resources to Federal, State, and local law enforcement officials who are on the frontlines of fighting this heinous crime.

Will the Democratic leader from New York jeopardize the committee's ability to actually consider and pass this law? Does he plan to block a Member of his own political party from advancing her bill to fight human trafficking as well?

This strikes me as wrong for a number of reasons, and I think it would actually be appalling if our Democratic colleagues, out of their frustration—frankly, borne out of their failure to do their job and work with us to find a solution to the meltdown of ObamaCare—lashed out in a way that affected victims of human trafficking and affected the Senate's ability to conduct its investigation into the Russian activities involved in our election.

Now is not the time to grandstand and make damaging, symbolic gestures like this because, while our Democratic colleagues talked a lot last night, we did not hear anything from them about the current realities of ObamaCare and how it has failed the American people. They seem to be whistling by the graveyard. We did not hear anything about rising costs or the lack of choices.

I talked to one of my Democratic colleagues this morning. He told me that his own son was looking at $7,500 premiums a year and at a $5,000 deductible. This friend, a Democrat—and I will not reveal his name because I do not think it would be appropriate to do so—told me that his own son had to spend $12,500 out of pocket before his insurance actually kicked in. That is a disaster, not just for his son but for millions of people who are negatively affected by ObamaCare. Yet our friends across the aisle want to flail about and threaten to block trafficking legislation or an investigation into the Russian involvement in the election.

The only thing they have not done is offer a constructive alternative. That is the only thing they have not done. They have tried about everything else. You know why, of course. It is that we know what the alternative is.

Basically, they did ObamaCare all by themselves. I remember. I was here on the Senate floor, in 2010, on Christmas Eve. I think it was at about 7:30 in the morning when we had the vote out of the Senate that passed ObamaCare. It was a pure party-line vote. So the Democrats have had it all to themselves—the ability to design a healthcare system that they thought America should have. It has failed time and again.

Do you know what their current proposal is right now? It is a single-payer option that puts our country even more in debt and that we know does not work.

The reason we know it does not work is that it will, no doubt, emulate things like the British National Health Service, which has resulted in two-tiered healthcare—healthcare for people who cannot otherwise afford to pay out of their pockets to get better healthcare, with all of the problems of government-run healthcare added to it, but far-left elements of the Democratic Party want a plan that goes even further than ObamaCare. That, I believe, could ultimately be their goal—one that would increase government spending on healthcare by $518.9 billion just this year, ballooning to $6.6 trillion between 2017 and 2026, according to the Urban Institute.

Take a look at the State of California, where a similar proposal—a single-payer system—was pushed at the State level there to enact a single-payer system that would add $400 billion each year to the California State budget. I think that is roughly double the amount of the whole budget for the State of California—$400 billion each year.

It strikes me that at least one conclusion you might draw from this is that our Democratic friends' solution, rather than trying to work with us in a bipartisan way to save people who are being hurt from the failures of ObamaCare, is to say: Let's throw more money at it. That is not going to work. What it will do is add to our national debt without solving the healthcare problem, and it will further burden future generations who will have to pay that money back at some point.

We already have about $20 trillion in national debt. These young people up here who are serving as pages are going to have to deal with that, I guess, unless we have the courage to do it ourselves. It strikes me as profoundly immoral for us to spend the money today and say: Well, our kids and grandkids are going to have to pay it back later. That is immoral.

If we thought ObamaCare crushed any semblance of competition in the healthcare marketplace, the single-payer plan from our friend Senator BERNIE SANDERS, from Vermont, who is the chief spokesman for the Democrats in the Senate on what an alternative might look like, removes competition completely because it is a government takeover. It takes away even more authority from State and local governments, and it takes away choices from individuals. Forget ''if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. If you like your plan, you can keep your plan.'' Forget all of that because it is the opposite of what American families have repeatedly asked for.

This is what the extreme factions in the Democratic Party want. They want to expand government. They want an even larger takeover of healthcare, and they want to simply throw more money at it—as if we are not spending enough money already. Throwing more money at the problem certainly will not fix it. I suggest that it will only make things worse.

We need to be realistic about what it will take to rework our healthcare system and put patients first. I am under no illusion as to what Republicans are going to be able to come up with on our own, given the constraints of the fact that the Democrats will not work with us at all and appear not to be in the business of lifting a finger to help the millions of people who are being hurt. I am not under any illusion that what we are going to be able to come up with—and it is an interim step—is going to be perfect, as no legislation ever is, but I think we are obligated to do our best. The fact that our Democratic friends will not help at all makes it a lot harder, but I do not think we can say: It is too hard. We cannot do it. We give up.

We are committed on this side of the aisle and invite our colleagues on that side of the aisle to work with us to fix the problems that are caused by ObamaCare and to implement real healthcare reforms that will work.

First of all, we need to stabilize the market—I mentioned this earlier—and rescue millions of folks who are losing all of their access to coverage because insurance companies are simply quitting because they are bleeding money. They cannot charge a high enough premium that somebody will actually pay, so they leave the market. In Texas, alone, there are dozens of counties that have only one insurance marketplace option. If we do nothing, I fear there will be no choices. When there is only one choice, the economic backlash is pretty simple. There is no competition to drive down costs and improve the quality of coverage.

I think this is, really, in some ways, a test of our convictions. If you really do believe that competition in the marketplace improves quality and cost for the consumer, as I do, then going to a single-payer system or even trying to repair ObamaCare is the opposite of what we should do. We need to return the market to a competitive one so that families can have the ability to make choices about their healthcare, what suits their needs, not what government is going to force you to buy, and if you do not buy the government-approved plan, it is going to punish you by fining you. That is what the status quo is like under ObamaCare.

ObamaCare is so bad that, currently, we have almost 30 million people who are still uninsured. About 6.5 million of them simply pay the penalty—I think it is $695 a year now—instead of buying the government-approved healthcare plan. They figure that paying the penalty is better than buying the insurance for them. Then there are others—millions more—who simply opt out because of hardship. If the goal of ObamaCare were universal coverage, it has failed that goal as well. So we need to stabilize the market.

Secondly, we need to address ObamaCare's skyrocketing premium increases. We all know that if ObamaCare stays in place, premiums will stand only to rise for consumers. That is something I think our friends across the aisle are missing as well.

Doing nothing is not an option because people are going to be even more priced out of the marketplace, assuming they can find an insurance company to sell them healthcare.

In Texas, a Houston-area insurer has asked for a 16-percent annual rate hike for its 2018 ObamaCare coverage—a 16-percent increase over this year they want for next year. That is what doing nothing will do. It warns it might even need a greater increase just to cover its costs.

Private businesses can't actually operate in the red like the Federal Government does. Private businesses can't just print more money or run up $20 trillion in debt. So when they can't make money, they simply have to raise premiums or they have to quit the market.

The third thing we need to do is this. Remember, the first thing I said is stabilize the market. The second is attack premiums to bring them down, and the third thing we need to do is make sure we continue to protect American citizens from preexisting conditions. This is something I think everybody believes that needs to happen, without regard to political or ideological affiliation. No one should be denied basic healthcare because they have a preexisting condition, and we want to preserve those protections. That is the third goal.

The fourth goal is to make Medicaid, which is the medical safety net for millions of people, sustainable into the future. Right now we know it is not sustainable, like our other entitlement programs. The way we want to do that is by giving States more flexibility. We want to make sure that those who rely on the program don't have the rug pulled out from under them, and we want to make sure that it continues to grow year after year, but at a sustainable rate.

Right now, there is no cap, no rate of increase provided. So it is an unlimited entitlement. One of the suggestions from the House bill is to grow it each year at the rate of the consumer price index for medical costs; that is, medical inflation plus 1 percent. In other words, more money would be spent next year than this year. Even more money than next year will be spent the following year and so on, but it will be done at a sustainable rate.

Finally, we want to free the American people from the onerous ObamaCare mandates that require them to purchase insurance they don't want and can't afford. It shouldn't be a surprise to anybody that if you take the penalty away and don't force the American people to buy insurance they don't want, many of them—the younger, healthy ones, in particular—will decide not to buy it. That is called freedom of choice. That is not what ObamaCare did. ObamaCare forced people to buy something they didn't want and penalized them if they didn't. So many people will choose not to purchase it and decide to handle their healthcare in other ways—perhaps, at the emergency room, where under Federal law everybody who comes in as a medical emergency is entitled to be treated. It is not what I would tell my daughters. It is not what I would recommend for anybody, but if somebody wants to make that choice, it is certainly their right.

So I would just conclude by observing that it is shameful that Members on the other side of the aisle sit on their hands and do nothing to fix a law that continues to hurt American families. We know that regardless of who won the last election—whether it was Hillary Clinton or whether it was Donald Trump—we would have to take steps to address this failed law. So I would implore our Democratic friends to listen to their own stories, which some have recounted to me in confidence. So I won't repeat their names here, but they know this is a problem. They have heard from their constituents just like we have. So we would implore them to work with us to try to help us help our constituents. That is what I thought we were here for.

Americans are ready for healthcare reform that actually works, and it is our responsibility to do our very best to provide that to them, and that is what we intend to do.

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. 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I listened to the majority leader this morning saying that ObamaCare was collapsing and Republicans are on a rescue mission. Honestly, the gall it must take to say, after Republicans and President Trump have spent all year sabotaging the marketplace, that ObamaCare is collapsing. They have threatened to stop critical cost-sharing payments that help keep deductibles and premiums down, hurting millions of people and sowing uncertainty in the market.

There is an easy way to fix it. Instead of crying crocodile tears, Republicans should guarantee that the cost-sharing payments will be made. That is not just Democrats saying it. That is the insurers. Listen to the insurers. What do they want? They want to keep premiums down and prevent them from leaving the exchanges. They want cost-sharing, which our Republican colleagues refuse to do, and, then, in a cynical ploy, they try to blame ObamaCare.

Listen to AHIP, the Nation's largest trade group of insurers. It is nonpartisan. It is a business group. Listen to what they said about the uncertainty about cost-sharing payments. They said it was ''the single most destabilizing factor in the individual market.'' A series of insurance companies, including Blue Cross Blue Shield and Anthem, have said explicitly that uncertainty caused by President Trump and Republicans about cost-sharing is causing them to pull out of certain markets.

So this idea, this cynical ploy—after sabotaging the bill and then blaming someone else other than themselves—is pitiful.

The House bill, of course, was so bad—TrumpCare was so bad—that our Republican friends are trying to switch the blame to ObamaCare. It is not true, and it will not work.

Now, last night, Democrats held the floor well into the night to discuss the Republican plan to pass a healthcare bill in just 2 weeks that no one in America has seen, without holding a single committee hearing or a robust debate on the floor. They want to bring the bill to the floor and rush it in the dark of night for a simple reason: They are ashamed of their bill. They don't want anybody to see it, least of all the public.

Last evening, I asked the majority leader if the minority would have more than 10 hours to debate and amend the final bill. He replied that ''there will be ample opportunity to debate and amend the bill.'' So I asked again: Will we get more than 10 hours? Ten hours is the maximum the rules allow us under reconciliation. He could only reply that ''There will be ample time.''

I have a feeling the majority leader and I disagree on the definition of ''ample,'' because 10 hours of debate time—a total of 10 hours of debate time on an issue this important—is a sham. It is a farce. We would have to read the bill, prepare amendments, and consider its consequences, all in 10 hours.

This is a bill that affects one-sixth of our economy, millions of Americans. For them, it is life and death, and we are supposed to rush it through.

The Affordable Care Act, for the sake of comparison, was debated for 25 consecutive days of Senate session and 169 cumulative hours of debate time, and that was after a robust hearing and committee process. Yesterday, the majority leader basically confirmed that we Democrats might only have 10 hours total—no committee hearings, no committee markups, no airing the bill—10 hours of debate. Can my colleagues believe it? This is supposed to be a democracy where we debate the greatest issues of our time.

I asked another question of the majority leader, and I ask him now and I hope he will answer: Will our 10 hours of debate time be on the House bill or will it be on the new Senate bill that he is crafting behind closed doors? Will he let us debate the full 10 hours on the new Senate bill—hardly enough—or is he even being more cynical and doing

the 10 hours of debate on the existing House bill and then putting a substitute in—the Senate bill they have written behind closed doors—and have no debate on that? With everything terrible that is happening, that could make it even worse. So I am asking the majority leader to publicly state what his plan is in that regard.

I have never heard of a more radical or a more reckless process in my entire career in politics—10 hours of total debate on a bill that would affect one-sixth of the American economy and millions of Americans. If the Senate bill, like the House bill, results in 23 million fewer Americans with insurance—23 million Americans losing their insurance—each hour of debate time would represent 2.3 million Americans losing their insurance. Each minute of debate time would represent 40,000 Americans losing their insurance. One minute, and 40,000 people's lives are changed; 40,000 people don't have the coverage they need.

It boggles the mind that the Republican leader is moving forward this way without letting anyone but Members of the Republican Senate caucus see the bill, and even many of them have said they haven't seen it. There is only one possible reason why my friends on the other side are going along with this process—only one reason: They are ashamed of the bill they are writing.

If they were proud of the bill, they would announce it. They would have brass bands going down Main Street America, saying: Look at our great bill. They can't even whisper what it is about, they are so, so ashamed of it. That is why they are hiding it. They must be ashamed that, just like the House bill, the Senate TrumpCare bill will put healthcare out of the reach of millions of Americans just to put another tax break into the pockets of the very wealthy.

President Trump likes to end many of his tweets with one word, almost like punctuation: ''Sad,'' ''unfair,'' ''wrong.'' It turns out the President has one word to sum up his healthcare plan as well: ''Mean.''

Last week, at a White House lunch with Republican Senators, the President reportedly told them he thought the House-passed healthcare bill was mean. That is what Donald Trump said on June 13, 2017.

For once, on the topic of healthcare, I find myself agreeing with the President. His healthcare bill is mean. Cutting Medicaid to the bone is mean. Cutting treatment for opioid abuse is mean. Cutting support for families with someone in a nursing home is mean. Allowing insurers to once again discriminate against Americans with preexisting conditions is mean. Charging older Americans five times or more for their health insurance is mean.

Passing a law which would cause millions of Americans to lose their health insurance in order to give a tax break to the wealthiest among us is pretty much the textbook definition of a mean bill—a mean bill—and even the President thinks so, but just like the Republicans in the Senate, President Trump doesn't want the American people to know what he really thinks of their healthcare plan. That is why he said it was mean behind closed doors at the White House, while in public a few weeks earlier he said it is a ''great plan,'' ''very, very incredibly well-crafted.'' Those are his words, the same bill—the same bill—out to the public: Great bill, great plan; while behind closed doors, what it really is: mean.

All the plaudits the President gave the House bill turned out to be flimsy salesmanship. Speaking candidly to fellow Republicans, the President didn't say: Take up and pass the House bill. He didn't say it was a great plan or that it was very, very incredibly well-crafted. He said it was mean. My Republican friends ought to take this to heart. Even President Trump thinks what Republicans are doing on healthcare is a cruelty to the American people.

As we on this side of the aisle have said before, there is a better way. Republicans shouldn't feel like this mean bill cooked up in secret is their only option. I have invited my Republican friends to meet in the Old Senate Chamber to discuss a bipartisan way forward on healthcare. The Republican leader seems to have foreclosed that option, but the invitation remains and the sentiment remains.

Democrats are willing to work with our Republican friends on improving our healthcare system. We have significant disagreements, sure, but Republicans haven't even tried to sit down with us to hash them out. We would like to try, but if Republicans continue down this path, ignoring the principles of transparency and the open debate that defined this legislative body, we Democrats will continue to do everything we can to shine light on what our Republican friends are doing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes.

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

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise in support of Ms. Sigal Mandelker, President Trump's nominee to be Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Crimes.

Five weeks ago, at Ms. Mandelker's hearing, members of the Banking Committee were moved by her heartfelt story of her parents' escape from the Holocaust. As her father proudly sat behind her, she explained to the committee how, as Holocaust survivors who narrowly avoided death, her parents raised her to never take for granted our safety, security, or freedom.

It was this that motivated Ms. Mandelker to public service, where she had an impressive career in law enforcement and national security at the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security before joining the private sector.

Like many Americans, she was compelled to action following 9/11 and joined to serve in Justice's counterterrorism and national security mission. Throughout the nomination process, it was obvious Ms. Mandelker would be a strong leader to defend our Nation against terrorism and illicit finance threats. She received bipartisan support from the Banking Committee in a 16-to-7 vote advancing her nomination.

Also, with bipartisan support, just last week the Senate voted on the Iran sanctions bill and our Russia sanctions amendment. Part of Ms. Mandelker's job as Under Secretary would be directly overseeing sanctions policy on Iran, Russia, North Korea, Syria, and some 25 other programs.

In fact, when asked what her top priorities would be in assuming office, she noted that, first and foremost, she will focus on the areas posing the greatest threats—those being North Korea, Iran, ISIS, Syria, and Russia. She also affirmed that she would work closely with the Banking Committee and Congress in carrying out her duties.

I don't need to stress the importance of confirming Ms. Mandelker's nomination so Treasury can carry out this important mission, especially given that the Senate vote on our sanctions package last week was so strong. The two leaders and many Senators of both parties were able to work together to pass this important, comprehensive sanctions legislation, as they should, to ensure Senate confirmation of this nomination.

Given Ms. Mandelker's strong qualifications, dedication to service and mission, and bipartisan support from this committee of jurisdiction, I urge my colleagues to support her nomination.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the Long nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Brock Long, of North Carolina, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Long nomination?

Mr. CRAPO. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

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

The result was announced—yeas 95, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 148 Ex.]

YEAS—95

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

NAYS—4

Booker	Schatz
Gillibrand	Warren

NOT VOTING—1

Graham

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

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 assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes.

Mitch McConnell, Roger F. Wicker, John Thune, Mike Rounds, Tim Scott, John Hoeven, Pat Roberts, Orrin G. Hatch, Tom Cotton, Thom Tillis, Michael B. Enzi, John Boozman, James M. Inhofe, John Cornyn, James Lankford, Cory Gardner, 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 nomination of Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 94, nays 5, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 149 Ex.]

YEAS—94

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

NAYS—5

Booker	Harris	Warren
Gillibrand	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—1

Graham

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 94, the nays are 5.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Arkansas.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly conference meetings and the time during the recess count postcloture.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Arkansas.

EARLY RELEASE

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, last year, a woman named Carol Denise Richardson was released from Federal prison after President Obama granted her clemency. She had been serving a life sentence for possessing and intending to distribute 50 or more grams of cocaine, on top of having an already lengthy criminal record. She had not done anything specifically violent, so, theoretically, we should have been able to release her early and see good results, at least according to the advocates of criminal leniency.

Unfortunately, nothing good has come from this decision. Now, less than a year later, Carol Richardson is going back to prison. As part of her release, she was put on a 10-year probation, which meant she had to check in regularly with her probation officers, but she did not. She did not tell them she had left her job. She did not tell them she had moved. She did not even tell them she had been arrested.

Her latest offense, I should say, falls somewhere short of heinous. She was arrested in Pasadena, TX, for stealing $60 worth of laundry detergent so she could buy drugs.

From everything I have read in the news, it seems clear that Carol Richardson is not a serious, violent menace to society, but it is also clear she was not prepared to reenter society. She still had not kicked her drug habit. She still could not keep and hold a steady job. She still could not meet the most basic requirements of citizenship and basic adulthood.

But the real question is, Why would she be ready? Why would we expect that of her? She never went through the rehab that could have given her a second chance at life. Instead we just threw her in the deep end and watched her sink. That is why I think this story is worth mentioning, because I believe we should give pause to every advocate of criminal leniency.

They like to argue that taking people out of prison both heals communities and saves money. But who was better off once Carol Richardson was released? Not her community; she committed a crime within months. Not the taxpayers; they are still paying for prison costs. And here is the thing: Neither was she. She is back in prison yet again.

But, sometimes, the consequences are worse than this sad story. They are horrifying. Last year, a man named Wendell Callahan brutally killed his ex-girlfriend and her two young daughters. A frantic 911 call from the scene said that the two girls' throats had been slit.

These murders were an atrocity, and they were completely avoidable. Wendell Callahan walked out of Federal prison in August of 2014 after his sentence had been reduced in accordance with the provisions of sentencing guidelines made by the Sentencing Commission. Callahan's original sentence should have kept him in jail until 2018. If he had been in jail instead of on the streets, a young family would be alive today.

What the Richardson case, on one hand, and the Callahan case, on the other hand, show us are two things: First, if we are going to reform the criminal justice system, we shouldn't focus on merely reducing sentences. That doesn't do all that much to help our society. Instead, we should focus on rehabilitating people while they are in prison, whatever the length of their sentence. They need serious help if they can ever hope to redeem themselves and, once they are out of jail, stay out for good. And we should give them that help, not only because it is

good for them—though it is—but because it is good for us as a society. This is why I support real reform that will make our prisons safer for inmates and correction officers alike and take real steps to help inmates leave their lives of crime behind once and for all.

The second lesson is this: We need to know far more than we do now about how many people we release early from prison go back to a life of crime. What types of crimes do they commit? How many murders? How many robberies? How many drug arrests? Those numbers can be small or they can be large, but we need to know them to understand the full scope of our problem. And having that information will help the President decide each case as he considers when and how to use his pardon power.

But, today, the Federal Government doesn't even compile these data.

That is why I, along with Senators HATCH, Sessions, and PERDUE, introduced a bill last year to require that the government collect and report on these numbers. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass into law. So I want to announce today that I intend to reintroduce the bill with a renewed sense of urgency. This is just one story, after all. We don't know how many people granted clemency are returning to crime. But that is all the more reason to start collecting more data. We need to thoroughly evaluate cold, hard evidence before we make any sweeping changes to our criminal laws.

Carol Richardson's story should warn us of the perils of letting ideology get the better of common sense. We owe it to our neighbors to keep their families safe, and we owe it to the Carol Richardsons of the world to give them a real and honest chance at life once they complete their sentence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, on May 4 of this year, there was a party at the White House, a celebration—a celebration that the House had passed TrumpCare. Indeed, the President wanted to invite people over and say what a great job they had done and what a great bill they had passed. He called it a ''great plan.'' He said the House plan was ''very, very incredibly well-crafted.''

That was on May 4—a party at the White House, a celebration—but what a difference a month can make. A week ago, on Tuesday, June 13, the President had another gathering, and at this gathering he said that the bill from the House was ''mean,'' and he went on to use a very derogatory phrase to describe it.

So what happened between May 4 and June 13? Did the bill change in some way? Absolutely not. It had already been passed out of the House. Apparently what happened is that someone explained to the President what was in it, and he said: That is terrible. We can't do that. It is a mean bill. And he used other vivid language to say just how bad it was.

What feature of the TrumpCare bill did the President get briefed on that made him say that it was mean? It certainly is a mean-spirited bill. It certainly is a hard-hearted bill. It certainly is destructive to the quality of life of millions and millions of Americans. So which aspect of the bill was he referring to?

I asked that question of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tom Price, when he came to the Senate for a hearing last week. I asked the Secretary if he shared the President's opinion that the TrumpCare bill was a mean bill. He didn't have an answer for that. He wouldn't say whether, as a leader in the administration on healthcare, he shared the President's opinion.

I asked whether he thought the President thought it was a mean-spirited bill because it ripped healthcare from 23 million Americans. The Secretary of healthcare didn't answer.

I asked whether it was mean because it eliminated essential health benefits like emergency care and rehabilitation services and mental health and addiction treatment and maternity coverage for women having a child. The Secretary again refused to answer.

And he proceeded to say things like ''Well, I wasn't in the meeting,'' and that he hadn't talked to the President about why the President didn't like the bill. One would think that the Secretary of Health and Human Services, upon hearing that the President thought that the bill he had advocated for was terrible, would actually go to him and say: What is it you thought was so terrible? That might inform the conversations here in the Senate. But he said that he hadn't talked to the President about it. The Secretary of Health and Human Services didn't want to know why the President disliked this bill.

I asked if the President thought that this was a mean bill because it has vast premium increases for older Americans. An individual in their mid-sixties, prior to the age for Medicare, a 64-year-old earning $26,500—how much would they pay under current law and how much would they pay under TrumpCare? Under current law, the answer is about $140 a month. And under TrumpCare from the House, the answer is $1,200 per month—an eightfold increase. How can anyone earning a little over $2,000 a month spend $1,200 on health insurance? It is an impossible situation.

So, of course, those Americans in that situation would not be able to buy health insurance, would not be able to access healthcare. Is that why the President thought it was mean? Did the President get briefed on the damage it would do to our older Americans? Or was the President concerned about the impact on our older Americans who need to have care in a nursing home? Is the President finally aware that Medicaid pays for more than 6 out of 10 individuals who are in a nursing home because they need a level of care that can't be provided in the home?

I went and visited a nursing home over the weekend in urban Oregon and then visited one in rural Oregon, in Klamath County. In Klamath County they told me that almost 100 percent of their citizens in long-term care are paid for by Medicaid. Nationally, it is a little more than 6 out of 10, but in this rural community, almost 100 percent. I thought about the residents there and what happens to them. Under this bill, when Medicaid is slashed massively and 23 million folks lose access to it, what happens to them? One woman, Deborah, said: Senator, Medicaid pays for my bill and if it doesn't exist for me—if it is taken away—I am on the street, and that is a problem because I can't walk.

So picture an older American, a senior American who needs an intensive level of care that can't be provided in the home being thrown into the street in a wheelchair, unable to walk, and, by the way, no support structure because in order to qualify for Medicaid to pay your bill, you have to have spent down all your own resources, so it isn't like somebody has a backup plan. Maybe there are family members who will take them in and provide an intensive level of care. Maybe a few will have friends who will take them in and provide an intensive level of care. But for the vast majority, that support structure isn't there, and that means they are going to be on the street. Is that why the President said it was mean?

Was it because the bill said States can charge more, allow insurance companies to charge more for individuals with preexisting conditions? That is certainly a huge problem. Community pricing has given access to insurance at the same price to everyone in America, regardless of preexisting conditions, but, unfortunately, TrumpCare changes that.

I think we need to recognize that now, here in the Senate, 13 Senators are working to craft a Senate version of TrumpCare, and they are terrified—terrified of the public seeing their bill. It is a vampire bill. It is afraid of the sunlight—the sunlight of public commentary, input, even a public discussion from experts. They are afraid of their citizens. They are afraid of the expert commentary. And they want to hide it until the last second so they can bring it to the floor—next Thursday, a week from this Thursday—and try to pass it in a moment's time, less than a day.

I was fascinated that our Secretary of Health and Human Services—after there were more than 100 hearings and roundtables and walk-throughs of the healthcare bill in 2009, after consideration of more than 300 amendments in the Senate, after more than 100 Republican amendments that were adopted,

minority amendments adopted, after more than 25 days of debate on the Senate floor—complained that the bill and the process were not transparent. If that wasn't transparent, how do you score the transparency of a bill where there have been zero committee meetings, zero chance for legislators to weigh in, zero chance for public input by experts, zero chance for the citizens of the United States to see this bill and share their feelings, zero chance for us to go back to our own States and have townhalls and ask for input? Well, you give it an F. It is a process completely out of sync with the responsibilities that every Senator took when they took the oath of office to be a Member of a legislative body—not a secret body, a legislative body, which implies deliberation in committee and deliberation on the floor and deliberation with constituents back home.

There is a phrase for the Senate—probably not merited; in fact, I am sure it is no longer merited—that the Senate was the world's greatest deliberative body. But crafting legislation in secret that affects the quality of life of millions and millions of Americans, with no deliberation, that is not a legislative process. That is not what was envisioned under our Constitution, our ''we the people'' Constitution. It wasn't a ''we the secret group of powerful folks accommodating powerful special interests, government by and for the powerful.'' That wasn't the introduction to our Constitution. Perhaps Members might read the first three words of the Constitution. Perhaps folks might go back and look at our history of why we have this floor to debate the issues, because that is what a system of government of, by, and for the people is all about.

In my home State, the elimination of Medicaid expansion—that is, the Oregon Health Plan expansion—would throw 400,000 people off of healthcare. Stretching that timeline from a couple years to 7 years doesn't change the fact that 400,000 people lose healthcare. That is mean-spirited. That is hard-hearted. That is terrible healthcare policy.

It is not just those individuals who are affected. The uncompensated care rate has dropped enormously in Oregon, from 15 percent to 5 percent. The result is that there is much more income to our clinics and to our hospitals, and the result is better healthcare for everyone—everyone in our rural communities, everyone in our urban communities. Nonetheless, the majority persists in wanting to destroy this improvement.

I am hearing from people like Elizabeth from Portland, who wrote to say that the Oregon Health Plan saved her life. The Oregon Health Plan, or Medicaid, saved her life. She was in school, and she had some health problems that were getting worse because of stress. But she didn't have a job and didn't have insurance, and things were getting bad. Then the Affordable Care Act came around, and it extended coverage. Since then, she has gotten her health problems under control, finished school, and was able to get a job. In Elizabeth's own words:

> I am once again contributing to society. I just need a little bit of time and help and I'm back on my feet.

Isn't it the right thing to provide a foundation for every single American to have access to quality healthcare, so that when they get sick, it helps them get back on their feet?

Ask yourself: What is your value? Is it your value that every American should have access to affordable healthcare? That is my value. That is what I am fighting for. What are you fighting for? Are you fighting to destroy healthcare for millions of Americans? Is that your value—to make life difficult and hard and mean-spirited and hard-hearted and terrible and painful for millions of Americans? Is that your value? If so, then keep up with this secret plan to destroy healthcare for millions of Americans. But if you value your constituents' quality of life, if you value their peace of mind, then put a stop to this abomination, this anti-democratic process. Insist that there is at least a month of consideration of the bill so that citizens can weigh in, so experts can weigh in, so committees can deliberate, so committees can propose amendments and improvements. Insist on that.

We just need three Members of the majority party to believe in the responsibility of this Chamber to hold a public debate and insist that they will not vote to proceed to the bill unless we have at least a month of opportunity. That is only one-ninth of what we had in 2009. It is only a fraction of the committee meetings, roundtables, and walk-throughs we had in 2009. It would be only a fraction of the amendments offered in 2009. It would only be a fraction of the time here on the Senate floor we had in 2009. Don't you believe we should have at least a fraction of the public deliberation we had just 8 years ago before jamming this through and destroying healthcare for millions of Americans? What does peace of mind mean to you?

I will tell you what it means to my constituents. It means that when their loved one gets sick, their loved one will get the care they need. It means that when their loved one gets sick, they won't go bankrupt. That is the peace of mind we are talking about, and that is the peace of mind that is so profoundly disturbed when you have a secret group meeting with powerful special interests, devising a bill they are afraid to show to the public of the United States of America. I would never want to have to vote on such a major bill without being able to hear what my citizens in Oregon think. I don't think any Member of this Senate should agree to vote on a bill with no deliberation and no public hearing.

So we need three champions. Just three out of 52. It should be 52 out of 52 who insist on a quality public process. We have heard the comments in the hallways, many Members of the majority dislike the fact that there is a secret process that their majority leader is insisting on. We have heard that they don't like it. It is not right. But do you know what? Every Member here has a chance to say no to the secret operation, the secret committee of 13, and the last-second presentation of such a bill on the floor.

The issue of the changes in healthcare without public deliberation terrifies folks like Deborah from Hillsboro, OR. She was diagnosed with Crohn's disease 8 years ago and has to take regular injections and medications to keep it under control. She does a lot of things right. She doesn't smoke, she exercises, and she follows her doctor's recommended diet. Other than her regular medications, she lives a normal, healthy life, and she is looking forward to retiring in the near future with her husband. They have been working hard their whole lives. They have been saving up for it. It is so close that they can almost taste it. But it is a dream that could be shattered by the Republican healthcare plan—the TrumpCare plan—being concocted secretly by 13 Members of this body. As she says:

> Without affordable coverage for pre-existing conditions I cannot even switch jobs easily. If Medicare is reduced or eliminated, as the GOP is trying to do, I may never be able to retire . . . we should not now, or ever, eliminate coverage for pre-existing conditions (or price that coverage such that most of us will never be able to afford it).

She is worried that changes that refer to Medicaid and the Oregon Health Plan will ruin her ability to retire and her ability to access healthcare.

I don't know exactly what the President was briefed on that made him call TrumpCare ''mean'' and then speak in a very derogatory fashion about the bill from the House. I don't know exactly what he learned. I don't know if it was because he learned that folks on long-term care could lose that long-term care and Medicaid pays for more than 6 out of 10 Americans who are in long-term care. I don't know if it was because he learned about preexisting conditions. I don't know if it was because he learned it would throw 23 million people out of the healthcare system. I don't know if it was because he learned this would have devastating consequences to rural healthcare because of the impact on the finances of clinics and hospitals.

Whatever he meant, he was right. He was right to make that transition from a month earlier when he held a celebration at the White House because this terrific, wonderful bill had been passed by the House, and when he sobered up and discovered that it was a mean-spirited, hard-hearted bill. But for all these reasons, no healthcare should be crafted and jammed through without deliberation. No significant bill affecting

the lives of Americans should be pushed through in this manner. Americans deserve better. They expect more from this Chamber than such a secret, callous, poorly informed process. They don't like that powerful special interests are meeting with the Senators in private—those private 13—to develop a plan, because here is what they have heard:

They know this bill gives huge tax breaks to powerful parts of the healthcare industry, that it gives huge amounts of money away to those who make medical equipment and huge amounts of money away to health insurance companies, meanwhile stripping healthcare from millions of Americans. They know it also gives a massive tax break to the richest Americans.

So here we are with a bill that Trump has called ''mean,'' giving away the Treasury to powerful special interests, meeting in private with my colleagues, giving away the Treasury to the richest Americans, while on the other hand lowering the boom on our seniors in long-term care, lowering the boom on struggling and working families, lowering the boom on 20 million or so Americans who would lose healthcare, and lowering the boom on the clinics and hospitals that provide care for everyone.

That is what they see: special favors for the powerful and thrown into the street the working and struggling families. That is morally wrong. That is wrong from a policy point of trying to improve the quality of life of Americans, and it is why every Senator here should absolutely say no to moving to this bill on the floor without a full month, at least, for committee deliberations and for the citizens of the United States to weigh in.

That is the difference between what happens in a dictatorship with no deliberation and a democratic republic with a legislative process that values deliberation and openness. That is the difference. Which model do my colleagues support?

Let's fight for the ''we the people'' vision of our Constitution, and let's fight for quality healthcare for every American, and let's say no to moving to any bill that hasn't had public deliberation and at least a full month of deliberation in this Chamber.

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.

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

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 6 minutes.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to thank all of my colleagues for their comments today on the damage TrumpCare would do. Democrats, patients, and families have been fighting back against TrumpCare and Republican efforts to jam it through Congress for months.

I want to take a moment and recall some of the promises President Trump and Republicans made at the very beginning of this process because there truly is a Grand Canyon between President Trump's promises and the TrumpCare bill he has now admitted himself is ''mean.''

At the start, President Trump promised to provide insurance for everybody that was both cheaper and higher quality. When TrumpCare was introduced in the House, Secretary Price said that ''no one would be worse off financially'' under the law. And when Speaker RYAN was asked whether millions of people would lose their insurance coverage under TrumpCare, he said ''no.''

Families were told again and again that TrumpCare would lower costs and keep people covered. As we know, TrumpCare would do the exact opposite. It will raise healthcare costs for people across the country, astronomically for those with preexisting conditions and for seniors, who could pay as much as 850 percent more in premiums. Medicaid would be gutted. Women and men would be unable to get care from the providers they trust and choose at Planned Parenthood. New mothers would pay as much as $1,000 more a month just to get maternity care. Tens of millions of people would see their healthcare coverage taken away.

I could continue. And I want to be clear that those facts came from the nonpartisan, independent Congressional Budget Office.

Unfortunately and unsurprisingly, when TrumpCare passed the House, President Trump ignored those facts and doubled down on his broken promises. He championed TrumpCare, calling it ''very, very well-crafted.'' He promised to get TrumpCare through the Senate, predicting that it would be an unbelievable victory. His Secretary of Health and Human Services called this bill—which would take healthcare coverage away from 23 million people—a victory for the American people. Which people? Maybe President Trump. Maybe special interests who are going to get these massive tax breaks. But not the hundreds of thousands of people in Washington State who are rightly scared of TrumpCare or millions more across the country.

Democrats have come to the Senate floor with story after story about how our constituents would suffer under this legislation, workers who would not be able to make ends meet between jobs without losing health insurance, seniors who know they will go bankrupt if TrumpCare becomes law, moms who stay up at night worrying about whether their child who has a preexisting condition will be priced out of coverage, patients fighting for their lives who are afraid that TrumpCare will kill them and who are literally begging Congress not to do this.

To these patients and families, President Trump's decision to finally admit the incredibly obvious—that TrumpCare is ''mean''—doesn't begin to cover it. To them, that bill is a gut punch. It is the bottom dropping out. It could be a death sentence. And this is especially true because, as hard as Senate Republicans have tried to keep their version of TrumpCare secret, behind closed doors, and in back rooms, as often as some have made promises just like those President Trump and House Republicans were making to try to reassure their constituents somehow that the Senate version of TrumpCare would be somehow less mean, the truth is, we know the Senate version of TrumpCare will be just as damaging.

Senate Republican leaders have already admitted that they expect their TrumpCare bill to mirror 80 percent of the House's. We have House conservatives writing letters to Senate Republicans making demands even meaner than many Senate Republicans want. And we all have a good idea how this is going to end up. ''Mean'' doesn't even begin to cover what TrumpCare would do to my constituents in Washington and to people across the country, but it is a start.

I haven't said this often, but I hope Senate Republicans listen to President Trump. This is a man who knows about mean—from making fun of a reporter with disabilities, to belittling our friend the junior Senator from Florida, to even impugning the senior Senator from Arizona, a war hero. When President Trump says something is mean, that certainly means something.

Mr. President, I hope they think about why he had to make that comment. They realize just how hard it will be to defend this truly appalling legislation, especially after it has been jammed through Congress, hidden from patients, and hidden from families without seeing the light of day. I hope they do what we tell preschoolers to do when they do something mean—apologize and make sure to do better next time. In Senate Republicans' case, that means dropping this effort to undermine families' healthcare once and for all and then joining with us to continue fixing healthcare for the people we serve by making healthcare more affordable, getting more families covered, and maintaining quality of care.

Democrats have ideas. We are at the table. We are ready to get to work as soon as Republicans are. It is not too late to make the right choice. The wrong choice is far more than mean. If my Republican colleagues do continue down this deeply harmful path, they should know they will own every bit of the hurt they cause, and they will be held fully accountable.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:37 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, Senator LEAHY be recognized next.

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

NATIONAL GREAT OUTDOORS MONTH

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, Montanans can tell you that nothing beats getting outdoors for hunting, skiing, fishing, backpacking—you name it; it is our way of life. In fact, after I graduated from Montana State University, I had to leave Montana to start my business career, but I came back to Montana while my knees were still good so I could spend my time enjoying all that Montana's outdoors have to offer. That is why I am excited that June is National Great Outdoors Month.

Montana's outdoors have a special meaning for me. In fact, I even proposed to my sweet wife Cindy some 31 years ago next month on the summit of Hyalite Peak, just south of Bozeman.

The value of Montana's outdoors is simply incredible. In fact, according to the Outdoor Industry Association, there are 64,000 Montanans whose jobs are directly tied to our outdoor recreation industry. In 2012, outdoor recreation generated almost $6 billion in consumer spending in Montana alone. Nationally—taking this to the big picture of our great country—outdoor recreation generates $887 billion in consumer spending each year and provides 7.6 million jobs.

Folks travel across our Nation, even from around the world, to come visit America's great outdoors. It is all right here in our backyard—in fact, for me literally. I grew up just about 90 miles from Yellowstone National Park. I went to kindergarten through college just 90 miles away from Yellowstone National Park, and I can tell you, I go back there every year with my family.

Whether it is hiking in Glacier National Park up in Northwest Montana, fly fishing the Gallatin River that Brad Pitt and Robert Redford made famous with that great movie ''A River Runs Through It''—which runs right by my hometown—or skiing at Whitefish, Big Sky, or floating down the Madison on a hot summer day, we can take these things for granted. That is why it is so important to recognize the value of the outdoors during National Great Outdoors Month. If you visit one of our national parks or if you go on a white water rafting tour, you are not only getting a great experience yourself, you know you are giving back to our local economy, and you are helping create jobs.

I want to encourage everyone to recognize National Great Outdoors Month by joining me and getting out there. Don't just talk about it. Get outdoors and experience all that the outdoors has to offer.

I yield my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Montana. I have hiked in his State before, and it is a wonderful place. Their mountains are a tad higher than ours, but both my wife and I love hiking in the mountains, and I have enjoyed his State.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. President, for the last 7 years, we have heard Republicans in Congress campaign on the pledge to repeal the Affordable Care Act. For 7 years they have said: We are going to repeal it and replace it. State to State, district to district, like President Trump, they pledged to repeal and replace the health reform bill that made access to affordable healthcare a reality for millions of Americans.

One would think—and what I get asked in Vermont is—when they campaigned for 7 years that they were going to repeal and replace it as soon as they were in power, you would think they would have a plan to do that. But it seems there is no plan. Instead, there are a dozen or so Republican lawmakers meeting behind closed doors. And they are shielded from public view. I don't think any other Members of Congress are allowed in their presence—lobbyists, but no Members of Congress. They say they have negotiated, finally, a grand plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act—and oh, by the way, a plan that makes devastating cuts to the Medicaid Program. And they have done this with no hearings, no debate, no process, no showing what the cost would be, and no bill. They are keeping a tight lid on the decisions they are making for the rest of America. What I get asked back home in Vermont is: What are they so afraid of? We are about to find out.

We hear they still intend to bring this yet-to-be-finalized bill to the Senate floor very soon under the expedited reconciliation process, without even the most basic vetting and transparency. Not only is this latest TrumpCare plan that is about to be foisted on the American people and on the Senate not ready for prime time; it is not fit for prime time. It is really nothing short of shameful.

Certainly, in my decades here in the Senate, I have never seen anything by either Republican or Democratic majorities done like this. In fact, I will give you an idea of how it can be done differently.

When the Democrats were in control, before we passed the Affordable Care Act, the Senate held over 100 hearings on the issue. Republicans haven't held one. We had over 100 hearings. We had roundtables on health reform. Hundreds of amendments were considered by the Senate Finance and HELP Committees during an exhaustive markup process, with 160 amendments by Republican Senators adopted. The process itself stretched for so long—more than a year—in the vain hope that Republicans would come to the table and stay at the table. In fact, the final Senate bill included more than 145 Republican-authored amendments, and it was posted for every single person in America to see for nearly a week before the Finance Committee marked it up. The same can be said for the HELP Committee. Then, more than 160 hours were spent on this Senate floor in considering the Affordable Care Act. Everybody had an opportunity to speak on it. That is when the Democrats controlled the Senate.

What is happening with the Republicans? Will they have 100 hearings? No, they have not had one single hearing, and they are not having any debate and not having any process. We don't even know what this is going to cost. And as of right now, there is no bill.

In the House and now in the Senate, this charade boils down to bumper sticker politics. It is not a solid, seriously vetted, workable, fair and equitable plan or policy. Let's see what happens when you do it this way.

After this bill passed in the House—a bill that no one had read—even the Secretary admitted he hadn't read it. After it passed and people had a chance to see what was in it, what did we find out? That 23 million Americans were going to lose coverage. And then the President proposed a budget that assumes savings from the repeal of the Affordable Care Act through big, big cuts to the Medicaid Program.

Under the House-passed TrumpCare bill, the State of Vermont will spend hundreds of millions more on Medicaid to compensate for the loss of Federal funds targeted by President Trump and the House Republicans. Under the House-passed TrumpCare bill, premiums are expected to rise by 20 percent. Seniors—many of whom live on fixed incomes—will be charged five times more than younger enrollees under the House-passed TrumpCare bill. Well, that translates north of $4,400 in increased healthcare costs for Vermonters between the ages of 55 and 64.

Notwithstanding the millions of people being thrown off the list, notwithstanding the cuts to Medicaid, President Trump joined Republicans at the White House, and he celebrated the House-passed bill. He celebrated. He said: Look what we can do with me as President. They all applauded, and they were all so happy.

Then somebody must have finally read the bill. Somebody at the White House must have read the bill and actually told the President what was in the bill that he was praising. And then,

in a sudden about-face, he described the House-passed bill as ''mean.'' ''Mean'' is what President Trump said of the House GOP healthcare plan.

Some back home may find it a surprise that I could be in agreement with President Trump, but do you know what? President Trump is right. I am saying it right here on the floor: President Trump is right. The House-passed bill that he praised is mean. It is mean because it would do so much harm to so many Americans.

It is untenable. It is unrealistic. And if Senate Republicans think they can fix it behind closed doors, they are wrong. We should be working together, Republicans and Democrats—together—to improve the Affordable Care Act. If there are parts where it is flawed, let's fix it. If there are parts where it could be improved, let's join together and strengthen it. Let's not double down on Americans at a time when their President is turning his back on the very programs that support our social safety net. Women and children and low-income Americans and small businesses alike are all going to suffer under his plans.

We 100, as representatives of our constituents—I think we have a responsibility to give voice to their concerns. We 100 Senators are elected to represent 350 million Americans. We are supposed to be the conscience of the Nation. Maybe it is time that each one of us, Republicans and Democrats alike, started listening to what Americans say about healthcare.

A family physician from Manchester, VT, wrote to me saying: ''I do not support efforts to roll back or eliminate the patient-centered insurance reforms established in recent years that prohibit discrimination against patients due to their race, gender, health status, or geographic location. These reforms matter to the everyday lives of our patients.''

Someone from Brattleboro, VT, wrote: ''I am writing to ask what I can do to help stop Medicaid from being changed to the system being promoted by the Republican majority.''

From Jericho, VT: ''I had Hodgkin's lymphoma 3 years ago and was fortunate to have insurance to cover most of the roughly $100,000 bill. Having had cancer is stressful enough without constantly worrying about severe financial consequences if it strikes again.''

From Bennington, VT: ''Being patient-centered means we put the patient first. As a physician and advocate for my patients, I do not want any of them to be hurt by the actions Congress takes or fails to take.''

And then from Manchester Center, VT: ''I will be one of the [20 million] people to lose their health insurance when the Trump administration almost certainly repeals the ACA in a few months. Tax credits will not help me to regain it.''

And from the small town of Sandgate, VT: ''My son has a chronic illness that, without our insurance, would cost $1,000 per month in prescriptions alone. That doesn't even cover the regular checkups. Right now he is covered, but, as I'm sure you remember from when you first got out of college or high school, we know that he may not have as good coverage when he gets out on his own. The Republican plan is a death sentence for him.''

The Republican plan is a death sentence for him.

These are real people. These are real stories about their lives, and I am willing to guess that there are similar people in virtually every State in this country with more stories like these.

This isn't a political campaign. This is about life and death and access to healthcare. For these Vermonters and for millions of Americans across the country, the decisions we make here will have consequences—real consequences in their lives. Every Senator should think about that before we hastily undo years of progress to increase affordable access to healthcare for millions of Americans.

The Republican majority, led on, cheered on by President Trump, passed a bill which would take so many millions of people off of healthcare. It would devastate Medicaid. It would make it so much more difficult for people to get healthcare. Then the bill they fought so hard to pass, the bill they cheered on, the bill they celebrated in the Rose Garden with President Trump, finally, somebody read what they passed. What a novel idea. They had all voted on it. They had all gone home. The President had praised them. I remember the pictures of them beaming in the praise of the President. Well, somebody finally read the bill and told the President, and he said that bill is ''mean.'' The House GOP healthcare plan—that bill is ''mean.''

Well, I agree with President Trump, but you know what they are pushing now—he and his administration—the Senate bill; yet nobody has seen the Senate bill. Nobody knows how many people are being cut off the roll. Nobody knows how many people are going to be without healthcare. Nobody knows how large the cuts will be to Medicaid. Nobody knows how much our 50 States are going to be hurt by it. Nobody knows which millions of Americans—good, hard-working, honest Americans—are going to lose healthcare in the wealthiest, most powerful Nation on Earth.

Will that be celebrated? Then, after it is passed, will somebody at the White House whisper to the President: The Senate bill is pretty mean, too. The Senate bill is pretty mean, but by golly, we got it passed. We had it on our bumper stickers that we would, and we got it passed. We are wealthy. We will have our healthcare. Too bad for those tens of millions of Americans who won't.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REQUESTS FOR AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have nine requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They do not have the approval of the Democratic leader; therefore, they will not be permitted to meet.

I ask unanimous consent that a list of committees requesting authority to meet be printed in the RECORD.

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

Committee on Armed Services
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Committee on Foreign Relations
Committee on the Judiciary
Committee on Intelligence
Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet
Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining
Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy
Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE SYSTEM

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the floor this afternoon to mark the 40th anniversary of the first oil moving through the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System. In Alaska, we call it TAPS. This is an 800-mile-long engineering marvel that runs from the North Slope of Alaska to tidewater in Valdez.

Forty years is a good, long history. I recognize that, and so this afternoon, in the interest of time, I will abbreviate the history, but I want to start the story of our pipeline in the late 1960s. Believe it or not, this was a pretty bleak moment for oil exploration in Alaska. Despite great promise, many companies had given up on exploration on the North Slope. By some accounts, at that point in time, there were at least 14 dry holes that had been drilled before ARCO and Humble Oil Company decided they were going to sink just one last well. It was actually an ARCO executive who described it ''more as a decision not to cancel a well already scheduled to go ahead.''

That well, Prudhoe Bay State No. 1, would prove to be a game changer for Alaska. We had discovered oil. We discovered oil on the North Slope and a lot of it. We quickly learned that Prudhoe Bay would be one of the largest oilfields in global history, by far the largest ever discovered in the United States. Early estimates, at that time, suggested as much as 9 billion barrels of oil could be recovered from it. We have learned over these intervening 40 years that we so far underestimated that.

Yet it was not just the issue of discovering the oil. Prudhoe Bay is located in a very remote part of the State, as far north as you can go—a pretty inhospitable area given the climate—far away from population centers in the lower 48. So a lot of challenges needed to be overcome before production could begin.

Initially, it was like, OK, how do we move significant quantities of oil? How do we transport this oil to market? It was Dan Yergin, in his book ''The Prize,'' who did a great job of describing the various choices that were out there.

He wrote: ''Icebreaker tankers that would travel through the frozen Arctic seas to the Atlantic were seriously considered. Other suggestions included a monorail or fleet of trucks in permanent circulation on an eight-lane highway across Alaska.''

They then ''calculated that it would require most of the trucks in America'' to do this. There was also ''a prominent nuclear physicist recommended a fleet of nuclear-powered submarine tankers that would travel under the polar ice cap to a deepwater port in Greenland—the port to be created, in turn, by a nuclear explosion. Boeing and Lockheed explored the idea of jumbo jet oil tankers.''

Obviously, none of those ideas came about, and some probably for very good reason, but after significant study and debate, a pipeline emerged as the best way to transport Alaska's oil. While two routes were considered—one over land, which would run across Canada—an all-Alaska route was ultimately chosen as the best way to go.

Yet, even then, pipeline construction could not begin right away. There were serious debates in the State over issues like taxes and tariffs and pipeline ownership, and it really consumed our State's legislature for years. The land claims of the Alaska Natives needed to be settled. This occurred in the landmark legislation that passed in 1971.

Then it was in 1973 that Congress took up the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act. As part of that debate here on the Senate floor, Alaska's Senators offered an amendment to deem the environmental impact statement for the pipeline to be sufficient and to shield it from what could have been decades of litigation by its opponents. This was a critically important aspect to the debate and really to the future of the pipeline in order to ensure that this construction would not be delayed by litigation.

The vote was as close as votes get here in the Senate. It was deadlocked 49 to 49, and sitting in that chair, the Vice President at the time, Spiro Agnew, cast the deciding vote in Alaska's favor. So every time I see the bust out here of Vice President Agnew, I look at him. Other people reflect on Vice President Agnew in different ways. I reflect on that deciding vote that allowed us to proceed with our Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

The pipeline bill went on to pass the Senate on a strong bipartisan basis. Not long after that, then-President Richard Nixon signed it into law. This was tremendous news for Alaska because we would be allowed to move forward with the construction.

The construction of this pipeline was a monumental undertaking, but that monumental undertaking was also done with considerable speed. In April of 1974, construction on a 360-mile haul road began. We now call it the Dalton Highway. It was finished in 154 days.

For those of you who have heard my plea on the floor and to colleagues who have been in committees when I have talked about the history of my efforts to try to get a 10-mile, one-lane, gravel, noncommercial-use road for the people of King Cove, I think about what we were able to accomplish in 154 days with that haul road that allowed us to then help to facilitate the build-out of the pipeline.

The pipeline itself was the largest privately funded infrastructure project ever undertaken in America at the time. It was significant. It was significant for Alaska, of course, but it was significant for the Nation as well. Its total cost came to be about $8 billion. In October of 1975, there were about 28,000 people who were working to make this pipeline a reality, and that pipeline was completed in 1977. Again, initial construction of the haul road began in 1974. It was completed in October 1977, which was just 3 years and 2 months after construction began. I am told it was actually 10 days ahead of schedule, according to one estimate, which is pretty remarkable.

The Trans-Alaska Pipeline—and I cannot find a picture that really shows the line well—an extraordinary line, which again, is 800 miles long, running from the North Slope to an ice-free Port of Valdez at tidewater. It crosses three mountain ranges, including Atigun Pass, which has an elevation of more than 4,800 feet. It reaches a grade of 55 degrees at one point in the Chugach Range. So it goes up incredible mountains and down the other side. It crosses more than 600 streams and rivers, and more than 400 miles of it are elevated above the ground.

We have it elevated aboveground here, but in certain areas, you can follow the pipeline either by air, or occasionally, you can see it from the road. It is probably one of the most photographed pipelines in the country, but you will see it go underground in many areas. About half of it is buried underground.

This was part of the engineering that allowed for the recognition that you are building in a permafrost area, so it is how you ensure that you are not having an impact in the ground and the area around it.

It crosses a major fault line, the Denali Fault. Back in November of 2002, we had a 7.9 magnitude earthquake just about 90 miles from Fairbanks on that Denali Fault. The pipe moved 7½ feet horizontally—moving back and forth this way—and 2½ feet vertically. This pipeline was designed for an 8.5 earthquake. It allows for 20 feet of horizontal movement and 5 feet of vertical movement.

The engineers not only worked to cross some extraordinary terrain but also recognized that this was in an area in which earthquakes did happen. It is extraordinary to listen to the stories of the engineers who inspected every inch of that line after that earthquake in 2002 and to hear their comments about, truly, this engineering marvel.

There are so many stories about the construction of the pipeline just as Alaskans, as we have lived through those pipeline years. It is hard to really capture what it was like to be in Alaska during the time of the construction of that line. We saw our population boom as we saw new workers come into the State. I was living in Fairbanks at the time. I was a high school student and was going into college there. Obviously, that was my town. In my town, all of a sudden there were people from Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma. I can remember seeing guys in cowboy boots in Fairbanks in the winter on the ice and thinking that these guys are going to figure out how to change their footwear. But we worked to welcome these people who were there to really help make a difference.

There were pressures on our community. You could not find a hotel room. You couldn't find a rental car. It was hard for the grocery stores to keep the shelves stocked in many of the towns. We saw a significant investment in our communities in many different ways. There were a lot of wild stories and tales, some which are appropriate to tell years afterward, some which still keep us smiling, but we do not talk too much about them. There are many good stories out there.

I am proud of this extraordinary infrastructure that we have in Alaska—an extraordinary energy asset—and to be celebrating the fact that, for 40 years now, this pipeline has been not only contributing to Alaska, but contributing to the Nation as something that, as Alaskans, we do look to with pride.

This pipeline is not just a piece of pipe; it is an economic lifeline for the State of Alaska. Over the course of 40 years, TAPS has become the veritable backbone of our State's economy. It has helped us create jobs to the point at which our oil and gas industry either employs or supports fully one-third of the Alaskan workforce. So it is pretty significant in terms of its impact.

It has generated tremendous revenue for our State, some $168 billion at last count, which has been used for everything from roads, to schools, to essential services. It really has helped build the State and continues to allow our State to operate.

TAPS has allowed us to create our permanent fund, which we have used to

convert the revenues from a nonrenewable resource—oil—into something that will make an enduring contribution to the growth and the prosperity of future generations.

Our pipeline has also allowed us to keep our tax burdens low, which is critical in a State like Alaska, where the cost of living is extraordinarily high. Alaska has one of the lowest tax burdens of any State, and that is thanks to the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System. It also allows us to keep other industries, whether it is fishing or tourism—keep their taxes much lower than they would otherwise be. The scale of this is often hard to imagine.

Dr. Terrence Cole, who is a history professor at the University of Alaska, put it this way back in 2004: ''Prudhoe Bay oil was worth more than everything that has been dug out, cut down, caught, or killed in Alaska since the beginning of time. The discovery of the Prudhoe Bay oil field in the late 1960s fulfilled even the most optimistic dreams for statehood.''

From day one, Alaska's pipeline has also strengthened the energy security of our Nation. Remember, TAPS began operating in the wake of the first Arab oil embargo. It helped tide us over during the 1979 oil crisis. It has insulated us from OPEC and has lessened our dependence on nations who do not share our interests. It has provided reliable and affordable energy that is needed by millions of Americans all up and down the west coast. It really is hard to imagine Alaska without the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. It is hard to imagine the consequences that America would have faced without the 17.5 billion barrels of oil that it has now safely carried to market. Think about that—17.5 billion barrels of oil over the past 40 years. It is no exaggeration to say that, while we built a pipeline, that pipeline helped us build our State.

Today, as we mark the 40th anniversary of TAPS, we can also take stock of the challenges that it faces. Many are a direct result of the decisions made—or perhaps not made—in this very Chamber. While our pipeline once carried 2.1 million barrels of oil per day, accounting for a full quarter of America's supply, today, that amount has been crimped down to just over 500,000 barrels a day. It is not due to lack of resources—not at all—but instead it is due to our lack of access to those resources. Alaska has never lacked for energy, just the permission to produce it, despite the promises that had been made to us at statehood and beyond.

According to the Federal Energy Information Administration, we have at least 36.9 billion barrels of oil. That is enough to produce 1 million barrels a day for the next 100 years. We have prolific potential in our National Petroleum Reserve, which was specifically set aside for oil production. We have world-class resources in our offshore areas, in the Beaufort, and in the Chukchi Seas in our Arctic Outer Continental Shelf. We have what is believed to be North America's largest untapped conventional oil field, which would occupy about one ten-thousandth of the nonwilderness 1002 Area within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Again, this is an area that was specifically set aside for development, and the Federal Government recommended that it be opened for that purpose back in 1987—a 30-year anniversary there.

So while we have the resources, what we need are partners at the Federal level who will work with us to restore throughput to the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. I welcome the new administration and its commitment to helping us produce energy—energy for Alaska, energy for the Nation.

I want to end with a quote from the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. This is an opinion piece by VADM Tom Barrett, who is the president of Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. This is the TAPS operator. He has written this opinion piece, and he states as follows: ''Though there has been a lot of change on TAPS in 40 years, one unwavering constant remains: the commitment of the people who work on TAPS today to provide safe, reliable, operational excellence, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, resilient amid all of Alaska's extreme geography and weather.''

I think about the men and women—the engineers, the workers, the contractors, and all those who do such an incredible job to deal with the day-to-day to keep that oil flowing safely. Again, as we recognize 40 years of safely transporting this oil, I want to repeat to my colleagues: TAPS, or the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, is not just a pipeline; it is an economic lifeline for us. It is source of security and prosperity for us as a nation.

So I join my delegation and my colleagues—Senator SULLIVAN and Congressman YOUNG—and all of the Alaskans who are marking this anniversary today, as TAPS reaches 40 good years. We look back, and we appreciate the past, but we also look forward and set our sights on another good 40 years to come.

Mr. President, I thank you, and I yield the floor.

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

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I am happy to be joined today on the floor by Senator HEINRICH, who has been a real fighter for healthcare for New Mexicans, and I am looking forward to staying on the floor and hearing him talk about how he feels about this Republican healthcare bill as well.

I rise today for the third time this session to oppose plans by President Trump and the Republicans to gut our healthcare system and to throw millions of Americans off their health insurance.

On May 4 of this year, the day that House Republicans narrowly passed their TrumpCare bill, the President held a celebration at the White House in the Rose Garden and pronounced the bill a great plan.

Well, TrumpCare may be a great plan if you are wealthy and healthy, because if you are wealthy you get big tax cuts and if you are healthy, your premiums may not go up, and may even go down—that is, until you are sick.

TrumpCare is not a great plan if you are over the age of 62, if you are a hard-working family trying to make ends meet, if you live in a rural area, if you have or have not had an illness like cancer or heart disease or diabetes, or if you are a woman. Twenty-three million Americans will be left high and dry—out of health insurance by 2026. They don't think TrumpCare is a great plan. To them, it is a mean plan. Actually, those were President Trump's own words several weeks after the Rose Garden celebration. President Trump came clean with the Senate Republicans, admonishing them that the bill is ''mean'' and needs to be more ''generous, kind, and with heart.'' For the first time since his inauguration, I agree with the President on healthcare.

Since day one of the 115th Congress, Republicans have had the Affordable Care Act in their sights, and so has the President. They have tried mightily to do away with the rights and benefits under the ACA. But there is good news. The American people have rallied. They have called, they have emailed, and they have gone to town halls. They have marched, they have made their views known, and they have shared their stories. So far, they have stopped Republicans from gutting our healthcare system.

Just this past Saturday in my home State, simultaneous rallies in opposition to TrumpCare took place in 20 counties. I say to them: Keep up the fight, and I will continue to fight as hard as I can. We need to do all we can to stop this attack on healthcare.

The consequences of upending our healthcare system are enormous. They are enormous for the 20 million Americans who now have healthcare because of the ACA through private insurance and through Medicaid expansion. TrumpCare hurts the most vulnerable—the elderly, the disabled, and those with fewer resources.

The consequences of gutting the ACA and restructuring Medicaid are enormous for our economy, one-sixth of which is related to healthcare. They are enormous for hospitals that rely on third-party reimbursements under the ACA and Medicaid expansion. These hospitals need those revenues, and even more so for rural hospitals that keep their doors open thanks to the ACA, as well as the Indian Healthcare Service facilities, which have reduced wait times and added services because of the ACA.

But the majority in Congress refuses to hold hearings, and they are blocking all public participation. This is unconscionable, and it is undemocratic.

Before Democrats voted on ObamaCare, the Senate held 100 committee hearings, roundtables, and walk-throughs. The final Senate bill included 147 Republican amendments. The majority leader has missed an opportunity for political and moral leadership on one of the most important issues we face. Senator MCCONNELL should have an honest and open process, including Senate committee hearings, with full public participation and a chance for patients to tell Congress how this proposal impacts them—not hidden meanings, not limited debate and a simple majority vote.

Americans deserve an open process from their elected leaders. That is why I introduced a bill last week with my Democratic colleagues called the No Hearing, No Vote Act. This bill would require a public committee hearing for any legislation that goes through the fast-track budget reconciliation process, including the TrumpCare legislation.

Members of Congress were elected to improve lives, not destroy them, and I believe we need bipartisan cooperation to ensure we don't do that.

If we wanted to improve on ObamaCare, we could: No 1, make sure that all Americans have healthcare; and No. 2, make healthcare more affordable.

So I will tell my colleagues what is really happening here. The American people don't want the benefits they have gained through ObamaCare to be repealed and replaced with an inferior plan. They do not support TrumpCare. Only 17 percent of Americans support the House Republicans' current bill. With this degree of public opposition, it is baffling that Republicans keep pushing the bill that kicks 23 million Americans off their healthcare.

But the moral underpinnings of TrumpCare are as bankrupt as Trump's New Jersey casinos. The winners of TrumpCare are the wealthy, and the Republicans are plainly serving those interests. The Republicans can keep trying to hide TrumpCare, but Americans understand that it is just plain wrong.

I want to talk about a few of the ways that it is just plain wrong. While women make up half of our population, no women serve on Senator MCCONNELL's healthcare working group. Yet women are uniquely affected by TrumpCare. For example, the range of cost-free preventive services under the Affordable Care Act includes screenings for breast cancer, including mammograms, bone density screenings, cervical cancer screenings, domestic violence screenings and counseling, breast feeding counseling and equipment, contraception, and folic acid supplements. All of these services were critical to maintaining women's health and the health of their babies as well.

New Mexico leads the Nation in the percentage of births that are covered by Medicaid at 72 percent of all births in the State. So these services that are now available to every woman are essential.

TrumpCare would repeal the cost-free preventive care requirements for the Medicaid expansion population. Not only would this repeal risk the health of women and their babies, but it would result in increased medical care costs overall. Preventive medical services save money in the long run.

The Affordable Care Act requires insurance plans to provide a range of essential health benefits. For women, these required services include maternity and newborn child care. But TrumpCare would allow States to apply for a waiver to define their own essential health benefits beginning in 2020. So States could choose to exclude maternity and newborn care, and women would end up paying more for this care. The result is women not getting the care they need.

TrumpCare would cut Medicaid funding to Planned Parenthood for 1 year. Planned Parenthood provides preventive medical and reproductive health services to women and men, and Planned Parenthood funding provides a safety net to low-income women. According to the CBO, cutting off Medicaid payments to Planned Parenthood for 1 year would mean a total loss of access to services in some low-income communities because Planned Parenthood is the only public provider in some regions.

Take Elena from Albuquerque, NM. When she was 30 years old and in law school, Elena found out that she had the BRCA gene mutation, which puts her at a much higher risk for breast and ovarian cancer. The treatments for the BRCA gene mutation include a mastectomy and ovary removal—treatments she couldn't afford.

Thankfully, Elena qualified for Medicaid under the expansion. She got her breast cancer screenings and decided to have a mastectomy because of the cancer scare. Elena had three surgeries, costing thousands of dollars, covered by Medicaid, and now the chances of her getting breast cancer are very low. But Elena now worries that if she decides to have her ovaries removed and TrumpCare becomes law, she will not be able to have this potentially lifesaving surgery. If she has had a lapse in Medicaid coverage, her Medicaid expansion coverage will be gone, and because TrumpCare would end the ban against insurance companies denying coverage for people with preexisting conditions, she may never be able to get insurance or surgery.

Public schools and schoolchildren will be hurt by TrumpCare. Schools are now eligible to receive Medicaid funds for necessary medical services for children with disabilities. Schools are reimbursed for vision, hearing, and mental health screenings. These services help children get services early so they can be ready to learn.

Right now, New Mexico schools are reimbursed $18 million from Medicaid, but under TrumpCare, States would not have to consider schools' Medicaid-eligible providers, and the costs would be on the public schools. The problem is, New Mexico public schools cannot take on these kinds of costs. That might mean hundreds of schoolchildren each year will go without vision, hearing, and mental health treatment because no one else will be able to provide them.

Dr. Lynn McIlroy, superintendent of the Loving Municipal Schools, a rural school district in Southeastern New Mexico, said:

> Medicaid funding is vital to our continuum of care and service to the majority of our students. Often, our school nurse is the only medical professional our students ever see.

New Mexico has one of the highest percent Native American populations in the country, more than 10 percent of our residents. Even though many Native Americans receive healthcare through the Indian Health Service, IHS has not always been able to provide needed care due to a lack of funding. Medicaid expansion has changed that and changed that dramatically.

Dr. Valory Wangler, who works with the Zuni Pueblo, says: Since the Affordable Care Act, patients of Zuni have access to special services that were once difficult to fund and often delayed or denied.

An IHS physician working on the Zuni Reservation had a patient with severe arthritis that was making it difficult for her to stay physically active and work at a local school. She needed knee replacement surgery. Before Medicaid expansion, IHS had trouble funding knee replacements, and the surgery was denied for years because IHS could only afford to pay for life and loss of limb services. This patient is now on the Medicaid expansion. She was able to get a total knee replacement, is working full time, staying fit, and is no longer in pain.

One of the ACA's most popular provisions is the protection from discrimination if you have a preexisting condition. This is one of the most mystifying parts of TrumpCare. Republicans would end that protection by allowing States to waive out and set up high-risk pools.

All of us know someone with a serious illness or condition, like Kitt here. Kitt is 4½ years old and has type I diabetes that will require lifelong care. Her mother Dana is worried about TrumpCare. Dana says: It breaks my heart that elected officials are leaning toward dropping the Federal mandate to guarantee affordable health insurance for those with preexisting conditions. Sit down with a child who has an unbearable disease and be their warrior in DC to make everything possible for that special soul and their family to have an easier tomorrow.

I hope we will all be those warriors to protect that healthcare program which has been put in place for them.

I yield to Senator HEINRICH.

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

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

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I want to start by thanking my colleague from New Mexico, Senator UDALL, for his advocacy on behalf of the pieces and parts of our healthcare system that are so important to the State of New Mexico. Things like rural hospitals, opioid treatment, Indian Country, he has been an incredible champion on those. That is part of the reason why both of us come to the floor today, given what is at stake.

Last month, President Trump and House Republicans rushed through a disastrous healthcare bill that would leave average New Mexico families paying thousands of dollars more for less healthcare coverage. It would destroy the Medicaid Program as it currently exists in our State and throw our entire healthcare system into chaos. Now Senate Republicans are drafting their own version of a similar healthcare bill in complete secret, behind closed doors, with absolutely no—none—bipartisan input.

This lack of transparency and departure from regular order is unacceptable and deeply irresponsible, especially when every single American family's healthcare coverage is at stake if this bill ever becomes law.

While we don't know for sure what the Senate Republicans' version of TrumpCare will look like, media reports say it is shaping up to look more and more like the train wreck of a bill that President Trump and House Republicans celebrated in the White House Rose Garden just a couple months ago, a bill President Trump reportedly said in another closed-door meeting with Republican Senators last week was, in his words, ''mean'' and cold-hearted.

The House-passed TrumpCare bill is devastating to low-income families, to seniors, to Americans living with preexisting conditions. This isn't so much a healthcare bill as it is a tax cut for the ultrarich masquerading as healthcare reform. You don't have to take my word for it. You can look at how the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office described its projected impacts of the House-passed TrumpCare bill.

According to the CBO's analysis, TrumpCare would strip 14 million of their health insurance next year and 23 million by 2026, all to give tax breaks to the wealthiest of Americans. That is reckless, and frankly it is inexcusable by any measure.

How would the bill do that? The House-passed bill, which again seems to be the baseline for the ongoing secret negotiations here in the Senate, would slash funding for the Medicaid Program by hundreds of billions of dollars and end the need-based tax credits for individual healthcare market plans under the ACA.

I have heard from so many New Mexicans who have told me how access to healthcare coverage has helped their families and, in some cases, even saved their lives.

I recently met with patients at the Ben Archer Health Center, a rural health clinic in Hatch, NM, and heard firsthand how important Medicaid coverage can be to families in Southern New Mexico. One of the New Mexicans I met there was Anna Marie, a Las Cruces native who worked for the Las Cruces public food service for 22 years.

Anna Marie's husband passed away in 2008, and when she found herself unable to keep working following a minor stroke, she could not afford healthcare coverage on her own. When she reached out to my office last year, she had bronchitis and walking pneumonia. My staff helped her enroll in Medicaid, and now she is able to get access to the care she needs.

I want to take a moment to explain why the Medicaid Program is so critical in my home State of New Mexico. As a Medicaid expansion State, New Mexico has seen dramatic gains over the last 5 years in coverage for the folks who need it the most. Stories like Anna Marie's illustrate just how important Medicaid can be for hard-working New Mexicans.

Medicaid currently provides affordable healthcare coverage to over 900,000 New Mexicans, including many schoolchildren, seniors in nursing homes and long-term care facilities, people with disabilities, and people who need treatment for mental health and addiction.

Just one example of the wide-ranging consequences of the Republican healthcare plan's drastic cuts to the Medicaid Program would be the end to any possible progress we have made so far in fighting the opioid and heroin epidemic. The opioid addiction epidemic has been deeply felt in communities across the State of New Mexico. For years, without adequate treatment resources, our State has suffered through some of the highest rates of opioid and heroin addiction in the Nation.

I would just note that today a story came out about how we hospitalized in the ER long-term care or hospital care 1.3 million Americans last year because of this epidemic. However, when provided with an opportunity to receive comprehensive treatment and rehabilitation, people who have suffered through the trials of opioid addiction can and do turn their lives around.

Evidence-based treatment works, but it is only possible when we devote real resources to pay for it. So much of that comes directly through the Medicaid Program. As we can see on this chart, Medicaid pays for 30 percent of opioid medication-assisted treatment in New Mexico—30 percent. It is the foundation to build on for opioid treatment.

In States like West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky, Medicaid pays for nearly half of opioid treatment payments. This came up just last Friday when the White House hosted its first meeting for President Trump's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis. The President's top advisers probably didn't hear what they would have liked to from the advocates who have been on the front lines of fighting the growing opioid crisis.

For example, Dr. Joe Parks, the medical director for the National Council for Behavioral Health, told the President's Commission:

> Medicaid is the largest national payer for addiction and mental health treatment. Since the majority of increased opiate deaths and suicide occur in young and middle-aged adults, which is the Medicaid expansion population, the Medicaid expansions must be maintained and completed.

It is nothing short of hypocrisy for the Trump White House to claim it is taking steps to address the opioid epidemic when it is helping Republicans in Congress push through legislation that would end the Medicaid Program as we know it. Slashing hundreds of billions of dollars in Federal funding from the Medicaid Program will ultimately pass all of those costs on to the States. Let me give a sense for just how big a burden that would be.

In New Mexico, it is estimated that our State government would have to either come up with a way to raise $11 billion of new taxes over the next decade or cut the equivalent amount of coverage for the hundreds of thousands of New Mexicans who rely on the program. That is a hit to the State budget of 1 billion-plus dollars a year. This would have an especially hard impact on our State's rural communities.

When you go to small towns in New Mexico, like Clayton, Raton, and Santa Rosa, as I did last fall on a rural healthcare listening tour, you see right away the vital role hospitals play in rural communities. In most cases, these hospitals are the only healthcare providers for many miles in any direction.

Hospitals are also often the major employer in these small towns. Rural healthcare providers face enormous challenges because it is financially difficult to provide care to populations that live over vast spaces and are, on average, older, less affluent, and more prone to chronic diseases than those in more urban and suburban communities.

Medicaid expansion and the need-based tax credits for individual healthcare market plans in the ACA have been critical financial lifelines for rural healthcare providers. Thanks to the coverage gains we have seen in New Mexico, instead of seeing uninsured patients coming to the emergency room during expensive medical emergencies, our rural healthcare providers are able to help New Mexicans live healthier lives with primary care and a preventive medicine approach.

When medical emergencies do arise, New Mexicans have coverage that helps rural healthcare providers cover those expenses. If President Trump and Republicans in the Senate pass their healthcare bill, all of that could go away, and some of our rural healthcare providers may very well have to close up shop.

Right now, more than one-third of rural hospitals are already at risk of closure. If you look at where the hospitals that have been forced to shut down in recent years are located, they are almost all in States that chose not to expand Medicaid. We should learn a lesson from that.

I know for a fact that if hospitals shut down, healthcare delivery in rural New Mexico would be decimated and economic impact would be severe in these small towns. It is estimated that when a single hospital closes in a small rural community, nearly 100 jobs are lost, taking more than $5 million directly out of the local economy.

A recent report by the Economic Policy Institute estimates that if Congress passes TrumpCare into law, New Mexico alone would see a loss of almost 50,000 jobs by the year 2022. Thanks in large part to the major coverage gains that we have seen under the ACA, the healthcare sector has been New Mexico's strongest area of job growth for the last 5 years. New Mexico added over 4,000 healthcare jobs in 2015 alone.

A couple of months ago, I met with students at Central New Mexico Community College, CNM, in Albuquerque, who were training for those healthcare jobs. These bright young people want to make careers out of making their communities healthier and safer. With this dangerous legislation moving through Washington, they are all worried about what it might mean for their future career plans.

Why would we want to rip the rug out from under them by wreaking havoc on the Nation's healthcare system? Again, you really have to ask yourself why Republicans are so intent on rushing through a massive piece of legislation before we can even understand its potential harmful consequences.

As I said earlier, I have heard from literally thousands of New Mexicans who have called in or written or come up to me on the street to oppose this legislation. Many of them have told me how it will directly impact their families. I could pick any one of these stories to demonstrate what is at stake in this debate, but I will leave you with just one.

Brittany, from Aztec, NM, wrote me about her two young children who were diagnosed with a rare form of food allergies that created absolutely unaffordable costs through her husband's employer-provided healthcare plan.

Brittany said that she and her husband were averaging three doctors' visits a week and were ''barely keeping [their] heads above water just from paying co-pays.''

After applying for Medicaid, she and her husband have full coverage for their children's medical costs. Brittany wrote to me and said:

> For us Medicaid is literally lifesaving. Please do not take away this program or any of the ACA! It may not be perfect and could use some work, but taking it away altogether would be catastrophic for so many people like my family.

That is what she wrote to me.

I want to urge President Trump and I certainly want to urge my Republican colleagues in the Senate to listen to that urgent message. It is time to turn the page on the disastrous policy path that is ''repeal and replace'' so we can finally get to work on actually fixing those things in the current healthcare system that we all agree need work.

Our common goal—regardless of whether we are Republicans or Democrats—that we should all be working toward is making quality healthcare more accessible, more affordable for all Americans.

I would welcome a good-faith effort to tackle that challenge because healthcare policies shouldn't be a political football. It should be about giving peace of mind to the millions of Americans like Anna Marie in Las Cruces, like Brittany in Aztec, who are only one diagnosis away from a crisis if we don't get this right.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, over the past few years, the Affordable Care Act has made tremendous strides in expanding healthcare coverage for hard-working Americans and the families who need it. I thank my colleague for his stories, and I would like to add some of my own.

While the law could certainly be improved, the way to do it is not by passing TrumpCare, which even President Trump has admitted is a ''mean'' bill. Unfortunately, Republican Senate leadership has indicated whatever it is that the Republicans are crafting in secret, behind closed doors, is going to be very similar to the version of TrumpCare that has passed the House. That is simply bad news.

The version of TrumpCare that passed the House could cost 23 million Americans, including 385,000 Illinoisans, to lose healthcare coverage. It would make it more expensive for older Americans and working people, especially those with preexisting conditions, to purchase insurance.

TrumpCare would cause their premiums and their out-of-pocket costs to simply skyrocket. The premiums of the average Illinoisan would increase by $700.

TrumpCare would also make critical services like maternity care for new moms and mental health and substance abuse services significantly more expensive, even though they are desperately needed. That is extremely mean-spirited.

Making matters worse, it would also put veterans on the chopping block. Specifically, TrumpCare would prohibit veterans who are eligible for VA healthcare from receiving tax credits to help them afford insurance in the individual marketplace. However, there is a big difference between being eligible for VA healthcare and being enrolled in VA. Oftentimes, that is not even a choice you can make.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, as many as 7 million of our veterans are eligible for VA care but are not enrolled. Preventing them from receiving tax credits would amount to a massive tax hike that would force them to pay thousands of dollars extra each year. That is not just mean; it is unacceptable.

There has been ample reporting indicating that Republicans knew exactly what they were doing. They could have included a fix to this but purposefully did not because that would have made their bill ineligible to be considered under the Senate's budget reconciliation process, which requires only 51 votes. That is because to remedy this huge flaw, the veterans tax credit language would need to be considered in committees of jurisdiction. That would entail holding public hearings and markups in committees, which would then reveal to the American people what exactly is in the Republican bill.

Apparently, the cost of public scrutiny is too high for Senate Republican leaders who are willing to raise taxes on veterans so they can hide this bad bill from the American people. As a result, the appalling flaws in their bill remain unfixed, and up to 7 million veterans remain on the chopping block.

That is not the only way TrumpCare would harm veterans either. Its massive cuts to Medicaid would have a direct impact on veterans, since nearly 2 million veterans across our country, including 60,000 veterans in my own home State of Illinois, rely on Medicaid for their healthcare coverage. That is 1 in 10 veterans.

For nearly 1 million of these veterans, Medicaid is their only source of coverage. Many of them are eligible for VA care only for the injuries they sustained in the military but not for any of their other health needs.

I shouldn't have to remind my colleagues that veterans are at a higher risk for serious health issues because of the sacrifices they made for our Nation. Yet, if TrumpCare becomes law, many of them will lose the coverage they gained from Medicaid expansion under the ACA.

Right now, 13 Republican Senators are sitting behind closed doors in some secret room on Capitol Hill, gambling with the lives of millions of Americans and people who have honorably served their country. One of those lives belongs to Robin Schmidt, a veteran from the North Side of Chicago.

Robin served during Desert Storm in Army military intelligence. Robin loved her job in the military because it had always been her dream to serve her country. As a 13-year-old girl, Robin

stood at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, DC. She knew that serving her country was her true calling. However, she was eventually forced to end her military career because, in her words, ''the Army refused to allow my husband to come back overseas to live with me.''

When she was pregnant with her child, she was forced to leave the military in order to return home to Arkansas to be with her husband to raise their children. When she was stateside, the VA denied her benefits because they were not service-connected, thus forcing her and her husband to pay the costs of maternity care and childbirth out of pocket.

She faced medical complications and developed endometriosis, a preexisting condition, and had to have a Caesarean section during delivery. After she delivered her baby, she ended up with $500,000 in hospital debt.

This enormous debt followed Robin and her husband throughout their marriage, and it eventually left them in divorce, medical bankruptcy, and with all of the repercussions that come from extreme financial hardship. She was also blocked from accessing affordable healthcare coverage because she now had a preexisting condition and could not afford good coverage on an $8.50-an-hour wage, so she went without care.

Robin remained uninsured for a total of 22 years, until she remarried and gained healthcare coverage under her husband's insurance. This was especially devastating because in 2007, Robin was diagnosed with cancer. Even though Robin was covered by her husband's insurance, insurance companies were not required to cover chemotherapy in 2007, and chemotherapy was too expensive for Robin and her family to pay for out of pocket. Instead, she had to choose debilitating surgeries.

After her cancer diagnosis, Robin developed severe autoimmune arthritis. Her autoimmune treatments started at $5,000 a month and soon increased to $14,000 a month. Insurance companies wanted Robin to pay for her medication upfront, with no guarantee of reimbursement.

As her medical costs grew and grew, Robin had to choose between her medical care and her mortgage payment. After the Affordable Care Act became law, insurance companies were mandated to cover Robin's medications and treatments. They were no longer able to refuse her the medications she needed. Her insurance premium prior to the Affordable Care Act was $1,600 a month, which was more than her family paid for their monthly mortgage and household bills. Now she pays just $300 a month for her entire family. There was no more redtape, constant stress, or fear that she might not be able to work—or worse, might not be able to stay alive.

Unfortunately, the coverage, relief, and peace of mind the ACA brought to Robin and her family is now under attack by congressional Republicans. Robin is afraid that if TrumpCare becomes law, she will once again become nothing more than an uninsurable preexisting condition. She is afraid she would be considered a high-risk pool patient who will be able to have insurance but will not be able to actually afford any of her treatments. She is afraid that if Republicans push through TrumpCare, she will not be able to walk, work, and will have absolutely no quality of life.

Her dream was to serve her country in our Armed Forces. She took two oaths to serve this country, and she kept those oaths—promises that she would defend this great Nation.

Robin may not be in uniform anymore, but she certainly deserves that we in Congress and here in the Senate defend her right to access quality healthcare.

For Robin and for nearly 7 million veterans, middle-class families, our seniors, and some of our most vulnerable Americans, I urge my Republican counterparts to stop these secret negotiations, take repeal off the table, and work with Democrats to improve our healthcare system. Just like Robin, each of these Americans has a story, a family, and a valued place in society. Robin's family and all Americans deserve better than having their coverage stripped away from them behind closed doors.

I yield back.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess, following my and Senator NELSON's remarks, until 5 p.m. for the all-Senators briefing and that the time count postcloture.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized to speak on issues not associated with the present subject of debate.

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

COUP ATTEMPT IN MONTENEGRO

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, last week, the Senate voted 97 to 2 to strengthen sanctions against Vladimir Putin's Russia for its attack on America's 2016 election and its other aggressive and illegal behavior. I hope the other body will take swift action to send this legislation to the President's desk.

We need strong Russia sanctions now because it has been 8 months since the U.S. intelligence community said publicly that the Russian Government directed this attack on our democracy. Yet, in the last 8 months, the Russian Government has hardly paid any price for its aggression. Thus, Vladimir Putin has been learning all over again that aggression pays. He learned that in Georgia in 2008. He learned that in Ukraine in 2014. He has learned that in Syria since 2015. So Vladimir Putin remains on the offense. This year, Russia attempted to interfere in France's election. We have already seen attempts to influence German public opinion ahead of 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.

But perhaps the most disturbing indication of how far Vladimir Putin is willing to go to advance his dark and dangerous view of the world is what happened in October 2016 in the small Balkan country of Montenegro, when Russian intelligence operatives, in league with Serbia nationalists and others, attempted to overthrow the democratically elected Government of Montenegro and murder its Prime Minister on the country's election day. Why would Vladimir Putin go this far? To answer this, one must understand why Russia was so interested in the outcome of Montenegro's election.

Russia opposes the spread of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law across Europe, which is advanced by the European Union and protected by the NATO alliance. To Russia's great frustration, Montenegro's Government had committed the country to a Euro-Atlantic future and pursued membership in both the EU and NATO.

Indeed, NATO's invitation to Montenegro to join the NATO alliance in December 2015 was considered particularly insulting and threatening by Moscow. After all, Montenegro had once been part of Russia's traditional Slavic ally, Serbia. Montenegro has long been a favorite destination for Russian tourists. Russian politicians and oligarchs are reported to own as much as 40 percent of the real estate in that country. A few years ago, when it feared losing its naval base in Syria due to the civil war, Russia reportedly sought a naval base in Montenegro but was rejected. Now, if Montenegro joined NATO, the entire Adriatic Sea would fall completely within NATO's borders.

Montenegro's accession into NATO would also send a signal that NATO membership was a real possibility for other nations of the Western Balkans—Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and, according to some optimistic voices in the region, perhaps even Serbia.

That is why Montenegro's October 16 election was no ordinary one. In Russia's eyes, it was a last chance to stop Montenegro from joining NATO, to thwart Montenegro's pursuit of a Euro-Atlantic future, and to reassert Russian influence in southeastern Europe. That is why there was little doubt that Russia would exert heavy pressure on Montenegro ahead of the election. Russia had already been accused of fomenting anti-government demonstrations and funding opposition parties. Yet few would have guessed how far Russia was willing to go. But now we know.

This April, as part of my visit to seven countries in southeastern Europe to reaffirm America's commitment to the region, I visited Montenegro and was briefed by Montenegrin officials on

the status of the investigation into the coup attempt. On April 14, Montenegro's special prosecutor filed indictments against 2 Russians and 12 other people for their roles in the coup attempt. This past weekend, a Montenegrin court accepted the indictments. As a result, the evidence before the court is now public.

I believe it is critically important that my colleagues and the American people are aware of the allegations made in these indictments. Pieced together, they reveal another blatant attack on democracy by the Russian Government—an attempt to smash a small, brave country that had the nerve to defy its will. And it is another unmistakable warning that Vladimir Putin will do whatever it takes to achieve his ambition to restore the Russian Empire.

According to the indictments, the coup planning got off to a slow start in March 2016. That was when opposition leaders in Montenegro allegedly sent an emissary known as Nino to Belgrade to meet with Slavko Nikic. In the first meeting at Slavko's office, Nino said that he had been doing business for years in Russia, and he claimed that he was in contact with powerful men in Russia. He claimed that one of the men with him was a Russian FSB agent in charge of special tasks. Nino tried to enlist Slavko and his men to lead a plot to destabilize Montenegro, and Slavko indicated he was able and willing to participate. Later, Nino and Slavko met on the Pupin Bridge in Belgrade, this time with the supposed FSB agent in tow. The Russian told Slavko it would be good if he traveled to Moscow.

After these encounters in Belgrade, Nino enlisted the help of Bratislav Dikic, the former chief of Serbia's special police and someone we will meet later in this story, to use his contacts to check into Slavko's reliability. He didn't pass the test, and this original version of the coup plot was abandoned.

It was at this point that the two Russians, Eduard Shishmakov and Vladimir Popov, stepped in to take control of the plans for destabilization operations in Montenegro. Both of these men are believed to be members of the Russian military agency, the GRU.

Shishmakov in particular already had a colorful past. In 2014, Shishmakov had been serving as deputy military attache in Russia's Embassy in Warsaw, Poland. After a scandal involving a Russian spy network within the Polish Government, the Polish Government identified Shishmakov as a GRU agent, declared him persona non grata, and ejected him from Poland.

Having taken over the Montenegrin operation, Shishmakov moved quickly to contact Sasa Sindjelic. The two had first met in Russia back in 2014, when they discussed their opposition to the EU and NATO. Shishmakov even offered to help support Sindjelic's organization, the Serbian Wolves, which promotes Pan-Slavism and close relations between Russians and Serbs and opposes NATO and the Government of Montenegro.

The two met again in Moscow in 2015. This time, Shishmakov had Sindjelic submitted to a polygraph test that lasted for hours. After the test went well, he sent Sindjelic home with $5,000 and a promise to contact him if something urgent came up. That was in the spring of 2016. Shishmakov wrote that Montenegro's Prime Minister, Milo Djukanovic, and his government must be removed immediately and that the people of Montenegro must rebel in order for this to happen.

Then in September 2016, Shishmakov told Sindjelic to urgently come to Moscow. Shishmakov even sent $800 to Sindjelic to buy his ticket. It was no trouble for Shishmakov to send the money—after all, he sent it from a Western Union conveniently located on the same street as GRU headquarters in Moscow. Once in Moscow, Shishmakov and Sindjelic discussed the planning and operation of the plot to overthrow the Montenegrin Government, install the opposition in power, and abandon all plans for Montenegro to enter NATO. Shishmakov said opposition leaders from Montenegro had already visited Moscow a number of times and were in agreement with the plan.

In total, Sindjelic received more than $200,000 to support the operation. He used those funds to pay personnel, acquire police uniforms and equipment, and purchase weapons, including rifles, gas masks, bulletproof vests, electrical tranquilizers, and a drone with a camera. He was also provided encrypted phones to enable secure communications between the coup plotters and GRU agents.

Sindjelic and Shishmakov stayed in close touch as preparations continued ahead of the October elections. The plan was this:

On election day, the Montenegrin opposition was planning large protests in front of the Parliament, expecting to draw nearly 5,000 people. Sindjelic and his coconspirators, including Bratislav Dikic, the former commander of the Serbian special police, would recruit as many Serbian nationalists as they could to travel from Serbia to Montenegro to join the demonstrations. They were hoping 500 would join the protests and be ready to act when called upon.

As the protests were underway, a group of 50 armed men recruited by Shishmakov and wearing police uniforms provided by Sindjelic would ambush and kill the members of Montenegro's Special Anti-Terrorist Unit to prevent them from interfering with the coup. The armed men, still wearing their police uniforms, would then proceed to the Parliament building, where they would begin shooting at members of the police defending the Parliament building. They hoped to create the impression that some members of the police were changing sides and joining the protesters against the government. As the coup plotters saw it, this was poetic justice—reminiscent of how former Serbian President and convicted war criminal Slobodan Milosevic had fallen from power.

Led by the coup plotters and the Serbian nationalists, who would wear blue ribbons to be recognizable to one another, the protesters would then storm the Parliament building and declare victory for the opposition. Within 48 hours, the new government would be formed and arrests would be made across the capital, including Prime Minister Djukanovic. If the Prime Minister could not be captured, he would be killed.

The coup plotters obviously wanted to create chaos, and it appears they may have had someone in mind to blame for the violence. Ahead of the election, the Montenegrin opposition hired a U.S. company to provide services, including countersurveillance and planning to extract personnel from the Montenegrin capital, around the time of the election. It is still unclear, the precise nature of this outreach to the U.S. company by the Montenegrin opposition or what services the company may have ended up providing, if any. Now, this is speculation, but if I know the Russians, American security personnel—some likely to have military or intelligence background—on the ground during the coup in the Montenegrin capital would have made excellent patsies for stories on Sputnik and Russia Today.

Fortunately—one might even say luckily—the plan never got off the ground. Four days before election day, one of the coup plotters got cold feet and informed the Montenegrin authorities. On election day, Montenegrin police arrested 20 Serbian citizens, including the on-the-ground leader of the nationalist protesters, Bratislav Dikic, the former commander of the Serbian special police. News of the arrests sparked fear among others involved in the plot, many of whom retreated to Serbia.

Furious that the plot had been disrupted, Shishmakov, the Russian GRU agent, grasped at straws for new ways of bringing down the Montenegrin Government. He ordered Sindjelic to procure an assassin to kill the Prime Minister. Sindjelic did not carry out that order and later turned himself into police, fearing he would be next for assassination by the GRU.

Shishmakov also ordered a false flag attack on the opposition party headquarters to create the appearance of an attack by the government. He even hoped to entice one of the political parties that was part of the Prime Minister's coalition to leave the government with a bribe using Russian money funneled through Chechnya. Again, fortunately none of this worked.

Montenegrin police made several arrests in the aftermath of this failed coup attempt, but those arrests did not

include the alleged GRU agents, Mr. Shishmakov and Mr. Popov. They were in Belgrade, Serbia's capital. Presumably, Montenegrin authorities hoped the Serbian Government would consider expediting the pair to Montenegro as the government had done with some of the lower level coup plotters, but that did not happen, and the two Russian agents returned to Moscow.

I know that sounded a little complicated. Every American should be disturbed by what happened in Montenegro. We should admire the courage of the country's leaders who resisted Russian pressure and persevered to bring Montenegro into the NATO alliance, which finally took place officially 2 weeks ago.

If there is one thing we should take away from this heinous plot, it is that we cannot treat Russia's interference in America's election in 2016 as an isolated incident. We have to stop looking at this through the warped lens of politics and see this attack on our democracy for what it is—just one phase of Vladimir Putin's long-term campaign to weaken the United States, to destabilize Europe, to break the NATO alliance, to undermine confidence in Western values, and to erode any and all resistance to his dark and dangerous view of the world.

That is why Putin attacked our 2016 election. That is why Putin attempted to overthrow the Government of Montenegro. That is why he tried to influence the election in France and will try the same in Germany and elsewhere throughout Europe. That is why it probably will not be long before Putin attempts some punitive actions in Montenegro to show other countries in the Western Balkans what happens when you try to defy Russia.

That is why it will not be long before Putin takes interest in another American election. The victim may be a Republican. It may be a Democrat. To Putin, it will not matter as long as he succeeds in dividing us from one another, weakening our resolve, undermining confidence in ourselves, and eroding our belief in our own values.

I urge my colleagues again that 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 and that of our European allies with strength, with resolve, with common purpose, and with action.

I would like to finally add we will be holding a hearing in the Armed Services Committee on this whole situation that took place in Montenegro.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, before the Senator from Arizona leaves the floor, he and I are very much in syncopation on the question of what he has just eloquently addressed about the Russian attempts to interfere in other countries as well as in our country with regard to the elections.

I just wanted to pose a question to the Senator. Is the Senator aware, as he obviously is—but it is my rhetorical question—that the Russians have already intervened in the elections of other countries and indeed tried and it boomeranged against them against France and are probably in the midst of trying to interfere with the German election?

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, every indication, I would say to my friend from Florida, a most valued member of the Armed Services Committee, they will continue to try to interfere in any election they possibly can. They are spending large amounts of money. They have certainly, to some degree, undermined confidence between countries in the NATO alliance, and that, coupled with the degree of uncertainty here in Washington, has probably put as great a strain on the NATO alliance as you have seen since its very beginning. I thank my colleague from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, one further question. Has the Senator been—well, he obviously is aware, and he has obviously been briefed—but can he help convey the gravity of the situation of Russia's interference in the upcoming elections in 2018 and 2020, where not only is it a question of whether they would change the vote count by getting in and hacking, but they could change the registration records so that a voter could show up to vote on election day and suddenly the registrar says: But you are not registered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would just say to my colleague from Florida that when you look at their early attempts versus their latest attempts, they learn with every experience. It is a lot easier—as my colleague from Florida knows, it is a lot easier to play offense than defense.

We are going to have a hearing on this whole Montenegrin thing, and I know the Senator from Florida will play a very significant role. Every time we turn around, we have a new revelation of some of the activities that have been carried out, not just by Russian hackers but by Chinese, by Iranian, even by single individuals. This is probably the national security challenge that may not be the greatest, but I would say we are the least prepared for.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, this Senator certainly looks forward to that hearing in the Senate Armed Services Committee. I thank the chairman for his leadership in constantly bringing up and reminding the American people of the threat that is coming through cyber attacks into this Nation and others.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. President, I wanted to speak about what is going on here in this Capitol at this moment. It has been the subject of a lot of discussion last night and again as we have been in session today; that is, trying to hatch a plan to overturn the Affordable Care Act and to find something that would replace it. In fact, it is being done in secret.

I would just merely pose the question, Why is it being done in secret if it is to be something that is to help the American people more than what the existing law is? Why wouldn't that be something you would want to expose to the light of day? If it is to improve the existing law, why in the world would that not want to be done on a bipartisan basis?

Yet we find ourselves confronting a situation where the majority leader has said he is trying to cobble together 50 votes to overturn the existing law, and it must be something that is not very palatable in what it is to overturn the existing law. Otherwise, it would be done in the open and in the sunshine.

Now, the existing law is not perfect so we ought to improve it, but the existing law, as we have heard in some of these dramatic townhall meetings, is the reason some people are alive today. It is the reason some folks no longer have to worry about being denied coverage for a preexisting condition.

By the way, that requirement of not allowing an insurance company to deny you coverage because you have a preexisting condition is not applicable just to those who are on the State and Federal exchanges. That is applicable to all insurance policies.

So if you have that kind of condition, which I can tell you might be a condition such as asthma, we are not going to insure you for the rest of your life because you had asthma or, if you want to go to the extreme—and it has been done—an insurance company saying: I am not going to insure you because you have had a rash. The flip side of that is insurance companies put a lifetime limit on it so if they pay out up to a certain amount—let's say $50,000—the insurance policy stops, no more payouts.

That is not according to the existing law. In the existing law, they can't say you are going to lose your coverage because you hit that lifetime limit cap that their payout is.

Every day I hear from Floridians who tell me how the House-passed bill would affect them and what we speculate, since we don't know, that the Senate bill that is attempting to be brought out at the last minute next week—what we suspect is going to be in it. Every day I hear from people.

So take, for example, the lady from Sebring, FL, Christine Gregory. She has allowed me to use her name.

> My daughter has Juvenile Diabetes (Type 1). She was diagnosed at age 15 . . . when the Affordable Care Act was signed into law. I absolutely rejoiced about the end of all the horrible things that come along with having a pre-existing condition. She no longer had to worry about cancellation of her insurance, waiting periods, denial of coverage, annual and lifetime limits, higher premiums, and the dreaded high-risk pools.

Then she continues to write:

> Fast forward to 2017. All the fear and the worry are back. Our President and Congress plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. Now she has the very real prospect of having to enter a very expensive high-risk

pool. That could mean bankruptcy and denial of needed medicines and care.

Take, for example, an unnamed constituent from Florida's panhandle who wrote me. I got this today.

I have chronic and persistent illnesses that would be debilitating without affordable and comprehensive care. I have chronic back pain from degenerative disc disease in every part of my spine. I have had innumerable procedures to help manage the pain, including epidural and targeted nerve block injections at multiple levels.

This unnamed individual, a constituent of mine, continues:

I am now planning to get radio frequency ablation of the nerves. Using pre-ACA rules—

Before the existing law—

I would have hit my lifetime limit at least 1 year ago and been unable to continue getting pain-managing treatment. I often feel like I am a burden to my wife who is one of the most understanding and supportive people I know.

He concludes:

If the AHCA passes and our insurance and total health costs go up significantly, the burden I feel I am right now will become a reality. Please, I deserve more than to suffer from uncontrollable pain. And my wife deserves more than to have to care for me in that condition.

The existing law is not perfect, but it has given millions of people, including those with preexisting conditions like juvenile diabetes, access to healthcare they otherwise would not receive. This healthcare bill that passed the House that is the model for apparently something—for taking it out of that—if they are ever going to get an agreement between the two Houses, that Republican healthcare bill will take us back to the days when it was nearly impossible for people with a preexisting condition to get health insurance coverage. People with asthma could be forced to pay more than $4,000 more because of that preexisting condition. People with rheumatoid arthritis could be forced to pay up to $26,000, and people who are pregnant could pay more and more and more.

Let me tell you about another constituent from Volusia County who shared how the repeal of this would affect her.

She writes:

My husband, a 50-year-old leukemia survivor, would lose his ability to obtain comprehensive health insurance due to the lack of protections for people with preexisting conditions.

My daughter, who has asthma and rheumatoid arthritis, would lose her ability to obtain comprehensive health insurance due to the lack of protections for people with pre-existing conditions. Our family, all hard working, tax paying Americans, will once again be subjected to annual and lifetime limits which could easily bankrupt us.

My daughter, who is a young woman just starting her career, would lose her ability to purchase affordable health insurance and receive tax subsidies that she currently receives under the Affordable Care Act.

She goes on to say that she is afraid that TrumpCare would relegate them, if you change all of that, to second class citizens.

Why am I saying this about preexisting conditions with regard to what was passed at the other end of this hallway, down at the House of Representatives? They say: No, no, preexisting conditions are not eliminated down there. But that does not tell you the whole story. The whole story is that, in the House-passed bill, it is left up to the States, and the States see that as a way of so-called lowering their premiums. If you start doing that for some and do not keep it spread over the millions and millions of people who are now under the protection of the preexisting conditions, it is going to become a select few more, and it is going to spike the cost of that insurance.

I conclude by telling you another part of what happened down there in the House. In effect, they changed Medicaid as we know it by cutting out of it over $800 billion over a 10-year period.

Donna Krajewski, from Sebastian, FL, wrote to me recently to tell me what Medicaid is for her family.

She writes:

I am writing this letter on behalf of my son . . . who has Down syndrome. . . . These blocks—

That is the technical term they are using in the House of Representatives. In other words, it is capping Medicaid to each of the States—

or caps [on Medicaid] will cause States to strip critical supports that my son needs to live, learn and work in the community.

These [Medicaid] funds have enabled him to participate in an adult supervised day program and transportation to and from the site. This program involves classes, such as daily living skills, social skills, and daily life skills. He is also able to go out once or twice a week to socialize. . . . He has become more confident and happy with his life.

We need to find ways to improve the healthcare system. We need to fix the existing law. We do not need to unwind all of the good things that we have done. We need to fix it in a bipartisan way so that, when folks come to me and ask, ''Senator, what are we going to do to fix it?'' what I will then say is that it is my responsibility to do something.

Last week, I filed a bill, with a number of other Senators, that would lower healthcare premiums for people in Florida by up to 13 percent. What it would do is help to stabilize the existing law's insurance marketplace by creating a permanent reinsurance fund that would lower the risk that insurance companies face—a risk pool, a reinsurance fund.

It is kind of like what we did back when I was the elected insurance commissioner of Florida in the aftermath of the monster hurricane—Hurricane Andrew. Insurance companies just simply could not take the risk that a category 5 would come along, hit directly on the coast, and just wipe out everything—wipe out all of the capital reserve the insurance companies had. What they did was to go to a reinsurance fund for hurricanes, which we actually created in Florida—the catastrophic reinsurance fund—so that the insurance companies could reinsure themselves against a catastrophic hurricane loss.

That is exactly what this proposal is. It would lower premiums by 13 percent and create a reinsurance fund—a permanent one—that would lower the risk to the insurance companies that are insuring people's health.

At least one Florida insurer estimates that this bill, if passed, would reduce premiums for Floridians who get their coverage from healthcare.gov by 13 percent between 2018 and 2020.

So you ask: What is a suggestion? I figured that it was my responsibility to come up with a suggestion on how to fix it. This is one of several fixes, and it is a tangible fix, and it is, in fact, filed as legislation.

What we are facing in the suggestion that I have made is not the ultimate solution to solving the healthcare system, but it is one small step in the right direction to making health insurance available and affordable for the people who need it the most.

How are we going to fix it?

You are not going to do it by running around in the dead of night, secretly putting together a plan that is only going to be a partisan plan. If you are going to fix the healthcare system, you are going to have to do it together, in a bipartisan way, building consensus. That is what I urge the Senate to do instead of what we are seeing happen behind closed doors.

Let's get together. Let's work together to make healthcare more affordable for people and stop all of this stuff behind the closed doors. The American people deserve better.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 5 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 4:25 p.m., recessed until 5 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. JOHNSON).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, it is hard to argue that ObamaCare is not a failing law. Seven years after it became law, its laundry list of problems continues to grow: higher premiums, higher deductibles, customers losing healthcare plans, patients losing doctors, fewer choices, failed co-ops, unraveling exchanges. And, unfortunately, without action, that list will only get longer and the consequences will only become more severe. Republicans know that. Democrats know that. Unfortunately, many Americans know it firsthand.

The American people deserve better, and they rightly expect us to act. That

is why choosing to watch from the sidelines as ObamaCare fails is not an option.

To say that ObamaCare has created significant problems for the American people is an understatement. That is why Senate Republicans are working to fix the mess created by ObamaCare to provide real solutions to this failed law. We want to save the millions of hard-working families who are trapped by ObamaCare's taxes and mandates.

Average annual individual market premiums have increased by $2,928—an increase of 105 percent—since 2013 in the 39 States that use healthcare.gov. And 62 percent of States using healthcare.gov, including my home State of South Dakota, saw premiums double between 2013 and 2017. We will help stabilize these collapsing insurance markets that have left millions of Americans with little or no options.

Today, one in three counties has only one insurer on its ObamaCare exchange. According to CMS, 47 counties nationwide are projected to have no insurers, which means Americans in these counties could be without coverage on the exchanges for 2018. As many as 1,200 counties—nearly 40 percent of counties nationwide—could have only one issuer in 2018. It is hard to argue that you have a market, that you have competition, when you have one option. That is 40 percent of the counties in America in 2018.

We will improve the affordability of healthcare by eliminating the ObamaCare taxes and mandates that are causing premiums to increase the most. These taxes and mandates have cost the American economy $1 trillion—a cost that was ultimately incurred by patients in the form of higher costs and larger tax bills. Reversing these taxes will provide millions of American families and businesses with much needed tax relief.

We will also preserve access to care for individuals with preexisting conditions. There has been a lot of debate and misinformation, I might add, about this issue over the past few months. In the Senate, we will ensure that individuals with preexisting conditions continue to have access to the care they depend upon.

We will also safeguard Medicaid by giving States more flexibility, while ensuring that those who rely on this program will not have the rug pulled out from under them. States should have the flexibility to design and operate Medicaid programs in a fiscally responsible way and not be stymied by the Federal Government.

Making these critical reforms to Medicaid will empower States with the tools they need to implement healthcare programs that best meet their residents' needs.

We must also ensure that those Americans who already rely on this program will not be left in the lurch. Republicans recognize our responsibility to make sure that Medicaid continues to provide quality care for these vulnerable citizens. We will balance the needs of the individuals who have Medicaid coverage, while ensuring sustainability of the Medicaid Program.

Finally, we will free the American people from the onerous ObamaCare mandates that, in some cases, forced them to purchase insurance they don't want or can't afford. These mandates have resulted in burdensome taxes that have been levied against most small businesses and the American people. The Republican healthcare plan will revoke these burdensome mandates and put the American people—not Washington—back in charge of their healthcare. This will be a huge leap in the right direction for hard-working families and small businesses.

Reforming America's healthcare system isn't easy, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't try. We have spent years—literally years—debating this issue, and we have had lots of ideas along the way. Now it is time to take action.

The core principles of the Republican healthcare plan are as follows: helping to stabilize collapsing insurance markets; improving the affordability of health insurance; preserving access to care for those with preexisting conditions; safeguarding Medicaid for those who need it the most; and freeing the American people from onerous ObamaCare mandates.

Without meaningful action, ObamaCare's problems aren't going anywhere. Without action, the individual market will continue to collapse, and more and more Americans will be without insurance options. Without action, Americans will continue to experience rising healthcare costs because of the law's costly taxes and mandates. Without action, States will continue to be hamstrung by Medicaid's bureaucracy, and we will not be able to put this critical program on a more sustainable path for the folks who need it the most. Without action, the ''Washington knows best'' approach to healthcare will live on.

We cannot let that happen, which is why we plan to deliver patient-centered healthcare reforms that lower costs and increase access to care for the American people.

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. TESTER. 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. TESTER. Mr. President, we are about to embark on something that is pretty amazing to me. Next week, I am told, we are going to take up the Senate healthcare bill that is going to be the first cousin of the House bill. There are a lot of things that are referred to as putting lipstick on a pig, but this is truly putting lipstick on a pig, where we are going to take healthcare away from millions of Americans.

We might make it a little better by extending some Medicare or Medicaid monies, but in the end that will go away. We will potentially set up some high-risk pools for people with preexisting conditions. I will tell you, from my time in the State legislature when we dealt with high-risk pools, that gives access to healthcare for the rich folks.

In essence, what we are going to do next week, because some folks in this body forgot to read the Affordable Care Act when it came up, is we are going to repeal it and we are going to replace it with a piece of garbage.

Today I rise on behalf of the 48 rural and frontier hospitals in Montana—48 rural and frontier hospitals that are the backbone of our State.

I rise for the 77,000 hard-working Montanans who now have healthcare because of Medicaid expansion, and the 41,000 jobs of our State of 1 million people sustained by our healthcare industry today.

I rise on behalf of every Montanan who deserves to know what is going on in Washington, DC. What is going on back there? Are you guys really talking about jerking my healthcare away from me? Are you guys actually talking about taking something up that is really not going to do much for the 30 million Americans getting pounded by high premiums and high deductibles? Are you doing this to give the top one-tenth of 1 percent of the Americans in this country a tax break?

Right now, the Senate majority in this body is playing Russian roulette with people's lives. A handful of Washington politicians are crafting a secret healthcare bill in a smoke-filled room, probably a little whiskey is involved, a few steaks. They are crafting a bill that will impact every man, woman, and child in this country.

I heard earlier today, they said these meetings were open. It would be nice to know where they are. I would love to go in and give my two bits on what rural America feels about how we need to move forward with healthcare in this country. This is a problem that is not going away unless we address it in a commonsense way.

So they are crafting this bill in secret. We don't know what is in it, but we have indication it is going to be very similar—a first cousin—to the American Health Care Act passed in the House so we should be deeply concerned. This is irresponsible legislation that jeopardizes healthcare for over 250,000 Montanans, denying coverage to over 150,000 Montanans who have a preexisting condition like cancer, heart disease, even high blood pressure, and, quite frankly, would put many of our rural hospitals at risk—at risk of closure; at the very best, changing the methods by which they deliver healthcare to these rural communities, by the way, that are hanging on by

their fingernails. This House bill is creating uncertainty in Montana, it is creating uncertainty across this Nation, it will fundamentally change our lives forever, and I do not believe it will be for the better.

My office has received over 3,600 pieces of correspondence related to the American Health Care Act. Many Montanans are terrified of the implications of this horrible bill. As elected officials, we are obligated to answer the tough questions, defend our positions, and advocate for our constituents. That is not what is happening here. As a result, the Senate, through their secret meetings and through a potential rushed-through healthcare bill next week—and I see no reason why it will not be—we are not doing right by our constituents.

The process and this bill are a disservice to folks like Julie Williams from smalltown Montana—Shepherd, MT. Julie was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, MS, in 2011, 5 months before the Supreme Court was set to make their decision on the Affordable Care Act. She spent those 5 months terrified that she was in for a constant fight with insurance companies over coverage, but the Supreme Court upheld the ACA, and Julie has insurance and doesn't have to worry about being denied coverage if she moves, changes jobs, or—God forbid—becomes unemployed because she now has a preexisting condition. Julie also doesn't have to worry about insurance companies cutting off her treatments because she happens to hit a lifetime cap, which is a very real concern for a healthy young woman with a disease like MS. She didn't have to worry—she didn't have to worry until now. If a bill like the American Health Care Act passes, Julie could be charged more because of her disease. She is unable to afford that coverage. The plan may not pay for the healthcare services she needs.

This legislation is also a disservice to a lady with the same last name, no relation, Jennifer Williams, of East Glacier, MT, one of the most beautiful parts of the world. Thanks to the preventive care provisions in the current healthcare system, Jennifer and her husband have been able to catch a few conditions early and avoid bigger problems in the future. That is going away.

Unfortunately, their premiums are rising. Congress needs to address that problem head on. I couldn't agree more. This bill that passed from the House doesn't do that. It will send folks like Julie and 250,000 Montanans on Medicaid out into the cold, no access to affordable care, jack up the cost of healthcare for folks with health insurance, and jack up the cost of healthcare for folks in their fifties and sixties. We can and should be working together to lower those costs for folks like Jennifer, Julie, and other Montana families. Instead, we are here scoring political points—or trying to—upending all the good things in the ACA and the current healthcare system. Instead, we should be working together in Congress. The Senate should be working together—not in some back room but right here on the floor—to lower premiums, copays, and deductibles, while increasing access to lifesaving medical care.

Look, we have said it before, we will say it again: The Affordable Care Act isn't perfect, but it has a lot of good things. Let's fix the things wrong with it and keep the progress we have made, but instead, we hear in Washington, particularly the Republican majority, is creating chaos in the marketplace and driving costs up. This chaos is putting our rural hospitals and community health centers at risk. That is not just the statement. That is a statement of fact.

Every day, folks in rural communities rely on their local hospitals, clinics, everything from basic checkup to emergency treatments. Thanks to Medicaid expansion, in Montana, these hospitals and community health centers have seen a reduction in charity care, and they have been able to keep their doors open, but the American Health Care Act puts those funds at risk and puts these frontier medical centers on the chopping block. These medical professionals are sworn by oath to provide healthcare for folks. If Medicaid expansion goes away, the hospital will be forced to absorb those costs.

Over the last 10 months, I have held over a dozen listening sessions, eyeball-to-eyeball listening sessions with Montanans. We are going to be holding some more. The sessions have been over health. I have heard one thing loud and clear from people: If Medicaid expansion goes away, these rural frontier hospitals will have to fundamentally change how they deliver healthcare or they may be forced to shut down altogether. These hospitals operate on razor-thin margins, and they cannot afford to see these funds disappear.

Take my hometown, Big Sandy, MT. Back in 1910, my grandfather came out, took a look around, saw grass as tall as the belly on a horse, and said: ''This is where we are going to homestead.'' He went back and got my grandmother. The farm that Sharla and I farm today was started, patented back in 1915. They worked together with their neighbors, the homesteaders of that area. They built barns, they built businesses, but it took them 50 years to build a hospital. In the mid-1960s, a hospital was finally built in Big Sandy, MT—50 years of people working together to get that hospital built.

I am going to tell you, if we don't do smart things in this body, if we take steps backward and not very many—and this bill I have seen from the House is horrible, and I don't think the bill in the Senate is going to be much better because it is a low bar. Hospitals like the hospital in Big Sandy will go away. I am going to tell you something, when that hospital goes away, Big Sandy goes away. Rural America goes away.

Big Sandy is just an example of hundreds of small towns in Montana and throughout this country that depend upon rural hospitals for healthcare. Without hospitals, Montana frontier communities will be forced to drive 100 miles to deliver a baby or take an expensive ambulance ride after an accident. People are not going to be able to afford or they are not going to choose to live there because of a lack of healthcare. They are not going to take that risk. They are going to move out of those small towns, and they are going to move to places where they have healthcare. In some cases, families who have lived in those house and on that property for generations will be forced to move. These hospitals just don't keep patients alive, they keep communities alive. The House bill would kill those rural hospitals and would be the death of rural America.

That is not the only uncertainty facing rural America. In Montana, insurance companies filed their proposed rates with the insurance commissioner last year, but these insurers are left without vital information for their proposals. They don't know if this administration will continue the cost-saving reduction payments that help make healthcare more affordable. Insurers have said if these payments go away, consumers will face double-digit rate increases. Montanans deserve to know from their elected officials what kind of impact this action has on premiums, and yet the insurance commissioners are leaving consumers and Montanans in the dark.

Transparency builds a more effective government. Hiding important information from the public is unacceptable at any level of elected official. We live in a country where citizens can hold their government accountable, and the American people make good decisions when they have good information, but right now, a select few in this body are shielding the American public from what is really going on. We hear about a bill that is going to impact one-sixth of the economy, we hear about a piece of legislation that will rip healthcare away from 23 million Americans, we hear about a bill that will take us back to the days when Montanans couldn't afford to get sick, but we haven't seen it.

Families across Montana are sitting at the kitchen table wondering if their healthcare coverage is going to go away. Folks are walking out of the doctors' offices with newfound conditions and wondering: Will I be able to get treatment if something similar to the American Healthcare Act is passed by the Senate? Children are being born prematurely, with asthma and cerebral palsy, and parents are left fearing their son or daughter will never be able to afford insurance.

These families deserve more from Congress. At a bare minimum, they deserve hearings. They deserve a panel of

experts discussing how we can lower premiums, reduce healthcare costs, and put transparency into prescription drugs. They deserve smart action, not political action. They deserve a Congress that will work together to improve the lives of all Americans, not one that works behind closed doors to draft secret legislation that will send shock waves through homes across this country.

Our Founders expected more from this body. Quite frankly, I expected more from this body before I got here. Montanans expect their U.S. Senate to work for them.

I am going to leave you with one story. I was in Butte, MT, at one of my listening sessions. A gentleman was sitting at the table. He was probably 45 years old. He said: You know, I have two kids and I can't work. I have had diabetes since I was a teenager. I have had some issues with mental health for a good portion of my adult life.

He said: I haven't been able to work, haven't been able to support my family, and then the Affordable Care Act came along, and the State of Montana was wise enough to pass Medicaid expansion. I was able to go to a doctor. I was able to get my diabetes handled because of Medicaid expansion. I was able to see a psychologist and get my mental health issues under control, and I was able to go back to work. I was able to support my family.

He said: And now you guys in Washington, DC, want to take all that away from me.

I will tell you, I will fight like hell to make sure that never happens. And if the majority leader wants to try to ram this down the people's throats, I will spend the rest of my life telling them why and who did what to them.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor, like many of my colleagues, shocked at the Republican majority's brazen, secretive effort to hijack the legislative process and pass a bill that would hurt millions of Americans.

I have served in public office for more than four decades, and never once in my 45 years as a mayor, a State legislator, a Congressman, or a Senator has it been so hard to understand the motivations of an opposing party. What kind of problems are Republicans trying to solve with legislation that raises premiums, reduces coverage, decimates Medicaid, and increases costs for everyone? Certainly not any of the concerns I have heard in New Jersey. Never has someone come up to me at the local diner to say that their premiums are too low or that Medicaid covers too many children or that cancer patients don't pay enough out of pocket.

There is only one place in America where these bad ideas have any traction, and that is behind closed doors in Washington, where 13 Republican men are working on a secret bill to take healthcare away from millions of people and raise costs on millions and millions more. They want no transparency, no bipartisan input, no hearings.

Those are the same Republicans who in 2009 and 2010 accused Democrats of ramming healthcare reform through Congress too quickly. In fact, it was the majority leader who said at the time: ''This massive piece of legislation that seeks to restructure one-sixth of our economy is being written behind closed doors without input from anyone.'' Even the Vice President—a Congressman at the time—said it is ''wrong for legislation that'll affect 100 percent of the American people to be negotiated behind closed doors.'' Mind you, all of these complaints came during what was a far more open, transparent process.

I sit on the Senate Finance Committee. I remember the process quite well. I remember our chairman at the time, Senator Baucus, bending over backward to get Republican input. We held 53 meetings—hearings, roundtables, briefings, and negotiations—on healthcare reform. Afterward, we held the longest Finance Committee markup in over 20 years—a markup that led to the adoption of nearly a dozen Republican amendments, on top of the two dozen amendments we accepted before the markup began.

Democrats also made huge bipartisan overtures on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. They, too, held a transparent process and adopted over 160 Republican amendments—160 Republican amendments.

Then and only then did we bring the bill to the floor of the Senate, and when we did, we spent 25 consecutive days in session debating the bill on the Senate floor in front of the American people.

In short, Democrats spent months making compromise after compromise in the hopes of getting Republicans on board, only to learn that they never had any intention of working with us at all. They never cared about expanding access to care or reducing prescription drug costs for seniors or making insurance affordable. They didn't work with us then, and they certainly are not working with us now.

Behind closed doors, 13 Republican men are debating just how many millions of Americans will lose their coverage under this bill. Is it 23 million? Is it 20 million? Is it 16 million? Behind closed doors, they are discussing just how high the age tax should be on middle-aged workers. Is it $8,000 a year or $10,000 a year or $12,000 a year?

Behind closed doors, they are picking and choosing which consumer protections to gut. Should they bring back lifetime limits on coverage, which is a real problem if you have a serious disease? Before, there were lifetime limits. So you had coverage, and then all of a sudden, you hit that ceiling. If you had challenges, for example, with cancer, and you expended all of your coverage, you still had an illness that needed to be treated. Now you were one illness away from bankruptcy.

Would you let patients with preexisting conditions sink or swim in high-risk pools, allowing insurers to once again charge women more than men simply because they are women? Same age, same bracket, same geography.

It is easy to see why Republicans want to keep this bill out of the public eye. If it is anything like the House version passed earlier this year, it is going to be a terrible, mean-spirited bill—a bill that the Congressional Budget Office said would take insurance away from 23 million people. It would raise premiums by 20 percent a year and price middle-aged consumers out of the market. It is a bill that, according to reports, even President Trump said is too mean. I have to tell you something. If a bill is too mean for President Trump, it is certainly too mean for New Jersey.

Today, I understand that a comment was attributed to the President. He was meeting with a group of business leaders. He says he wants a health bill with heart—with heart. I can tell you, it is not this bill because the House bill—and, from what I am hearing, behind closed doors, the potential Senate bill—is a heartless bill.

I am not the only one with that view. I was glad that most of my New Jersey colleagues in the House of Representatives rejected this bill in a bipartisan way. Indeed, every House Democrat and nearly every House Republican in our delegation understood why this bill would devastate New Jersey.

This bill will price thousands of New Jerseyans out of the private health insurance market, especially those nearing retirement age. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, premiums for a 60-year-old worker who earns $20,000 a year in Monmouth County will see their premiums increase by 900 percent—900 percent. That is an increase of nearly $9,000.

Every day, New Jerseyans are reaching out to tell me what is at stake in this debate and what this secretive effort will mean for their health and their financial security. Take Dr. Howard Fredrics, a 54-year-old constituent from Park Ridge who emailed to say:

> Without subsidies provided under the ACA, my 51-year-old wife and I would have no insurance. . . . We could not afford premiums in excess of $1100 a month. . . . Without these subsidies, millions will go uninsured and many of these people, myself included, will die.

Of course, my Republican colleagues like to say their plan will give Americans more choice. We don't know what the plan is, but they keep saying—at least the House plan—we are going to give Americans more choice. But if all the choices are unaffordable, what good are they? What good is it to have ''more choices'' if you can't afford any of the choices?

If they provide significantly less coverage, what good is it to say I have insurance when the moment I get sick, I don't have the coverage for it? So I have been paying for a policy that doesn't really help me at the moment I need it.

They also say their plan will give States more choice on how to run Medicaid. When you cut Medicaid by $800 billion, you leave States no choice but to scale back the health services they provide. That is not choice. That is not choice.

Leaving nursing home patients out in the cold, ending respite care for children with disabilities, denying low-income children a fair shot of the American dream—that is not choice.

New Jersey alone will face $30 billion in cuts to Medicaid over the next decade—cuts that will not only leave thousands of families uninsured but, according to the Milken Institute, will cost New Jerseyans more than 41,000 jobs. It is no wonder Senate Republicans are terrified of having to defend this bill. It is a terrible, mean bill, and they don't have the guts to tell the American people what is in it, even though they want to pass it next week. If only they had the courage that so many New Jerseyans have shown me in recent weeks as I have toured our State—hard-working Americans who have been willing to share their personal healthcare stories.

It is not easy to share a serious illness you have with everybody in the world, but so compelled are they and so courageous, I would add, that they do. People like Irma Rivera, a constituent I recently met in Jersey City, told me about her battle with uterine cancer nearly a decade ago. She was fortunate to survive, but without the Affordable Care Act, she would be blacklisted by health insurance companies for the rest of her life, simply because she is a survivor of that cancer. Today Irma is covered and receiving world-class care.

I also met with Samantha Williams, a young mother in Burlington City. She told me about her son's brush with a life-threatening asthma attack. They were uninsured so they avoided going to the emergency room, as so many people do. The illness gets worse and worse, more consequential to your life, more consequential to the cost, but eventually his breathing got so bad, she had no choice. The doctor said if they had waited any longer, her son might have never made it. She credits Medicaid with saving his life.

I also want to know how my Republican colleagues can reconcile their concern with the opioid epidemic with their plan to end the Medicaid expansion that is saving so many lives. Just yesterday, I received an email from Irene in Oakhurst, NJ. She writes:

> My daughter is a recovering drug addict on the Medicaid program which pays for mental health care and services. . . . She's part of the opioid epidemic that has taken the lives of so many young people like her. She's been drug free for almost a year. Taking money from this program would be disastrous not only for her but for so many people who cannot afford any other healthcare.

So I listen to those compelling stories. They are courageous to tell their stories to the whole world—very personal stories. Yet there isn't the courage here to come forth with a bill and let's debate it open, in public. This bill leaves millions of low-income Americans who depend on Medicaid expansion with no options at all. And for what? To give insurance health executives, real estate moguls, and hedge fund managers a massive tax cut they don't need. If there was ever such a thing as class warfare, this is it.

In my home State of New Jersey, 250 millionaires are slated to get a collective tax cut of $14 million. You heard it right—250 millionaires get a tax cut, while over half a million New Jerseyans lose their healthcare coverage. That is a pretty awesome thought—an incredible thought. It is totally mean-spirited. It is certainly without heart. Many of them are people who work in some of the toughest jobs, but they don't get healthcare benefits at the job where they work, from dishwashers and cashiers and home health aides, just to mention a few. These were my neighbors growing up in the tenement in Union City—people who worked tirelessly to give their children a better life and so often put their own health on the back burner.

Many of us thought the cruel legislation Republicans passed through the House would be dead on arrival in the Senate. Instead, an incredibly unpopular bill has a new lease on life. Why? Because padding the pockets of the health insurance industry, capping Medicaid spending, and cutting taxes for millionaires have been at the top of Republican wish lists for years.

The notion that the GOP can pass this secret bill with no debate is insulting to our democracy, and the idea that they can dismantle this historic law without hurting millions of people is just not true because, make no mistake, when you take $800 billion out of Medicaid, everyone feels the pain. When you add 23 million people to the ranks of the uninsured, everyone feels the pain. When you send more people back to the emergency room as their way of getting healthcare, saddle consumers with higher out-of-pocket costs, and end protections against insurance company abuses for patients, everyone feels the pain.

What really boggles my mind—what I just can't understand is, there is no shortage of problems in our healthcare system—real problems that need real solutions. Ask anyone, and I mean anyone, about our healthcare system. I will guarantee you will get an earful about what is wrong with it. You will hear from parents about deductibles that are too high, from workers about how hard it is to find in-network doctors, from seniors about generic drugs that suddenly cost thousands of dollars, police officers about the opioid crisis tearing apart our communities, and hospital staff concerned about the nursing shortage, business owners, like the group I met from Cumberland County, NJ, yesterday who want Congress to work in a bipartisan way to lower employees' healthcare costs.

Imagine, just for a moment, how thrilled Americans would be if Republicans actually had a bill that solved some of their problems instead of bringing back old ones. Imagine how excited my Republican colleagues would be to show off a bill that improved, instead of endangered, people's lives, but my Republican friends are not excited to show off this bill because when you are excited to show a bill—when you have a great product, you want the whole world to know about it. When you have a terrible product, you don't want anyone to know about it, and they don't want to defend it because they know it is indefensible.

For 7 years, my Republican colleagues put politics over policy. For 7 years, they demonized ObamaCare, with no substance behind their rhetoric. Now their poll-tested platitudes have caught up with them, and they know it. That is why they let 13 Senators, who represent less than one-quarter of the country, meet behind closed doors, and that is why their hope is to keep this bill a secret until the very last minute.

So today I have come to the floor with a message for my Republican colleagues: If you want to have a debate about how to improve our healthcare system and about how to help more families get covered and about how to lower costs more and create a healthy, more productive nation, these are issues Democrats have been ready to have that debate on. I have said it in the Senate Finance Committee. We did remarkable things under the Affordable Care Act, but there is still room for improvement. We are ready to have that debate because Democrats know that while the Affordable Care Act was a historic law—a law that stopped insurance companies from dropping your coverage if you got sick, that covered 90 percent of Americans for the first time in our history, that required healthcare plans to cover essential health benefits like visits with specialists, prenatal care, mental health and addiction treatment, hospital stays, and more—despite all of the positive steps forward, in spite of all the good the Affordable Care Act did, Democrats have never stopped believing we could even make it better.

Before we can make our health system better, we must stop Republicans from making it worse. We cannot go back to a time when healthcare was a privilege granted only to those who could afford it, when it was always, I think, a right afforded to all Americans. The only way we can go forward is by working together with bipartisan input, with open debate, with full transparency on an issue that affects virtually every American, in full view

of the American people we were elected to serve. They deserve no less, but they are getting a lot less by the majority as it relates to this bill—behind closed doors, in secret, that even the President of the United States says is mean. The only thing I can agree with President Trump on is we need a bill with heart, and from what I have seen and heard so far, this is pretty heartless.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me thank my colleague from New Jersey for his excellent remarks on the Affordable Care Act and its future and really spotlight the point he made. He and I have been around legislatures for a long time, both at the local level, State level, and here in Washington. If you have something you are really proud of—a bill—you can't wait to roll it out. We have a place for a press conference about every 15 feet in the corridors around here. We have a press corps that fills the Gallery when they all show up, and they are anxious to hear our story. If you have something you are proud of—and each of has had that legislation—you put it in a press release and do the social media and the whole number.

If you are unfortunate to be in the position to bring a bill to the floor you are not very proud of—you don't know how you can explain it back home—you keep it secret. You do it behind closed doors.

What the Senator has said is exactly the truth—and we know it, as our colleagues on the other side know it. They have, for the past several weeks, since the House passed their bill, been meeting behind closed doors. So 13 male Senators—why they couldn't invite the women Republicans in the Senate—it is their decision—I can't understand. They have not produced one thing for public consumption—nothing. Yet, Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, tells us: Well, you have 10 days. We are going to pass the new healthcare system for the United States of America in 10 days, and pretty soon we are going to show you what we are going to propose.

It tells you the whole story. There is something in there that is painful, that hurts them politically, and that they can't really explain. After all these years—''Repeal ObamaCare, repeal ObamaCare,'' they can't come up with an alternative they can sell to the American people.

I thank the Senator for pointing out his experience, and the experience he is finding in New Jersey. I am finding the same thing back in Illinois.

I thank my colleague from New Jersey for his statement.

This last Saturday, I was invited to debate a Republican House Member from my hometown of Springfield, IL, on his vote in favor of TrumpCare—if you want to call it that—the Republican healthcare plan in the House. We were invited by the Ministerial Alliance of Springfield, the African-American ministers. I accepted the invitation on a Saturday afternoon, and he did as well.

He put conditions on it. No. 1, no media coverage. This is not open to the public. Really? We are going to debate a healthcare system change for America that is going to affect millions of people, and we will not talk about it in public? But that was his ground rule. And then in the midst of it, he thought someone was taping him while it was going on and stopped full sentence and said: I don't want this taped. Well, here is a bill he voted for to change the healthcare system for the people he represents, including the folks in that room, and he didn't want to be on the record or public about that discussion. That tells me a lot as well.

It isn't just a secret bill we haven't seen, it is a lot of Republican House Members who voted for it—and they were all Republicans—passed by, I believe, two or three votes, and now they don't want to talk about it. Well, there is a message there.

Here is what I have concluded after looking at this in a lot of different ways. Where you stand on healthcare in America depends on where you start on the question: Do you believe every American has a right to affordable, quality healthcare? If the answer is, no, that is for people who are lucky or rich or have the right job, then you can reach the same conclusion they did in the House when they passed the Republican measure because, you see, their bill removed health insurance coverage from 23 million Americans, instead of expanding the percentage of Americans with health insurance coverage, which we set out to do with the Affordable Care Act. The Republicans have reversed field. They are taking away health insurance from more people than the Affordable Care Act gave.

Is that a press release from the Democratic National Committee I just quoted? No. It was the Congressional Budget Office—a bipartisan group here, an agency in Washington that analyzes our legislation and gives us their analysis. They looked at the Republican bill and said it will cost 23 million people in America their health insurance.

If you started with the position that healthcare is a right, you would stop at that point and say: Well, this bill clearly doesn't work because it takes away healthcare coverage instead of creating healthcare coverage.

Where you start is where you stand.

The second question is this: If you believe the highest priority of this effort is to cut taxes on wealthy people, then, of course, you would vote for what they passed in the House—$700 billion in tax cuts. Now, that tax cut came right out of the healthcare system of America. That is the tax revenue that is used to expand Medicaid insurance coverage to those who are lower income workers. That is the money that is used to help subsidize the premium payments of middle-income workers who can't afford the monthly premium.

But they believed—the Republicans who voted in the House—that there is a higher priority than helping those people to have health insurance, and that is cutting the tax burden of the wealthiest people in America. So if you start with that premise—that you have to cut taxes by $700 billion regardless of what happens—this is what you end up with, the measure that came over from the House of Representatives. I don't know what the Senate Republicans will come up with in response to that, but clearly it must be parallel or close to what the House of Representatives did.

Let's take a close look at this measure and take a look at the history that brought us to this moment. As I mentioned, we still don't have the text of the Republican secret bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Six years and counting, they can't produce a replacement. It looks like we are going to vote on this in a few days. By congressional standards, this is a high crime and misdemeanor. To think that we are going to consider a bill within 10 days affecting every American, affecting one-sixth of the American economy—a bill that will say to some people: You are going to lose your health insurance, and to others: We are going to offer you a health insurance policy that really isn't worth the paper it is written on, and we haven't seen the bill.

Well, what is the history of this? Is this the way the Republicans always operate? Not really. In December 2009, Republican Senator MCCONNELL, their leader, said, when we were debating the Affordable Care Act: ''This massive piece of legislation that seeks to restructure one-sixth of our economy is being written behind closed doors without input from anyone in an effort to jam it past, not only the Senate, but the American people.'' That was Senator MCCONNELL about the Affordable Care Act when it was being proposed by President Obama.

Well, what is the fact? During the passage of the Affordable Care Act, the Senate held over 50 bipartisan hearings on the bill. How many bipartisan hearings have we held on the new Republican healthcare proposal? None, not one.

At that time, 6 years ago, we had a week-long markup in the Finance Committee and a month-long markup in the HELP Committee. The Senate spent—and I remember this well—25 consecutive days in session on the floor of the Senate debating this bill. It is the second longest consecutive period of time ever spent on a bill in the Senate.

We considered on the floor of the Senate hundreds of amendments. You know, we ended up adopting 150 Republican amendments to the Affordable Care Act. Not a single one of them would vote for it, but we took their proposals to make it better seriously and adopted 150 changes.

How much of a chance will we have to amend the Senate Republican bill that may come before us as soon as this week? It remains to be seen. It could be what we call a vote-arama around here, which is a corruption of what this grand institution really established as a standard of operation for generations and centuries. The vote-arama lets you vote on an amendment offered to the bill, with 2 minutes of debate.

You are changing the healthcare system and you have 1 minute on each side to debate your amendment? Is that a serious undertaking with something that is that consequential for so many Americans? No one has seen this secret bill—not Democrats, not many Republican Senators.

I asked Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Price last week in a hearing: Have you seen the bill? You are the one that is going to have to implement it.

He said: No, I haven't seen it either .

This weekend the Presiding Officer, Senator RUBIO, a Republican from Florida, said:

> The Senate is not a place where you can just cook up something behind closed doors and rush it for a vote on the floor.

Mr. President, I couldn't agree more.

Senator RON JOHNSON, a Republican from Wisconsin, said:

> I want to make sure the American people, I want to make sure the members of Congress have enough time to evaluate it. I want to have enough time to really take a look at what we're voting on.

That was Republican Senator RON JOHNSON of Wisconsin.

Senator BOB CORKER, a Republican Senator from Tennessee, said:

> I've said from Day 1 and I'll say it again: The process is better if you do it in public. Obviously, that's not the route that is being taken.

I didn't pull these quotes from months and years ago. They are from the weekend. The comments were made over the weekend by Republican Members about their very own leadership and the process they are following in preparing to change America's healthcare system.

Let's talk about some numbers. Let's start with zero. How many hearings have we had on the Senate bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act? Zero. How many markups have we had? Zero. How much time has the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the man responsible for implementing this bill, spent on it to review it? Zero. How much Democratic input has been allowed for this secret negotiation? Zero. How many women Senators have been involved in crafting the bill? Zero. How many medical organizations or patient groups support the secret Senate bill? Zero. And most concerning of all, how much time has the public had to even read this bill? Zero.

Let's take a look at another number: 23 million. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 23 million Americans will lose their health insurance under the House-passed repeal bill—1 million in Illinois.

I have said it before, but I will say it again—and this is a driving factor in terms of my views on the subject: If you have ever in your life been the parent of a seriously ill child and didn't have health insurance, you will never forget it as long as you live. I know. I have been there.

I was a law student, newly married, with a brand new baby girl with a really serious health issue, and I had no health insurance. My wife and I sat in the charity section at Children's Hospital waiting for them to call our name so we could take our little girl in to the latest resident, with a hundred questions and who wanted to go through them all over again. I thought to myself: DURBIN, how did you ever reach this point where you don't have health insurance?

I fixated on health insurance from that point forward. From the time I got out of law school, for years afterwards while my daughter was growing up, I not only had health insurance, but I sometimes had two health insurance policies. I was so worried about having coverage if I ever really needed it.

So we want to take health insurance away from 23 million Americans? Do you want it to be your family, your son, your daughter? I sure wouldn't.

Here is another number: 750. Lower income older Americans would see their premiums increase 750 percent under the House-passed repeal bill, from $1,700 under ACA to $14,000 under the Republican plan. Now, how can that happen? How can you see the premiums go up that fast? We built into the affordable care bill a guaranteed protection for disparity in premium payments of no more than three to one. The most expensive health insurance policy cannot be more than three times the lowest cost policy. The Republicans changed that to five to one. Well, who does that affect?

If you are between 50 and 64 years of age, you are in a category of people not yet eligible for Medicare. If you are now facing chronic illnesses that could make health insurance more expensive, you will pay the higher premiums. The higher premiums, when calculated, are dramatically higher for this group. That is why the American Association of Retired Persons has come out foursquare against the Republican TrumpCare, the Republican repeal bill. It is just unfair to those between the ages of 50 and 64.

Some 130 million, that is how many people nationwide have preexisting conditions. Almost half of the people in Illinois have a preexisting condition. Several weeks ago, I had a procedure for an atrial flutter. It worked out just fine. Now I have a preexisting condition. I am in that category. What does that mean? If you went out to buy health insurance with a preexisting condition, you are charged more, if you could buy insurance at all.

So when the Republican bill that passed the House does not guarantee, as the Affordable Care Act, that you cannot be discriminated against because of a preexisting condition, it makes millions of Americans—130 million—more vulnerable.

Is that what they wanted to achieve?

Where you stand depends on where you start. If you think everyone is entitled to health insurance, then you can't be standing for something that allows preexisting conditions to be used against you. A lot of the people whom I am talking about have employer insurance, but what about those who shop on the individual market or purchase individual insurance in the future? Under the House repeal bill, insurers would, once again, be allowed to charge people with preexisting conditions more money for insurance.

The next number is 33,000. Senator MENENDEZ referred to it. That is how many people are dying every year because of the opioid or heroin overdose—33,000, and 1,800 a year in Illinois.

Now, listen to this. The Republican bill dramatically cuts the Medicaid Program, the Nation's largest provider of substance abuse treatment services, and it allows insurers, once again, to refuse coverage for those needed services.

I have been here a few years, and I can remember that desk because that is where Paul Wellstone of Minnesota sat, and I remember that desk because that is where Pete Domenici of New Mexico sat. You couldn't ask for two more polar opposites politically. Paul Wellstone was a garrulous, proud liberal. Pete Domenici was a proud conservative. One was from Minnesota, and one was from New Mexico, and they came together on an issue.

Do you know what the issue was? Each of them had someone they loved in their family who suffered from a mental illness, and they said: Why in the world will health insurance companies refuse to write coverage for people with mental illness? They fought for years against the insurance companies, and they finally won.

We included, in the Affordable Care Act, the requirement that your health insurance policy cover not only physical illness but mental illness. It was a breakthrough. For the first time, we stopped treating mental illness like a curse and treated it like an illness that could be treated.

They added a section at the end that most of us didn't even notice: mental illness and substance abuse treatment. I didn't know it was there until the opioid crisis, and I started going to these rehab facilities and saying to these people there: How are you paying for this care? Some of them were under Medicaid, but those under private health insurance said: My policy covers it. It covers it because Wellstone and Domenici insisted on putting it in.

After that historic victory, you would think the Republicans would include mental illness and substance

abuse treatment as one of the basic essential services for health insurance, but they don't.

When they say we are going to write a bill that gives Americans more choice in their health insurance—oh, that sounds appealing—the choice is whether you want mental illness and substance abuse treatment or you don't.

Well, from where I am sitting, that is the kind of insurance coverage that should be basic to everyone. You never know whether that little girl that you are raising—that beautiful little girl—6 years from now is going to be struggling with an addiction. At that point, you better hope that your health insurance policy has some coverage so that you can save her life and bring her back from that addiction.

Now, 280,000 is the next number. That is how many children in Illinois depend on Medicaid for school-based health and medical services, from feeding tubes and handicapped buses to special education teachers. I made a point this last week when I was home to visit the schools in Chicago and Bloomington and hear firsthand what cuts in Medicaid meant to local school districts.

Many Senators don't realize this, but the kids with whom you are dealing who have learning disabilities and other disabilities, many of them are supported at your local schools by Medicaid dollars. The Medicaid dollars pay for the counselors, pay for the special buses, and pay for the feeding tubes for these kids to survive. So when you make a dramatic cut in Medicaid, as the Republican bill that came out of the House does, you endanger the very services and the very benefits that these special ed kids need. The school districts are mandated by law to help these kids, but if the money is cut off from Medicaid, what are they going to do?

The Republican repeal bill that every Republican Congressman in my State voted for slashes $40 billion in Medicaid funding to Illinois, including money to school districts.

Three—this is the most important single number in the next 10 days in the Senate—3. That is the number of Republican Senators needed to stop this. Surely, there are three Republican Senators who are concerned enough about this secret, behind-closed-doors process that we are witnessing when it comes to rewriting healthcare in America—at least three Republican Senators who want to take time to properly review this legislation that affects one-sixth of our economy.

Just the Senators who have publicly stated their personal concerns about this process—if the three of them would come together, we could stop this and do it the right way.

I said privately to a Republican Senator last week, after the tragedy where a Republican Congressman was shot at a baseball practice: Isn't this the moment when we ought to get together quietly—Democrats and Republicans—when we ought to sit down and write a bill we can both be proud of? I am hoping he was listening.

I am hoping that three Republican Senators, if they stand up for it, will help us achieve that goal. Surely there are three Republican Senators who are worried about the kids in their States like I am worried about the kids in mine, who do not want to make the opioid epidemic any worse, who want to make certain—underline the word ''certain''—that they are protecting the people they represent from discrimination because of preexisting conditions. Surely there are at least three Republican Senators who do not want to throw millions of Americans off of health insurance coverage. Maybe some of the Senators who represent States that have been ravaged by the opioid epidemic will step forward. There are a lot of them. It only takes three to change this.

To Republican Senators, I say: Do not do this. Do not do this secret process. Democrats are willing to work with you to improve our healthcare system. I have said before that the only perfect law that I know of was carried down a mountain on clay tablets by Senator Moses. All of the other efforts can use some work, and in this case, we are willing to work with you. Take repeal off the table, and we will put a chair up to the table.

Over the past week, I have received thousands of emails and letters from Illinoisans who are worried about what is happening in the Senate today.

Helen, from River Forest, IL, is 47 years old. She is a primary caregiver for her parents. Her mom has Alzheimer's and is in a nursing home.

Here is what Helen writes:

> Just before Thanksgiving, my dad's health deteriorated. He is now in hospice in the same nursing home. I have spent all of their savings—my mom and dad's savings—on healthcare. My mom is finally eligible for Medicaid. Without Medicaid, I would need to bring my parents to my home and quit my job to personally nurse them myself because I don't have the money myself to keep them in the nursing home and pay for private care. Please protect ObamaCare and Medicaid.

Here is Madeline from Chicago, who writes:

> My younger sister is disabled. Before the Affordable Care Act went into effect, she was just about to hit the maximum lifetime limit on her private insurance policy.

That used to be the case. You would sign up for insurance, and you would say: Oh, great coverage—no copays, no extra charges. Then you would find in the fine print that there is a limit to the coverage of $100,000. My friends, I can tell you that we are—each and every one of us—one diagnosis or one accident away from having more than $100,000 in medical bills. It happens pretty quickly. That used to be built into insurance policies. We outlawed it under the Affordable Care Act. Now, in the name of ''choice,'' the Republicans want to bring that back.

Madeline writes:

> Before the ACA went into effect and my daughter was about to hit the maximum lifetime limit on her private insurance policy, she was going to have to apply to be part of a high-risk pool, but that was going to involve a long wait, without any insurance, plus high premiums if and when she was accepted into the pool. The Affordable Care Act came just in time for my sister and for our family.

When the Republicans in the House say not to worry about people with preexisting conditions, that they have set aside $8 billion to take care of them in private risk pools, it is sad and, in a way, tragic that they would say that. That is not nearly enough money, and there is no guarantee that private risk pools that never worked before the Affordable Care Act would work in the future. It is a way to give an answer to the obvious question of why they are dropping so many people with preexisting conditions from guaranteed coverage.

The last note is from Erin of Chicago, who writes:

> I implore you to force a public hearing on the ACA repeal that the Republicans are trying to sneak through. If this bill passes, many of my friends and family will lose coverage either due to preexisting conditions or because the deductibles are too high. Additionally, my parents are self-employed and getting older. Under the proposed act, their health insurance premiums will likely increase to $14,000 a year. They cannot afford it. They just can't. They will not have coverage, will get sick, and be unable to afford care.

If the Republicans have a better idea than the Affordable Care Act, for goodness' sake, stop hiding it from the American people. Stop talking about it behind closed doors. If it is such a good idea, bring it out for the world to take a look at. There will be critics. There were certainly critics with regard to the Affordable Care Act. I remember that very well. Yet that is what this body is all about.

The Senate is supposed to be a place where we deliberate on the important issues of our time. Is there anything more important than your health, the health of the people whom you love, and your opportunity to get basic healthcare so that you can protect them?

I implore the Republicans and those who know that this is the wrong way to go to stand up and say so. It only takes three Republican Senators to do this a much different way so as to bring credit to this institution and create a bill—create a change—that makes healthcare more affordable, more accessible, and more fair to more Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

USS ''FITZGERALD'' TRAGEDY

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, before beginning my remarks about the requirement for a larger Navy, I do want to extend my deepest condolences to the loved ones of those who lost their lives aboard the USS *Fitzgerald* recently.

During Saturday morning's early hours, the USS *Fitzgerald*—a guided-

missile destroyer—collided with a Filipino merchant ship off the coast of Honshu, Japan. The USS *Fitzgerald* sustained significant damage, including the rapid flooding of three compartment areas, and seven sailors lost their lives. These young Americans were on board because they chose to serve their country, and they are heroes whose names will be added to the list of those who will be forever honored by our country.

Questions remain about the collision, and I am hopeful that they will be answered soon. Administrative and safety investigations into this tragedy are already underway, but we cannot change the horrific turn of events that occurred at 2 a.m. off the coast of Japan.

Our hearts go out to the loved ones who are dealing with the grief this accident has caused. We wish a quick recovery for those who were injured, and our gratitude goes to the many sailors who acted swiftly and resolutely to save lives and prevent further damage aboard.

Does the distinguished majority leader wish me to yield for some business?

Mr. MCCONNELL. If the Senator would yield so that I may do wrapup here.

Mr. WICKER. I would be delighted.

Mr. President, I yield to the distinguished majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I thank the Senator.

MORNING BUSINESS

TRIBUTE TO JOAN B. CLAYBROOK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to take a few moments to acknowledge my friend, Joan Claybrook. Joan is a legend. She is one of the most effective champions this Nation has ever seen—and she is still leading the charge. Last week, Joan celebrated her 80th birthday, and one thing is clear, Joan Claybrook isn't slowing down.

Like so many bright young people in Washington, Joan began her career right here in the U.S. Congress, working for Senator Walter Mondale and Representative James Mackay as a congressional fellow. In the summer of 1966, the Senate unanimously passed the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act, the first major legislation to improve auto safety in this country. This effort was led by consumer advocate, Ralph Nader, and working right by his side was Joan Claybrook. It led to important safety standards we take for granted today: seatbelts, windshield wipers, outside mirrors, and dashboards. This landmark legislation also launched Joan's impressive career as a consumer advocate.

During the Carter administration, Joan served as the head of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, where she led efforts to improve vehicle safety and increased consumer access to safety information. Prior to her time with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, she ran Congress Watch, worked for the Public Interest Research Group, National Traffic Safety Bureau, Social Security Administration, and the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

In 2009, Joan retired as president of Public Citizen, after nearly three decades of service championing consumer interests and campaigning on issues from campaign finance reform, to truck safety, and business regulation. Among her many accolades at Public Citizen, Joan was able to limit the number of triple- and longer double-trailer trucks on the road, and she helped to ensure that health, safety, and environmental agencies were able to continue its important work protecting the American people, but her proudest, and perhaps most impactful, achievement was winning a 20-year battle with the auto industry to install airbags in cars. Because of Joan's work, countless lives have been saved. I want to thank her for these contributions that improved the health and safety for so many across the country.

Joan Claybrook has been honored by numerous organizations, including the Philip Hart Distinguished Consumer Service Award from the Consumer Federation of America, an Excellence in Public Service Award from the Georgetown University Law Center, and an award for Superior Achievement from the National Traffic Safety Bureau—just to name a few. In her precious spare time, Joan serves on the board of Citizens for Tax Justice and Public Justice. She also cochairs the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety and Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways.

It is not simply Joan Claybrook's extraordinary resume that earned her such great respect; it was her approach to the job. Joan brought humility, integrity, and fairness to every challenge she faced. Her energy, passion, and optimism are infectious, and her continued drive to ensure all Americans have the chance to lead safe and equitable lives make her an inspiration. Joan may have retired, but her commitment to those values has never wavered. She is a force of nature.

I will close with this. I strongly believe in the role of public service to create change and make a difference. Joan Claybrook's years of service reflect these values and prove that, with the right approach, change is possible. I am lucky to count Joan as a friend. It is with great pride that I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating Joan Claybrook's 80th birthday and congratulate her on an outstanding career. I hope Joan enjoys this special day, and I wish her many more wonderful years.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES AND TOWNS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in Vermont, we believe in forging resilient communities through strong local governments and in fostering well-informed leaders to understand and respond to the many complex issues facing us today. The Vermont League of Cities and Towns, VLCT, embodies these principles and more, and I am delighted to contribute in honoring the league and its members on its 50th anniversary.

Established in 1967, the VLCT was created to help improve local governance. Local officials needed a way to help towns best serve their constituents and to connect members of their communities with their local governments. In response, a handful of municipalities formed the organization that provided these services. Beginning with VLCT's first executive director and continuing through today, this organization has consistently worked to represent the values of all Vermonters. For the first time in 1995, every city and town in Vermont had joined as members of VLCT, demonstrating how valuable this institution is for all of our communities regardless of their size.

For many years, I too have worked alongside VLCT to improve the lives of Vermonters. Whether through their efforts supporting the State's recovery from Tropical Storm Irene or improving the water quality of Vermont's rivers and streams, their dedication to Vermont's way of life and quality of life makes us all better. They provide direction and advice and support our municipalities in their timely and important but often underfunded responsibilities.

As a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, VLCT will always be there to support us, to support Vermont communities. Our great State is made better by the involvement of organizations like the VLCT, and I wish them continued success over the next 50 years in bettering the lives of all Vermonters.

CBO COST ESTIMATE—S. 512

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, in compliance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Environment and Public Works has obtained from the Congressional Budget Office an estimate of the costs of S. 512, the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act, as reported from the committee on May 25, 2017.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cost estimate be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 512—NUCLEAR ENERGY INNOVATION AND MODERNIZATION ACT

As reported by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works on May 25, 2017

SUMMARY

S. 512 would direct the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)—which licenses and regulates the use of radioactive materials at civilian facilities such as nuclear reactors—to

undertake certain activities related to establishing a regulatory framework for licensing nuclear reactors that use advanced technologies for either commercial or research-related purposes. The bill also would modify the NRC's underlying authority to charge fees to entities that the agency regulates and would authorize the Department of Energy (DOE) to provide grants to developers of advanced nuclear technologies to help pay for the costs of developing and licensing such technologies. Finally, S. 512 would amend existing law regarding the disposition of excess uranium materials managed by DOE.

CBO estimates that implementing S. 512 would cost $386 million over the 2018–2022 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. Pay-as-you-go procedures apply because enacting the bill would affect direct spending; however, CBO estimates that any such effects would be insignificant. Enacting S. 512 would not affect revenues.

CBO estimates that enacting S. 512 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2028.

S. 512 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary effect of S. 512 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 270 (energy).

	By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—						
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2017–2022
INCREASES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION [a]							
Advanced Nuclear Energy Licensing Cost-Share Grants:							
Estimated Authorization Level	0	87	88	90	92	93	450
Estimated Outlays	0	26	53	80	90	91	340
Accelerated NRC Activities:							
Estimated Authorization Level	0	10	10	10	10	10	50
Estimated Outlays	0	7	9	10	10	10	46
Total Changes:							
Estimated Authorization Level	0	97	98	100	102	103	500
Estimated Outlays	0	33	62	90	100	101	386

Note: NRC = Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
[a] CBO estimates that enacting the bill would have no significant effect on direct spending.

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

For this estimate, CBO assumes that S. 512 will be enacted near the start of fiscal year 2018 and that amounts estimated to be necessary will be provided at the start of each year. Estimated outlays are based on historical spending patterns for affected activities.

Advanced Nuclear Energy Licensing Cost-Share Grants

S. 512 would authorize DOE to provide grants to developers of advanced nuclear technologies to accelerate the development, licensing, and commercial deployment of those technologies. Such grants would be available for a range of costs related to those efforts, including fees charged by the NRC for licensing-related activities. Based on an analysis of information from DOE, CBO estimates that spending for such assistance under S. 512 would require appropriations totaling $450 million over the 2018–2022 period. That estimate is in line with the total amount of funding provided by the Congress for a six-year effort, now largely completed, to support the development, certification, and licensing of small modular reactors (a type of advanced nuclear technology). Assuming appropriation of those amounts, CBO estimates that outlays would total $340 million over the 2018–2022 period and $110 million after 2022.

Accelerated NRC Activities

Funding for the NRC—which totals approximately $1 billion in 2017—is provided in annual appropriation acts. Under current law, the agency is required to recover most of its funding through fees charged to licensees and applicants; CBO estimates that such fees, which are classified as discretionary offsetting collections, will total nearly $900 million this year.

S. 512 would require the NRC to establish a regulatory framework for licensing advanced nuclear reactors, defined in the bill as reactors that involve significant technological improvements relative to those currently being constructed. The bill specifies that any funding provided to the NRC for activities related to developing that framework would be excluded from the portion of the agency's budget that is offset by fees the NRC collects. Based on an analysis of information from the NRC about the anticipated costs of establishing the proposed licensing regime within the timeframe specified by the bill, CBO estimates that implementing S. 512 would cost $46 million over the 2018–2022 period, mostly for salaries and expenses for technical experts required to develop the necessary analyses and regulations.

In addition, starting in 2020, the bill would modify the existing formula used to determine the amount of NRC fees. CBO expects that the proposed modifications to the formula used to set regulatory fees charged by the NRC could change the amount of such fees collected in future years. Under both current law and S. 512, the amount of such fees would depend on the level of funding provided for a range of specific NRC activities. Because CBO has no basis for predicting how much funding will be provided for such activities in future years, CBO cannot determine whether the resulting fees would be higher or lower under S. 512 than under current law.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS

S. 512 would amend exiting law regarding the disposition of uranium materials managed by DOE. Under the bill, DOE would be required to develop plans for marketing those materials and to comply with annual limits on the volume of uranium materials placed into commercial markets. Specifically, the bill would cap sales and transfers at 2,100 metric tons per year through 2025 and at 2,700 metric tons starting in 2026. The bill also would expressly authorize DOE to market materials derived from depleted uranium, which is one of the by-products of the uranium enrichment process.

According to DOE, uranium sales and transfers averaged about 2,450 metric tons a year over the 2012–2015 period, but fell to 2,100 metric tons in 2016. Using information from studies done for the department on uranium markets, CBO estimates that the quantity of uranium that will be disposed over the 2018–2027 period under current law probably will remain below 2,100 metric tons a year. Thus, CBO estimates that the caps on sales and transfers of uranium materials in S. 512 would have no significant effect on offsetting receipts from those activities over the 2018–2027 period. (Under current law, CBO estimates that the sales of those materials will total about $800 million over the 2018–2027 period; however, CBO expects that only a portion of that value, or $80 million, will be deposited in the Treasury as offsetting receipts because of uncertainty surrounding DOE's budgetary treatment of these transactions.)

INCREASE IN LONG-TERM DIRECT SPENDING AND DEFICITS

CBO estimates that enacting S. 512 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2028.

INTERGOVERMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

S. 512 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

PREVIOUS CBO ESTIMATE

On June 12, 2017, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for S. 97, the Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act of 2017, as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on March 30, 2017. Both bills contain provisions that would authorize DOE to provide cost-share grants to support the expedited development, licensing, and commercial deployment of advanced nuclear technologies. Because those provisions are substantively the same and the estimated costs of implementing those provisions are the same in both bills. The estimated increase in spending subject to appropriation under S. 512 is greater than under S. 97 because the estimate for S. 512 includes additional costs for the NRC to meet new requirements specified by that bill.

ESTIMATE PREPARED BY:

Federal Costs: Megan Carroll and Kathleen Gramp; Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Jon Sperl; Impact on the Private Sector: Amy Petz.

ESTIMATE APPROVED BY:

H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

NOMINATION OBJECTION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I intend to object to any unanimous consent request at the present time relating to the nomination of Steven A. Engel, of the District of Columbia, to be the Assistant Attorney General for the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel until Mr. Engel responds to questions I posed to him in a June 12, 2017, letter concerning a May 1, 2017, opinion by the Office of Legal Counsel entitled, ''Authority of Individual Members of Congress to Conduct Oversight of the Executive Branch.''

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved Mr. Engel's nomination on June

8, 2017, and my objection is not intended to question the credentials of Mr. Engel in any way. However, at that time, no member had sufficient opportunity to pose questions to Mr. Engel concerning the May 1, 2017, OLC opinion. I believe each Member of my committee and of the Senate should have the benefit of his views on the opinion as they consider his nomination to lead the office that created it.

The opinion erroneously states that individual Members of Congress are not constitutionally authorized to conduct oversight. It creates a false distinction between oversight and what it calls ''nonoversight'' requests, and it relegates requests from individual Members for information from the Executive branch to Freedom of Information Act requests. I have written a letter to the President requesting that the OLC opinion be rescinded. The Executive branch should properly recognize that individual Members of Congress have a constitutional role in seeking information from the Executive branch and should work to voluntarily accommodate those requests.

My June 12, 2017, letter to Mr. Engel asks him several questions about the opinion, including whether the opinion met the OLC's own internal standards requiring impartial analysis, whether individual Members of Congress are ''authorized'' to seek information from the Executive branch, and what level of deference the Executive branch should provide to individual Member requests. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD following my remarks. I look forward to Mr. Engel's responses.

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

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, June 12, 2017.

STEVEN A. ENGEL,
Care of the Office of Legislative Affairs, United States Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. ENGEL: recently, the Committee obtained a copy of a May 1, 2017, Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) opinion entitled ''Authority of Individual Members of Congress to Conduct Oversight of the Executive Branch.'' That opinion asserts that individual Members of Congress in fact do not have that authority. Specifically, the opinion states, quite remarkably, that individual Members of Congress are not Constitutionally authorized to request information from the Executive Branch. It further states that requests from non-Chairmen essentially are subject to the same level of deference as a request submitted from a private, unelected member of the public pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

As you know, the Constitution imposes significant responsibilities on each and every Member of Congress that require them to make informed decisions and cast votes in the best interests of their constituents on a vast array of matters. Those responsibilities in many instances require that the Members have access to Executive Branch information. The OLC opinion did not entertain this and other key points and did not attempt to address the significant and dangerous implications it creates for the separation of powers, bipartisan congressional oversight, transparency in government, and accountability to the American people. Your views on this opinion, its incomplete analysis, and its highly problematic conclusions are very important for ''individual Members'' of the United States Senate to carefully weigh as they consider your nomination.

Thus, please respond to the following questions by June 26, 2017. Please number your answers according to their corresponding questions.

1. Are you familiar with the May 1, 2017 OLC opinion?

2. In your view, does this opinion meet the standards described in OLC guidance that require impartial analysis of competing authorities or authorities that may challenge an opinion's conclusions? If so, can you please point to the portion of the opinion which you believe fully discusses contrary authority or arguments for non-Chairmen's need for information from the Executive Branch to carry out their constitutional function?

3. Do you believe that individual Members of Congress, who are not Chairmen of committees, are ''authorized'' to seek information from the Executive Branch to inform their participation in the legislative powers of Congress? Do you believe they are authorized by the Constitution? Why or why not? Do you believe that they are authorized by Congress? Why or why not?

4. In your experience, what percentage of congressional requests for information are answered by the Executive Branch on a voluntary basis?

5. In your view, what is an appropriate reason for withholding information requested by an individual Member of Congress?

6. In your view, does the Executive Branch have any Constitutional responsibility to respond to requests for information from individual Members of Congress as part of a process of accommodation in order to promote comity between the branches? If not, why not?

7. Is a request from an individual, elected Member of Congress entitled to any greater weight than a FOIA request, given the Member's broad Constitutionally mandated legislative responsibilities? Why or why not?

Thank you for your cooperation in this important matter. Should you have questions, please contact DeLisa Lay of my Committee staff.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO LARRY VOYLES

• Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to congratulate Larry Voyles, the former executive director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, for his 40 years of dedicated service to the State of Arizona and the Nation.

Larry recently retired from the helm of my home State's wildlife management agency. He leaves with a litany of accolades and achievements that underscore a remarkable career. During his time at the department, Larry also served in a variety of national posts that advanced Federal policies important to outdoor sports and wildlife conservation, including as president of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Larry first began at the department as a district manager and eventually ascended to become the agency's top training officer and later a regional director before being selected by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to serve as the executive director for the past 8 years.

Faced with daunting challenges like regional drought and catastrophic wildfires, Larry proved time and again that the department understands how to care for the land and the large variety of animal life in the Grand Canyon State. Larry also knows the importance of safeguarding a State's right to manage wildlife populations without undue interference from the Federal Government, and he remains a tireless advocate for sportsmen community and those pursuing meaningful wildlife conservation.

I thank Larry, my friend, for his honorable service at the Arizona Department of Game and Fish and wish him the best in his future endeavors.•

TRIBUTE TO DARYL DELABBIO

• Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, today I wish to mark the distinguished 40-year public service career of Daryl Delabbio of Kent County, MI. Mr. Delabbio is widely regarded as one of the Nation's preeminent municipal managers, helping lead his region to growth and prosperity with an unwavering devotion to financial stability and customer service. Mr. Delabbio is retiring as the administrator of Kent County, a position he has held for the past 19 years. Prior to that role, he served as assistant Kent County administrator for 3 years and as manager of the city of Rockford, MI, for 11 years. Mr. Delabbio began his municipal career in 1977 as administrative coordinator for the city of Rockwood, before joining Garden City, MI, as director of administrative services.

Mr. Delabbio has presided over a county that emerged from Michigan's historic economic downturn as the fastest growing county in the State. His success has stemmed from building important partnerships, while prioritizing excellent citizen services and encouraging diversity and inclusion throughout the county. He has distinguished himself by spearheading many of the successful public and private partnerships that have become the hallmark of Kent County's prosperity. Mr. Delabbio was one of the founders of the Kent County/Grand Rapids Convention and Arena Authority, an organization whose work has greatly advanced the economic development of Kent County. The authority's development of a downtown convention center and sports and entertainment arena have become catalysts for the economic vitality of Grand Rapids, Michigan's second-largest city.

Mr. Delabbio has shown a dedication to lifelong learning by creating various educational programs for county staff and a strong commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. In 2001, he helped

create the Cultural Insight Council. This self-directed, interdepartmental workgroup is comprised of employees from diverse backgrounds, representing all levels of the organization.

Under his stewardship as county administrator and controller, Kent County has attained the highest possible bond ratings for 19 consecutive years. These triple-A ratings have allowed the county to finance important community projects at the lowest cost possible. Kent County has achieved many milestones under Mr. Delabbio's tenure, from the construction of Millennium Park and the Kent County courthouse, to the expansion of the Kent County jail and the transition of the county Department of Aeronautics to a regional airport authority. Mr. Delabbio has worked with over 60 elected Kent County commissioners and is held in the highest regard by his peers around the country and globe. He has served as a regional vice president of the International City County Management Association, an organization with over 9,000 members worldwide, as well as a board member on many other organizations, including the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, Experience Grand Rapids, and The Right Place, Inc.

Mr. Delabbio holds a bachelor of science degree in political science and master of management from Aquinas College, as well as a master of public administration from Wayne State University and a Ph.D. from Western Michigan University. He has been an adjunct professor at Davenport University and plans to continue teaching and sharing his expertise with others in his retirement.

Mr. Delabbio's colleagues in Kent County have praised him for work that has embodied what it means to be a public servant: resourceful, thoughtful, creative, and dedicated. Mr. Delabbio's decades of work have set the standard for excellence and integrity for municipal managers throughout the State of Michigan, while mentoring many others who share his passion for public service. Those that know him will also attest that Mr. Delabbio is a humble man of impeccable character.

I am honored to ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Daryl Delabbio for his decades of public service to the citizens of Kent County, MI. His selfless, quiet leadership has left behind a legacy of growth and achievement that will benefit them for decades to come.●

REMEMBERING JOHN BERLIN McCANTS

● Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize and honor the life of a dear friend and a true American hero, Mr. John Berlin McCants of Goose Creek, SC.

He served around the world in the U.S. Army for 22 years before retiring in 1975 and settling in Goose Creek with his wife and children. In 1992, he was elected to a seat on the Goose Creek City Council where he served for an outstanding 24 years. John was a lifetime leader with a compassionate spirit. He dedicated so much of his life helping those who cannot help themselves. For that, he will be remembered not only as a devoted public servant , but also an inspiration to so many people around South Carolina.

I can tell you that he certainly had a positive impact on my life. John was my political mentor. He taught me the ABCs of being an effective leader and a public servant who remains committed to the greater good of our State and country.

The A stands for personal accountability. John taught me that, as a Member, I should always be accountable for my decisions and choices. B is for backbone. John once told me that we seldom find that Members have backbones, and that it is critical for me to use it when necessary, to stand up for what is right. C is for common sense. He taught me that it is important to not let fear and political ideology deter me from common sense. These great lessons stick with me everyday as I walk the halls of the U.S. Capitol and make decisions on behalf of South Carolina and the entire Nation.

Simply put, John was a great person and a mentor to many; I am thankful to have known him. He truly did represent the very best of our State. To Christina, his wife, and their wonderful family, John is forever in our hearts, and I would like to add his legacy to our June 20, 2017, Congressional Record.●

REMEMBERING HAROLD HAUGLAND

● Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life and legacy of a brave Montanan and American, Harold Haugland.

Harold's story begins in Glendive, MT, where he was born in 1928 to Peter and Alma Haugland. Harold and his family were well known in the community for their compassionate hearts and unrelenting work ethic. Harold took these Montana values to the U.S. Army in 1949, where he quickly became a highly decorated soldier, receiving a number of medals and citations.

In late November 1950, Harold joined the Company D, 15th antiaircraft Artillery Battalion, 7th Infantry Division.

Two thousand five hundred U.S. and 700 South Korean soldiers were deployed east of the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea when they were engaged by an overwhelming number of Chinese forces. By early December, the U.S. Army evacuated approximately 1,500 wounded servicemembers; the remaining soldiers had been either captured or killed in enemy territory.

Because Harold could not be accounted for by his unit at the end of the battle, he was reported missing in action as of December 2, 1950. Harold's name did not appear on any prisoner of war lists, and no returning soldiers reported him as a prisoner of war. The U.S. Army declared him deceased as of December 31, 1953.

In 1954, a number of remains were recovered from north of the Korean Demilitarized Zone. However, Harold's remains were not included and he was declared nonrecoverable. After his death, Harold was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his heroism and leadership.

During a joint recovery operation in 2004, Harold's remains were found in a mass grave on the eastern bank of the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. Thanks to recent technological advancements in forensic science, the U.S. Department of Defense positively identified one of the individuals as Harold Haugland. After nearly 66 years, an American hero has been brought home to Montana for a full and proper military burial.

Harold represents the very best that this Nation has to offer with his profound bravery and dedication to service. Like many before him and after him, Harold paid the ultimate sacrifice to protect the freedoms that make the United States the greatest Nation in the world.

To Harold and his family, on behalf of myself, Montana, and a grateful nation, I extend our deepest thanks for Harold's service, sacrifice, and valor.●

REMEMBERING FRANK McCAULEY

● Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor an American hero.

Frank McCauley passed away last week peacefully in Hamilton, MT. Frank was the oldest living fighter pilot ace from World War II.

He originally joined the Army at the beginning of America's entry into the war, but quickly then turned to the Air Force where he discovered his passion and skill as one of our Nation's first fighter pilots.

Frank flew his P–47 fighter ''Rat Racer'' on 46 missions while supporting B–17 bombers in the European Theatre, and he is credited with shooting down five and a half Nazi aircrafts. For this he received a Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, and four Air Medals.

In 2015, Frank and his family were flown to Washington, DC, and he was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor that Congress can bestow on an individual for his service during World War II.

After leaving the Air Force, Frank had three sons—Craig, Kirk, and Kevin—and he built a life on the west coast with a successful career in the construction business. In 1974, Frank retired, married the love of his life, Bobbie, and moved to the Bitterroot Valley in western Montana.

It was in Montana where Frank and Bobbie enjoyed their retirement years by traveling in their motor home and organizing numerous parties for their friends, family, and neighbors.

Frank McCauley embodies the Greatest Generation, and he is a symbol for the American dream.

He is survived by his wife, Bobbie McCauley; sons, Craig, Kirk, and Kevin; stepdaughter, Nancy Cook; and numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren.

To ensure Frank's life story is preserved and to honor the contributions he has made to our country, I am proud to enshrine his story in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

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

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

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

EC–1913. A communication from the Secretary of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Whistleblower Awards Process'' (RIN3038–AE50) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1914. A communication from the Acting Administrator of the Specialty Crops Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Marketing Order Regulating the Handling of Spearmint Oil Produced in the Far West; Salable Quantities and Allotment Percentages for the 2017–2018 Marketing Year'' (Docket No. AMS–SC–16–0107) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1915. A communication from the Acting Administrator of the Livestock, Poultry, and Seed Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Beef Promotion and Research Rules and Regulations'' (Docket No. AMS–LPS–15–0084) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1916. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a semiannual report entitled, ''Acceptance of Contributions for Defense Programs, Projects, and Activities; Defense Cooperation Account'' and a semiannual listing of personal property contributed by coalition partners; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1917. A communication from the Senior Official performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to an increase in the Program Acquisition Unit Cost (PAUC) for the Chemical Demilitarization—Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA) Program; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1918. A communication from the Senior Official performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) transmitting, pursuant to law, the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) 2016 Accreditation Report; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1919. A communication from the Acting Administrator of the Specialty Crops Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Changes to Reporting and Notification Requirements and Other Clarifying Changes for Imported Fruits, Vegetables, and Specialty Crops'' (Docket No. AMS–SC–16–0083) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1920. A communication from the Chief of the Regulations and Standards Branch, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Oil and Gas and Sulphur Operations in the Outer Continental Shelf-Lease Continuation Through Operations'' (RIN1014–AA35) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 7, 2017; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–1921. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Commissioner, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 8, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1922. A communication from the Chief of the Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Extension of Import Restrictions Imposed on Archaeological and Ethnological Materials from Peru'' (RIN1515–AE29) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 2, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1923. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Annual Report to Congress on the Open Payments Program''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1924. A communication from the Chief of the Border Security Regulations Branch, Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Merchandise Produced by Convict, Forced, or Indentured Labor; Conforming Amendment and Technical Corrections'' (RIN1515–AE22) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1925. A communication from the Chair of the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report to Congress on Medicaid and CHIP''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1926. A communication from the Deputy Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Humanitarian Use Devices; 21st Century Cures Act; Technical Amendment'' (Docket No. FDA–2017–N–0011) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 9, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1927. A communication from the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the actuarial status of the railroad retirement system; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1928. A communication from the Acting Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and a Management Report for the period from October 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1929. A communication from the Director, Office of Government Ethics, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Technical Updating Amendments to Executive Branch Financial Disclosure and Standards of Ethical Conduct Regulations'' (RIN3209–AA00 and RIN3209–AA04) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 8, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1930. A communication from the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report from the Office of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1931. A communication from the Federal Co-Chair, Appalachian Regional Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1932. A communication from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries Off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; 2017–2018 Biennial Specifications and Management Measures; Inseason Adjustments'' (RIN0648–BG86) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 7, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1933. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Special Local Regulations and Safety Zones; Recurring Marine Events and Fireworks Displays within the Fifth Coast Guard District'' ((RIN1625–AA08 and RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0064)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1934. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Detroit Symphony Orchestra Fireworks, Lake St. Clair, Grosse Pointe Shores, MI'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0349)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1935. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled

''Safety Zone; Lower Mississippi River, Vidalia, LA'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0451)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1936. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; PUSH Beaver County/Beaver County Boom, Ohio River, Miles 25.2 to 25.6, Beaver, PA'' (Docket No. USCG–2017–0390) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1937. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zones; Coast Guard Sector Ohio Valley Annual and Recurring Safety Zones Update'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0011)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1938. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Upper Mississippi River, Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0300)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1939. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Mill Creek, Hampton, VA'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0075)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1940. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Delaware River, Philadelphia, PA'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0399)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1941. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Chicago River, Chicago, IL'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0347)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1942. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Chincoteague Channel, Chincoteague Islands, VA'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0248)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1943. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Columbia River, Goble, OR'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0488)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1944. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Navy Underwater Detonation (UNDET) Exercise, Apra Outer Harbor, GU'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0412)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1945. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Hope Chest Buffalo Niagara Dragon Boat Festival, Buffalo River, Buffalo, NY'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0275)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1946. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Special Local Regulation; Motor City Mile; Detroit River, Detroit, MI'' ((RIN1625–AA08) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0372)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1947. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; East River and Buttermilk Channel, Brooklyn, NY'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2017–0401)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1948. A communication from the Senior Official performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the global defense posture (OSS–2017–0589); to the Committees on Armed Services; Appropriations; and Foreign Relations.

EC–1949. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Spirotetramat; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9961–95) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1950. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Isofetamid; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9961–80) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1951. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Cumene Sulfonic Acid and its Ammonium, Calcium, Magnesium, Potassium, Sodium and Zink salts; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9961–68) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1952. A communication from the Senior Official performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department of Defense's Evaluation of the TRICARE Program for fiscal year 2016; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1953. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Suspension of Community Eligibility (Washington County, IN, et al.)'' ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No . FEMA–2017–0002)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1954. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Wassenaar Arrangement 2015 Plenary Agreements Implementation, Removal of Foreign National Review Requirements, and Information Security Updates; Corrections'' (RIN0694–AG85) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 15, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1955. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Economic Development Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Economic Development Administration Regulatory Revision'' (RIN0610–AA66) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 15, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1956. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of New Reactors, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Physical Security Hardware - Inspections, Tests, Analyses, and Acceptance Criteria'' (NUREG–0800, Section 14.3.12) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1957. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approvals; TN; Prong 4–2010 NO2, SO2, and 2012 PM2.5 NAAQS'' (FRL No. 9963–48–Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1958. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; West Virginia; Update to Materials Incorporated by Reference'' (FRL No. 9961–19–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1959. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; Clean Air Act Requirements for Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance and Nonattainment Source Review'' (FRL No. 9962–48–Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works .

EC–1960. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan; Imperial County Air Pollution Control District; Stationary Sources Permits'' (FRL No. 9962–57–Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1961. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Effluent Limitations Guidelines and

Standards for the Dental Category'' (FRL No. 9957–10–OW) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1962. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Administrative, Procedural, and Miscellaneous'' (Rev. Proc. 2017–34) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 14, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1963. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Announcement of the Results of the Phase III Allocation Round of the Qualifying Gasification Project Program'' (Announcement 2017–06) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1964. A communication from the Executive Secretary, Foreign-Trade Zones Board, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Foreign-Trade Zones in the United States'' (RIN0625–AA81) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 15, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1965. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation of a group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the Secretary of State (OSS–2017–0624); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1966. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–68, ''Child Neglect and Sex Trafficking Temporary Amendment Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1967. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–69, ''Grocery Store Restrictive Covenant Prohibition Temporary Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1968. A communication from the Inspector General of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Inspector General's Semiannual Report to Congress for the period from October 1, 2016, through March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1969. A communication from the Chairman of the Board of Governors, U.S. Postal Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of Inspector General's Semiannual Report for the period of October 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1970. A communication from the Acting Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Semiannual Management Report for the period from October 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–1971. A communication from the Chief of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisher Houses and Other Temporary Lodging'' (RIN2900–AP45) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–1972. A communication from the Chief of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Expanded Delegation Authority for Procedures Related to Representation of Claimants'' (RIN2900–AP96) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 12, 2017; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–1973. A communication from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Using Pot Gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XF333) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1974. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fish and Fish Product Import Provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act'' (RIN0648–AY15) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1975. A communication from the Acting Assistant Administrator, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Annual Catch Limits; National Standard Guidelines'' (RIN0648–AV60) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with amendments:

H.R. 494. A bill to expand the boundary of Fort Frederica National Monument in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115–114).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. McCAIN for the Committee on Armed Services.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Ronald J. Place, to be Major General.

Navy nomination of Capt. William C. Greene, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).

Navy nomination of Capt. William S. Dillon, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).

Navy nomination of Capt. Karl O. Thomas, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).

Air Force nomination of Maj. Gen. Jay B. Silveria, to be Lieutenant General.

Navy nomination of Capt. Samuel J. Paparo, Jr., to be Rear Admiral (lower half).

Navy nomination of Capt. Gregory N. Harris, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).

Army nomination of Col. John P. Lawlor, Jr., to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Dion B. Moten, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Bowlman T. Bowles III, to be Brigadier General.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. (lh) Daniel J. MacDonnell, to be Rear Admiral.

Navy nominations beginning with Rear Adm. (lh) Daniel B. Hendrickson and ending with Rear Adm. (lh) Matthew A. Zirkle, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nomination of Capt. Jacquelyn McClelland, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).

Navy nomination of Capt. James M. Butler, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).

Navy nominations beginning with Capt. Eugene A. Burcher and ending with Capt. Richard A. Rodriguez, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. (lh) Keith M. Jones, to be Rear Admiral.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. (lh) Bret C. Batchelder, to be Rear Admiral.

Air Force nomination of Col. DeAnna M. Burt, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Stephen R. Hogan, to be Major General.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, to be Major General.

Army nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. Steven W. Ainsworth and ending with Col. Irene M. Zoppi, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.

Army nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. Gregory L. Kennedy and ending with Brig. Gen. Andrew P. Schafer, Jr., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Christopher P. Callahan, to be Major General.

Army nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. James P. Begley III and ending with Brig. Gen. Gary S. Yaple, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. (lh) Ann M. Burkhardt, to be Rear Admiral.

Air Force nomination of Maj. Gen. Scott A. Howell, to be Lieutenant General.

Air Force nomination of Maj. Gen. James C. Vechery, to be Lieutenant General.

Army nomination of Maj. Gen. Thomas A. Horlander, to be Lieutenant General.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. Andrew L. Lewis, to be Vice Admiral.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. Matthew J. Kohler, to be Vice Admiral.

Navy nomination of Vice Adm. Kevin M. Donegan, to be Vice Admiral.

Marine Corps nomination of Maj. Gen. Robert F. Hedelund, to be Lieutenant General.

Navy nomination of Vice Adm. James G. Foggo III, to be Admiral.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, for the Committee on Armed Services I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDS on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

Air Force nomination of Jered N. Fry, to be Major.

Air Force nominations beginning with Christopher R. Boney and ending with Daniel D. Reyes, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Air Force nomination of Jeffrey A. Garrett, to be Major.

Air Force nominations beginning with Roger A. Lee and ending with Jeffrey R. Rosenberry, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Air Force nomination of Theadore L. Wilson, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Jason S. Cross, to be Major.

Air Force nomination of Angela M. Mike, to be Major.

Air Force nominations beginning with Matthew V. Chauviere and ending with Lauren A. May, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Michael E. Bruhn and ending with Victor D. Weeden, Jr., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Jeffrey W. Drake and ending with Jack Vilardi, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.

Air Force nominations beginning with Megan E. Anderson and ending with Rajeev S. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.

Air Force nomination of Jose G. Bal, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Jennifer M. Bager and ending with Ramey L. Wilson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 27, 2017.

Army nominations beginning with Alfred C. Anderson and ending with Kelley Tomsett, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 27, 2017.

Army nomination of William F. McClintock, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with David S. Allen and ending with Barry K. Vincent, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 18, 2017.

Army nomination of Jeffrey L. Washington, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Joseph B. Dore, to be Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Christopher M. Chung and ending with Heath D. Holt, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.

Army nominations beginning with Devin G. Mccane and ending with Sharri L. Ormsbee, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.

Army nomination of Janna X. Gaddy, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Bradley H. Stephens and ending with Amilyn M. Taplin, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.

Army nomination of Terry Kim, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Jeff A. Burchfield and ending with Brian D. Wieck, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on June 5, 2017.

Marine Corps nomination of Jason K. Fettig, to be Colonel.

Navy nominations beginning with Juanito F. Boydon, Jr. and ending with Suresh K. Thadhani, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 8, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Anthony L. Bayungan and ending with Michael A. Leachman, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 8, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Todd M. Boland and ending with Kail C. Swindle, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 8, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with James G. Adams and ending with Charles C. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 8, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Shawn G. Denihan and ending with Chad A. Runyon, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 8, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Kelvin J. Askew and ending with Erika L. Berry, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 8, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Kathleen A. Allen and ending with Christopher Frye, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 8, 2017.

Navy nomination of Bruce E. Osborne, to be Captain.

Navy nominations beginning with Colette M. Murphy and ending with John A. Robinson III, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Nathan R. Anderson and ending with Jodie M. C. Yim, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nomination of Adria R. Schneck, to be Captain.

Navy nominations beginning with Mary A. Ponce and ending with Brian K. Reed, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Ryan K. Mahelona and ending with Philip L. Notz, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Joseph T. Bailey and ending with Jonpaul Stefani, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nomination of David W. Shaieb, to be Captain.

Navy nominations beginning with Lee A. Axtell and ending with Mark S. Winward, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Thomas M. Bestafka and ending with Francis J. Stavish, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nomination of Danny W. King, to be Captain.

Navy nominations beginning with Babak A. Barakat and ending with Stephen M. Wilson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Michael J. Allanson and ending with Gerard J. White, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Matthew L. Beran and ending with Ian S. Wexler, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Garland H. Andrews and ending with Meredith L. Yeager, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Oladapo A. Akintonde and ending with Sean R. Wise, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Jeff A. Bleile and ending with Jeffrey G. Zeller, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Grady G. Duffey, Jr. and ending with David A. Vondrak, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with William M. Kafka and ending with William R. Urban, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Daniel E. Fillion and ending with Jason D. Weddle, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Damon B. Dixon and ending with Jonathan J. Vorrath, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with James W. Adkisson III and ending with Sherri R. Zimmerman, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Cory S. Brummett and ending with David J. White, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Julie M. Alfieri and ending with Brett A. Wise, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Matthew E. Arnold and ending with Anthony C. Taranto, Jr., which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Peter A. Arrobio and ending with Kevin J. Watkins, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with John A. Anderson and ending with Jay A. Young, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Lawrence H. Kennedy and ending with Tracie A. Severson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Jose G. Hernandez and ending with Derek A. Vestal, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with David A. Abernathy and ending with Jesse J. Zimbauer, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nomination of Kenneth M. King, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Garry P. Closas, to be Commander.

Navy nominations beginning with Paul D. Melvey and ending with Alexander Woldemariam, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with William J. Bailey, Jr. and ending with Christopher D. Tucker, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Gina A. Buono and ending with Sandra F. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with David J. Allen and ending with Tracie M. Zielinski, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with David M. Buzzetti and ending with Eric R. Vetter, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with David E. Bailey and ending with Christopher J. Stewart, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with John R. Adams and ending with Mary C. Wise, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Sean A. Cox and ending with Luis A. Perez, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Elizabeth W. Bundt and ending with Michael G. Watson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 22, 2017.

Navy nomination of Miguel A. Santiesteban, to be Commander.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

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. ROUNDS:

S. 1380. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize officers to opt out of promotion board consideration for promotion; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. ROUNDS:

S. 1381. A bill to require a report on the extension of authorities to the United States Special Operations Command for the development, acquisition, and sustainment of special operations-peculiar technology, equipment, and services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. ROUNDS:

S. 1382. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to temporarily suspend officer grade tables to attract more talent, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. NELSON):

S. 1383. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify safe harbor requirements applicable to automatic contribution arrangements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 1384. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to authorize borrowers to separate joint consolidation loans; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1385. A bill to provide for a general capital increase for the North American Development Bank, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1386. A bill to permit employees to request changes to their work schedules without fear of retaliation and to ensure that employers consider these requests, and to require employers to provide more predictable and stable schedules for employees in certain occupations with evidence of unpredictable and unstable scheduling practices that negatively affect employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. COONS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. BROWN):

S. Res. 195. A resolution recognizing June 20, 2017, as ''World Refugee Day''; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 21

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 21, a bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

S. 34

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 34, a bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for the en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for ''midnight rules'', and for other purposes.

S. 58

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 58, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage.

S. 75

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 75, a bill to provide for the reconsideration of claims for disability compensation for veterans who were the subjects of experiments by the Department of Defense during World War II that were conducted to assess the effects of mustard gas or lewisite on people, and for other purposes.

S. 167

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 167, a bill to designate a National Memorial to Fallen Educators at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas.

S. 170

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 170, a bill to provide for nonpreemption 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. 374

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 374, a bill to enable concrete masonry products manufacturers to establish, finance, and carry out a coordinated program of research, education, and promotion to improve, maintain, and develop markets for concrete masonry products.

S. 434

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 434, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to qualify homeless youth and veterans who are full-time students for purposes of the low income housing tax credit.

S. 534

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 534, a bill to prevent the sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities, and for other purposes.

S. 569

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 569, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the Land and Water Conservation Fund to maximize the effectiveness of the Fund for future generations, and for other purposes.

S. 708

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 708, a bill to improve the ability of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to interdict fentanyl, other synthetic opioids, and other narcotics and psychoactive substances that are illegally imported into the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 913

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 913, a bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to establish an initiative, carried out by the Assistant Secretary for Aging, to coordinate Federal efforts and programs for home

modifications enabling older individuals to live independently and safely in a home environment, and for other purposes.

S. 929

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 929, a bill to improve the HUBZone program.

S. 1008

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1008, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to exclude cannabidiol and cannabidiol-rich plants from the definition of marihuana, and for other purposes.

S. 1024

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1024, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1237

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1237, a bill to amend title 11 of the United States Code to clarify the rule allowing discharge as a nonpriority claim of governmental claims arising from the disposition of farm assets under chapter 12 bankruptcies.

S. 1320

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1320, a bill to reform apportionments to general aviation airports under the airport improvement program, to improve project delivery at certain airports, and to designate certain airports as disaster relief airports, and for other purposes.

S. 1343

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1343, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code to extend and modify certain charitable tax provisions.

S. 1349

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1349, a bill to provide that the rate of military basic pay for the Senior Enlisted Advisors to the commanders of the combatant commands shall be equivalent to the rate of military basic pay for the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and for other purposes.

S. 1354

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1354, a bill to establish an Individual Market Reinsurance fund to provide funding for State individual market stabilization reinsurance programs.

S.J. RES. 46

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 46, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

S. RES. 154

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 154, a resolution promoting awareness of motorcycle profiling and encouraging collaboration and communication with the motorcycle community and law enforcement officials to prevent instances of profiling.

S. RES. 194

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 194, a resolution designating June 15, 2017, as ''World Elder Abuse Awareness Day''.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. NELSON):

S. 1383. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify safe harbor requirements applicable to automatic contribution arrangements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, ensuring that more Americans are better prepared financially for their retirement is one of my top priorities.

That is why I rise to reintroduce with my colleague, Senator NELSON, the Retirement Security Act of 2017. Our bill would encourage more small employers to offer retirement plans, provide incentives for employees to save more for retirement, and make it easier for low- and middle-income taxpayers to claim tax benefits for retirement savings already authorized in law.

According to the non-partisan Center for Retirement Research, there is an estimated $7.7 trillion gap between the savings American households need to maintain their standard of living in retirement and what they actually have. A recent Gallup poll found that only 54 percent of working Americans believe that they will have enough money to live comfortably in retirement. We must continue to work to ensure that more Americans will have the resources they need to enjoy their ''golden years.''

The Social Security Administration's most recent report noted that 61 percent of all beneficiaries rely on Social Security for more than half of their income. Many seniors in my State rely almost entirely on Social Security to cover their monthly expenses, despite the fact that the average annual benefit is only about $16,000 per year. It is hard to imagine stretching those dollars far enough to pay the bills—certainly a ''comfortable retirement'' is out of the question.

Sadly, they fare no better when it comes to savings: a survey by the Federal Reserve found that nearly half of individuals do not have enough savings to cover an emergency expense of $400. That is not even enough to buy new tires for a car. For this reason, among others, Americans need to increase their personal savings so that we can better weather financial emergencies without raiding our retirement accounts.

There are many reasons why Americans have struggled to save for retirement, including the shift away from employer-based ''defined benefit'' plans, or pensions; the severity of the recent financial crisis; rising health care costs; the need for expensive long-term care; and most of all, the fact that Americans are living far longer than they did in the past. Many Americans reaching retirement age also have more debt than retirees of previous generations.

Another contributing factor is that employees of small businesses are much less likely to participate in employer-based retirement plans. According to a study by the PEW Charitable Trusts, more than 30 million U.S. workers lack access to a work-based plan to save for retirement.

Making it easier for smaller businesses to offer retirement plans for their workers would make a significant difference in the financial security of many Americans. That is why the bill we are introducing today focuses on reducing the cost and complexity of retirement plans, especially for small businesses, and on encouraging individuals to save more for retirement. Let me describe the provisions of the bill:

First, our bill would make it easier for businesses to enter into multiple employer plans, known as MEPs, to offer retirement programs to their employees. MEPs permit small companies to share the administrative burden of a retirement plan, which helps lower costs. Current law discourages the use of MEPs because it requires a connection, or ''nexus,'' between unrelated businesses in order to join a MEP, such as membership in the same trade association. Our bill would waive the nexus requirement for businesses.

Second, our bill makes joining a MEP a more attractive option for small businesses. Under current law, if one employer in a MEP fails to meet the minimum criteria necessary for retirement plans to obtain tax benefits, all employers and their employees could lose these tax benefits—which are substantial. For employees, benefits include delaying the taxation of income contributed to a plan until funds are

withdrawn. For employers, plan disqualification could result in limited deductions and a higher tax burden. Our bill would address this uncertainty, and protect members of a MEP from the failure of one bad apple to meet its obligations.

Third, our bill would reduce the cost of maintaining a retirement plan. Current law requires that participants in a retirement plan receive a variety of notices. Our bill would direct Treasury to simplify, clarify, and consolidate these required notices to lessen costs.

Fourth, the Retirement Security Act would encourage those still in the workforce to save more for retirement. Retirement plans are often designed to comply with existing safe harbors to prevent the IRS from challenging the tax benefits that flow to employees and employers. The existing safe harbor for so-called ''automatic enrollment'' plans effectively caps employee contributions at ten percent of annual pay, with the employer contributing a ''matching'' amount of up to six percent. Our bill would create an additional safe harbor for these plans that would allow employees to receive an employer match on contributions of up to ten percent of their pay. Employees would be able to contribute more than ten percent, albeit without an employer match for contributions above ten percent.

I recognize that businesses that choose to adopt a plan with this new optional safe harbor may face additional costs due to the increased employer match. That is why our bill would also help the smallest businesses—those with fewer than 100 employees—offset this cost by providing a new tax credit equal to the increased match.

I should note that the new retirement plan options for businesses included in our bill are just that—options. No business, large or small, would be required to offer its employees a retirement plan under the Retirement Security Act.

Finally, our bill would ensure that current measures to encourage savings are functioning as they were intended. One such measure is the so-called ''saver's credit,'' which reduces the tax burden on low- and middle-income individuals who contribute to retirement plans, including IRAs and 401(k) plans. Yet the credit cannot be claimed on a Form 1040EZ, which is frequently used by these individuals. A 2013 Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies survey found that only 23 percent of people with household incomes of less than $50,000 per year, the group most likely to qualify, were aware of the saver's credit. To address this, our bill directs Treasury to make the credit available on Form 1040 EZ.

Mr. President, during my time as chairman of the Senate Aging Committee, I have heard countless stories of retirees whose savings did not go as far as they anticipated. Adequate savings reduce poverty among our seniors. As the HELP Committee noted in a July 2012 report, poverty among our seniors also increases Medicare and Medicaid costs and strains our social safety net. Giving those not yet at retirement age more opportunities to save, and to save more, would help ease this additional burden on entitlement programs that already are projected to be unsustainable.

In light of the positive effects this bill would have in strengthening retirement security for millions of Americans, I urge my colleagues to join Senator NELSON and me in supporting the Retirement Security Act of 2017.

Thank you, Mr. President.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1385. A bill to provide for a general capital increase for the North American Development Bank, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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. 1385

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''North American Development Bank Improvement Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. GENERAL CAPITAL INCREASE.

Part 2 of subtitle D of title V of Public Law 103–182 (22 U.S.C. 290m et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 547. FIRST CAPITAL INCREASE.

''(a) SUBSCRIPTION AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of the Treasury is authorized to subscribe on behalf of the United States to, and make payment for, 150,000 additional shares of the capital stock of the Bank.

''(b) LIMITATION.—Any subscription by the United States to the capital stock of the Bank shall be effective only to such extent and in such amounts as are provided in advance in appropriations Acts.''.

SEC. 3. POLICY GOALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to projects within the mission and scope of the North American Development Bank on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act and pursuant to section 2 of article II of the Charter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall direct the representatives of the United States to the Board of Directors of the Bank to use the voice and vote of the United States to support the financing of projects related to—

(1) environmental infrastructure relating to water pollution, wastewater treatment, water conservation, municipal solid waste, and related matters;

(2) natural gas, including natural gas pipelines and combined cycle power plants, with major emphasis on cross-border energy distribution and consumption and the energy security of the United States and Mexico; and

(3) the expansion or new construction of international land border crossings to help facilitate the flow of goods and people across the international land border between the United States and Mexico while reducing wait times at border crossings and improving air quality by reducing pollution related to vehicular and commercial traffic.

(b) CHARTER DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''Charter'' means the Agreement Concerning the Establishment of a Border Environment Cooperation Commission and a North American Development Bank, signed at Washington and Mexico November 16 and 18, 1993, and entered into force January 1, 1994 (TIAS 12516), between the United States and Mexico.

SEC. 4. EFFICIENCIES AND STREAMLINING.

The Secretary of the Treasury shall direct the representatives of the United States to the Board of Directors of the North American Development Bank to use the voice and vote of the United States to seek to require the Bank to develop and implement efficiency improvements to streamline and accelerate the project certification and financing process, including through initiatives such as single certifications for revolving facilities, programmatic certification of similar groups of small projects, expansion of internal authority to approve qualified projects below certain monetary thresholds, and expedited certification for public sector projects subject to lender bidding processes.

SEC. 5. PERFORMANCE MEASURES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall direct the representatives of the United States to the Board of Directors of the North American Development Bank to use the voice and vote of the United States to seek to require the Bank to develop performance measures that—

(1) demonstrate how projects and financing approved by the Bank are meeting the Bank's mission and providing added value to the region near the international land border between the United States and Mexico; and

(2) are reviewed and updated not less frequently than annually.

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall submit to Congress, with the submission to Congress of the budget of the President for a fiscal year under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, a report on progress in imposing the performance measures described in subsection (a).

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 195—RECOGNIZING JUNE 20, 2017, AS ''WORLD REFUGEE DAY''

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. COONS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. BROWN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a resolution to mark World Refugee Day, and to address the ongoing displacement crisis across the globe. War, conflict and persecution have forced millions of people to leave their homes, creating more refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people than at any other time in history. Today, there are more than 65 million displaced men, women, and children worldwide, the highest level ever recorded in history. To put this number into perspective—if the global displaced population were a country, it would be the 21st largest country, more populated than the United Kingdom.

The global displacement trends we are witnessing now, due to conflict, severe human rights abuses, and climate change, are not going away. U.S. leadership in responding to these crises, whether it is the immense suffering of refugees from South Sudan or the plight of the internally-displaced in Syria and Iraq, is critical. How we respond—or whether we respond at all—will undoubtedly shape the landscape and the lives of future generations for years to come.

The United States has a long and proud history of providing safe harbor to the world's most vulnerable refugees—women and children, survivors of torture and other violence, and those with severe medical conditions. This included after World War II and after the fall of Saigon, when we resettled hundreds of thousands of refugees.

At the same time, we take the security of our citizens seriously. That is the reason the United States has the most rigorous refugee screening process in the world, involving the Department of Defense, Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and National Counter Terrorism Center. The process includes biometric checks, medical screenings, forensic testing of documents, DNA testing for family reunification cases, and in-person interviews with highly trained homeland security officials.

The U.S. Refugee Resettlement program has been and should remain open to those of all nationalities and religions who face persecution. The Trump Administration's proposals that would have the U.S. State Department disqualify refugees from protection based on their nationality or religion fly in the face of the very principles this Nation was built upon. They also contradict the legacy of leadership our country has historically demonstrated, and dishonor our shared humanity.

It is clear, however, that the Trump Administration is determined to undermine longstanding American tradition and values, and in doing so they weaken our National security. As we all know, one of President Trump's first executive orders sought to drastically reduce the number of refugees entering the United States and turn away refugees from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. This un-American policy, rooted in fear not fact, cannot be tolerated. We collectively must reject the misplaced notion that some refugees are more deserving of protection than others.

Again and again, the Federal courts are signaling to the White House a real need for the President to immediately rescind his discriminatory executive order targeting Muslim refugees and travelers. Even while stayed by the courts, President Trump's executive orders have made America less safe, damaged our relationships with our allies, and harmed countless numbers of law-abiding citizens, travelers, and their families. America is a compassionate nation steeped with a history of welcoming immigrants and refugees.

I was proud to join Members of Congress who filed legal briefs in opposition to the President's discriminatory executive orders, along with HIAS in Silver Spring, Maryland, whose motto is to ''welcome the stranger'' and ''protect the refugee.'' Recently the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit provided a valuable check and balance on the President's authority. The court correctly pointed out that the President's most recent Executive Order ''speaks with vague words of national security, but in context drips with religious intolerance, animus, and discrimination'' which violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. No American president is above the law.

Turning away refugees—whether they are from Syria or Somalia, Burma or Iraq, whether they are Muslims or Christians, Hindus or Jews—means turning our backs on the international humanitarian system and the mechanisms of stability and security that are the bedrocks of international order. Refugees remain powerful ambassadors of the American Dream and our Nation's founding principles of equal opportunity, religious freedom, and liberty and justice for all.

The Trump Administration again revealed its determination to erode American leadership with the release of its Fiscal Year 2018 Budget request. Their FY18 budget represents a wholesale repudiation of U.S. global leadership on virtually every critical matter, including humanitarian assistance and protection of the most vulnerable populations. The President's budget called for a 44 percent cut in humanitarian assistance—a truly horrifying reduction made even more appalling given the level of global need. According to a group of leading NGOs, the human cost of these cuts could be staggering. The proposed 18 percent cut to the Migration and Refugee Assistance account could result in over 3.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons not receiving assistance globally, including about 1 million in the Middle East and 1.1 million in Africa.

The United States has been a beacon of hope for so many around the world for centuries, and it is imperative that we remain so for others in this century, and beyond. We need to be unified on this and the United States must lead by example. It is a universal human desire to live in peace and security and to create a better life for our families and loved ones. We must do our part to facilitate that. We need to keep our doors—and our hearts—open to those who so desperately need safe harbor.

S. RES. 195

Whereas World Refugee Day is an opportunity to acknowledge the courage, strength, and determination of women, men, and children forced to flee their homes due to conflict, violence, and persecution;

Whereas according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (referred to in this Resolution as ''UNHCR'')—

(1) there are more than 65,600,000 displaced people worldwide, the highest level ever recorded, including nearly 22,500,000 refugees, more than 40,300,000 internally displaced people, and 2,800,000 people seeking asylum;

(2) children account for 51 percent of the global refugee population, millions of whom are unable to access basic services, including education;

(3) 10,300,000 people were newly displaced due to conflict or persecution in 2016;

(4) more than 5,500,000 refugees have fled Syria since the start of the conflict, and more than 6,300,000 people are displaced inside Syria;

(5) since January 2014, more than 3,000,000 Iraqis fleeing violence have been internally displaced, and 257,000 refugees have fled to neighboring countries;

(6) South Sudan has the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis, which is now the largest refugee crisis in Africa, with more than 1,800,000 refugees, including 1,000,000 children;

(7) increasing violence in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras has led to a growing number of unaccompanied child refugees, who are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, human trafficking, and kidnapping; and

(8) ongoing conflict, violence, and persecution have resulted in the displacement of millions in Ukraine, Colombia, and the Central African Republic;

Whereas 84 percent of the world's refugees are hosted in developing regions, with more than 28 percent hosted in the world's least developed countries;

Whereas refugees who are women and children are often at greater risk of violence, human trafficking, exploitation, and gender-based violence;

Whereas the United States resettlement program is a life-saving solution critical to global humanitarian efforts, which reflects American values, strengthens global security, and alleviates the burden placed on front-line host countries;

Whereas refugees are the most vetted travelers to enter the United States and are subject to extensive screening checks, including in person interviews, biometric data checks, and multiple interagency checks;

Whereas refugees contribute to their communities by starting businesses, paying taxes, and sharing their cultural traditions; and

Whereas refugees contribute more than they consume in state-funded services, including schooling and health care:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms the bipartisan commitment of the United States to promote the safety, health, and well-being of the millions of refugees;

(2) recognizes those individuals who have risked their lives working individually and for nongovernmental organizations and international agencies, such as UNHCR, to provide life-saving assistance and protection for people displaced by conflict around the world;

(3) underscores the importance of the United States Refugee Resettlement Program as a critical tool for United States global leadership;

(4) calls upon the United States Government—

(A) to continue providing robust funding for refugee protection overseas and resettlement in the United States;

(B) to uphold its international leadership role in responding to displacement crises with humanitarian assistance and protection of the most vulnerable populations; and

(C) to alleviate the burden on refugee host countries through humanitarian and development support while maintaining the

United States' long-standing tradition of resettling the most vulnerable refugees regardless of their country of origin or religious beliefs;

(5) reaffirms the goals of World Refugee Day; and

(6) reiterates the strong commitment of the United States to seek to protect the millions of refugees who live without material, social, or legal protections.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO OBJECT TO PROCEEDING

I, Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, intend to object to proceeding to the nomination of Steven Andrew Engel, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Attorney General for the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel, dated June 20, 2017.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 12 noon, Wednesday, June 21; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Mandelker nomination postcloture; finally, that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Mandelker nomination.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator WICKER and Senator HASSAN.

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

The Senator from Mississippi.

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A LARGER NAVY

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, let's talk about the size of our Navy's fleet.

The current fleet has 276 ships, but the Navy's requirement is now for 355 ships—a figure supported by congressionally mandated future fleet architecture studies.

Last week, I spoke on the floor about the national imperative to build a larger Navy. I outlined the critical missions that our Navy performs every day to help secure the country's vital interests. I also described an intense naval competition with our real and potential adversaries. This is a competition America cannot afford to lose.

America needs a bigger Navy. How do we get there? Related to that question is when we get to a 355-ship fleet. According to the Chief of Naval Operations, ADM John Richardson, we should reach our 355-ship objective in the mid-2020s. To do that, we should have started yesterday. Building and sustaining technologically advanced ships is a long-term national project. It cannot happen overnight. It takes years.

As chairman of the Seapower Subcommittee, I intend to lay a firm foundation this year to help support a buildup. Based on my subcommittee's work, I am convinced that Congress has a critical role to play in determining how we get to 355. All options should be on the table. Here are four ideas to consider.

No. 1, ramp up hot production lines.

The Navy's accelerated fleet plan states that over the next 7 years, the shipbuilding industrial base can support building more ships than are currently planned. The Navy plans to build 59, but the shipbuilders can actually complete 88. We should do this. Many hot production lines have excess capacity. Congress should authorize the Navy to ''buy in bulk,'' using multiyear and block buy contracts. These contracts would help solidify the skilled workforce, stimulate suppliers, and drive down costs. We can also authorize advance procurement funding to buy long-lead-time pieces and parts.

No. 2, extend the service life of ships in the fleet.

A quarter century ago, the Navy had 450 ships and deployments that averaged 167 days. Now the average deployment exceeds 200 days. In other words, the Navy is smaller, but the tempo of its operations has accelerated. An extra month of deployment puts additional wear and tear on ships, and this can force early retirement and ultimately squander taxpayer dollars.

Better maintenance can extend ships' service lives, delay retirement, and help us reach the 355-ship goal faster. I applaud the President's budget request for fully funding ship depot maintenance. We must build new ships and maintain the current fleet better.

In a recent speech to the Naval War College, the CNO, Admiral Richardson, noted that extending the lives of *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyers could help the Navy reach the 355-ship objective 10 to 15 years earlier. The commander of Navy Sea Systems Command, VADM Thomas Moore, agreed with the CNO in a recent speech in which he stated that proper maintenance would extend service lives and help grow the fleet more rapidly.

No. 3, reactivate ships in the Ready Reserve fleet.

During the Reagan buildup, the Navy brought ships out of mothballs, including battleships with massive guns, to help grow the fleet size. The Navy should look at the Reserve fleet ship by ship to determine if any can be restored to operational status.

In his Naval War College speech, the CNO revealed that he is considering bringing some retired *Oliver Hazard Perry*-class frigates out of mothballs. Vice Admiral Moore also suggested examining the merits of returning some logistics ships to the force.

Reactivating retired ships does not simply mean bringing back less capable ships. Jerry Hendrix and Robert C. O'Brien wrote in POLITICO in April that reactivated ships could be outfitted with modern missile systems and potentially cutting-edge electromagnetic railguns and directed energy weapons. In other words, reactivated ships could perform completely different and relevant missions at a fraction of the cost of new construction.

No. 4, develop and deploy unmanned maritime systems.

The fleet of the future will include new types of ships. Again, according to the CNO, ''There is no question that unmanned systems must also be an integral part of the future fleet.'' Unmanned undersea and surface ships can offer significant advantages, such as the ability to conduct persistent operations. We have seen drones revolutionize combat from the skies. The same is possible on the seas.

I believe the Navy needs a dedicated range to test unmanned systems with other manned and unmanned platforms, while also training new operators and maintainers. I applaud the Navy for including substantial R&D funding for unmanned underwater vehicles, UUVs, in its unfunded priorities list. I am hopeful that Congress will provide the resources that are necessary to rapidly develop and deploy new unmanned systems.

To conclude, we should be considering all options for building up our naval capacity. I do not dismiss the fact that these options cost money and some are controversial, but they deserve to be explored. It would be irresponsible for Congress not to do the work now to ensure that the Navy of the future has what it needs to respond to challenges and fulfill its missions. That means 355 ships, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to set this imperative national project into motion.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Mississippi for his remarks about the brave men and women in the Navy and their need for support.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. President, I rise today to join my Democratic colleagues in speaking out against the dangerous TrumpCare bill which is currently being drafted behind closed doors by our Republican colleagues.

The secrecy around this bill shows that Senate Republicans know they cannot defend it to their constituents. That is why Senate Republicans are refusing to even hold a single hearing on the bill. In my State of New Hampshire, you can't pass a bill if it has not

had a hearing, and the Senate here in Washington should work the same way. I continue to urge my colleagues to hold public hearings on this bill so that we can examine the bill for ourselves and get feedback from our constituents and stakeholders.

We do know that this legislation will be very similar to the House TrumpCare bill, which President Trump himself called mean, and calling it mean is even putting it lightly. TrumpCare threatens to have devastating impacts on millions of Americans. Today I am going to address three specific ways that TrumpCare is mean to people in New Hampshire and across the Nation. First, it undermines the Medicaid Program; second, it hurts our seniors; and third, it continues this administration's efforts to roll back women's access to healthcare.

As Governor, I worked to pass and then reauthorize New Hampshire's bipartisan Medicaid expansion plan that provides coverage now to over 50,000 hard-working Granite Staters. And TrumpCare, by proposing to repeal Medicaid expansion, hurts many of the hard-working people who are served now by that expansion program and whose care depends on the expansion program being continued. This includes people like Jo from Portsmouth.

I met Jo at a roundtable earlier this year. Jo has a painful, precancerous disease that eats at her abdominal organs. She has had it for most of her life. Prior to the Great Recession, she had a job that provided health insurance and allowed her to get treatment for this chronic health condition. But in 2009 Jo was laid off from her job. Then unable to find reliable, full-time work, she worked several part-time jobs, but they didn't offer health insurance.

In 2012, she desperately needed surgery. She didn't have health insurance. She couldn't get the surgery. Her health declined, the recession continued, and her ability to support herself also declined.

In 2014, after New Hampshire came together and passed its bipartisan Medicaid expansion program, she was able to get healthcare coverage. The Medicaid expansion program helps her get 8 to 12 prescriptions, necessary medical tests, physical therapy, treatment, and specialists. This has also meant that Jo is healthy enough to work again. TrumpCare would end Medicaid expansion, putting people like Jo at risk.

TrumpCare also changes Medicaid into a per-capita cap system. That is a fancy label for massive cuts to the Medicaid Program that would force States to choose between slashing benefits, reducing the number of people who can get care, or both. Under TrumpCare, States will be faced with cutting services that children, people with disabilities, and seniors depend on.

This brings me to the second point I would like to highlight today about this mean bill and whom it impacts. It is clear that TrumpCare would hurt seniors across the Granite State. The majority of nursing home residents in New Hampshire are served by Medicaid. TrumpCare would jeopardize the ability of seniors to stay in nursing homes. It would also threaten services for seniors who receive at-home care. And these cuts to Medicaid are just one of the ways seniors would be hurt under this mean proposal, because TrumpCare would also create an age tax, letting insurance plans charge older adults five times more than younger people. If you are between the ages of 50 and 64, you will be especially hard hit.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, under TrumpCare, you could face 20 percent higher premiums in 2018, with especially high premium hikes for older Americans. And the AARP opposes TrumpCare because it would ''make healthcare less secure and less affordable.''

Finally, my third point is that it is clear that TrumpCare would continue this administration's efforts to roll back women's access to critical healthcare services. To compete economically on a level playing field, women must be able to make their own decisions about if and when to start a family. They should not have to pay more than men for healthcare, and they should be able to visit providers of their own choice who understand their healthcare needs. To fully participate not only in our economy, but also in our democracy, women must be recognized for their capacity to make their own healthcare decisions, just as men are.

Under TrumpCare, if you are a mother, giving birth could now be considered a preexisting condition. TrumpCare would also undermine the requirement that insurance companies have to cover essential health benefits, including maternity care. And TrumpCare's Medicaid cuts would have drastic impacts for women across the country. According to the Congressional Budget Office, Medicaid pays for nearly half of all births in the United States, and it provides healthcare coverage for one in three children across our country.

TrumpCare also defunds Planned Parenthood, which provides critical primary and preventive healthcare services to thousands of New Hampshire women, including preventive care, birth control, and cancer screenings.

My Democratic colleagues and I are ready to work with anyone who is serious about working to build on the Affordable Care Act and lower healthcare costs for hard-working people, but what we do not need is legislation that even the President himself admits is mean.

I will continue working with my colleagues to speak out against and defeat TrumpCare, and I urge the people of New Hampshire and people all across America to keep making their voices heard and make clear that this mean bill is simply unacceptable.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 12 noon tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:39 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, June 21, 2017, at 12 noon.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

ANNA MARIA FARIAS, OF TEXAS, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, VICE GUSTAVO VELASQUEZ AGUILAR, RESIGNED .

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

MARVIN KAPLAN, OF KANSAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD FOR THE TERM OF FIVE YEARS EXPIRING AUGUST 27, 2020, VICE HARRY I. JOHNSON III, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

PATRICK PIZZELLA, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF LABOR, VICE CHRISTOPHER P. LU, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

LANCE ALLEN ROBERTSON, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR AGING, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, VICE KATHY J. GREENLEE.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate June 20, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

BROCK LONG, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRATULATING COLLEEN MURRAY ON RECEIVING THE CONGRESSIONAL AWARD GOLD MEDAL

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Miami Springs resident Colleen Murray for her dedication to bettering our community and receiving Congress's highest honor, the Congressional Award Gold Medal.

To receive the Congressional Award Gold Medal, one must demonstrate immense dedication and be willing to sacrifice a great amount of time. All recipients must participate in 400 hours of voluntary community service, 200 hours of personal development, 200 hours of physical activities, and an additional four night mission of their choosing. This is all done within a two year time frame.

For Colleen's public service, she chose to highlight her appreciation for classical music and opera. Colleen volunteered at local hospitals and provided music therapy to patients. By utilizing her passion, Colleen not only improved her musical skills but also helped others in our community. Colleen incorporated her love of music for her personal development requirement as well. She dedicated time to improve her harp skills in order to compete in regional and national competitions. Most notably, she performed with the New World Symphony. For her physical fitness requirement, Colleen built up her stamina and ran one mile at a consistent pace despite a persistent knee injury.

As Colleen was nearing her goal, she had to complete her four days of exploration. With an interest in history, she visited a variety of sites in Tennessee, South Carolina and Georgia, ranging from the Revolutionary War to the Civil Rights era. During the evening, Colleen stayed with local families to fully immerse herself in the experience. With all of the activities Colleen completed, she not only bettered the community, but herself.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to congratulate Colleen Murray on her accomplishment, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing her outstanding achievement. It is an honor to know that Florida's 25th District has an individual with such a bright future.

BERNADETTE CHAMBERS

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Bernadette Chambers for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Bernadette Chambers is a student at Mandalay Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Bernadette Chambers is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Bernadette Chambers for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Focus on the Family, a vital American institution dedicated to preserving one of our country's most foundational pillars—the family.

Forty years ago, there were dire warning signs of the erosion of the family and the Judeo-Christian roots that have brought such benefit and blessing to the United States of America, and to the entire world. Dr. James Dobson saw these threats and could not ignore them.

In Psalm 11:3, King David asks, "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?" That question has been viewed by some as a lament—a rhetorical question that signals defeat or resignation. But others take it as a rallying cry—to weigh that question, to search one's heart, and to resolve to do something about the foundations that are being destroyed.

It was in this spirit that Dr. James Dobson founded Focus on the Family. Instead of retreating or shrugging off the problem to the next generation, Focus on the Family has proven what the righteous can truly do. Under the vision and leadership of Dr. Dobson and more recently Jim Daly, by the grace of God, incredible things have been accomplished to preserve, promote, and protect the family.

It would be impossible to quantify the full impact that Focus on the Family has had in our own nation as well as across the world. We do know that thousands of marriages have been revived, prodigal sons and daughters have been brought home, life changes have been successfully navigated, young adults have been equipped, children have been lovingly discipled, and families have been encouraged and strengthened.

I do want to highlight a significant impact that can be quantified. Through Focus on the Family's Option Ultrasound, over 720 grants have been awarded to pregnancy centers to purchase ultrasound machines. As a direct result, over 382,000 lives have been saved by mothers choosing life over abortion.

In Colorado Springs, our local pregnancy centers have benefitted greatly from the generosity of Focus on the Family. Many of the materials given to women facing unexpected pregnancies come from Focus. In fact, since Life Network obtained its very first ultrasound machine through Focus on the Family, over 2000 women who have seen their babies on ultrasounds have chosen life. What an incalculable, multi-generational blessing.

Although Focus on the Family was founded in California, we are glad that they saw the light and relocated to Colorado Springs when they did in 1991. I wonder for how many children around the country—even the world—their first knowledge of Colorado Springs is through Adventures in Odyssey.

It is truly a privilege to celebrate with Focus on the Family on the occasion of their 40th anniversary. Focus on the Family has fortified our families and our country, and for that, I am truly grateful.

PASSING OF WALKER A. WILLIAMS

HON. KAREN BASS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to honor the life and memory of Walker Alexander Williams.

Born in East Orange, New Jersey in 1940, Walker lifted his eyes well beyond our shores and developed an international reputation as a businessman and an advocate for the African and Caribbean diaspora communities. His passion for economic empowerment led him to create Alternative Marketing Access, Leadership Global (formerly Leadership Africa USA) and NiQuan Energy as platforms for development. Walker leaves behind a legacy of uplifting others and promoting the advancement of under-represented groups, especially those of African and African American descent.

Walker also recognized the importance of training people to fill leadership roles and developing talent to serve in African political and economic contexts. He had a vision for developing countries in which their diverse communities and nations overall could reach their full potential. His distinguished career included testifying in Congress on "The Future of Energy in Africa" where he urged this body to support and encourage partnerships to improve Africa's access to energy. He also provided vital leadership around the initial passage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), arranging several Congressional briefings for African Ambassadors, key members of Congress, and Administration officials on AGOA and its potential effect on infrastructure, energy, agriculture, health, nutrition, and security.

During his long career as a businessman, advocate, and philanthropist, Walker remained

committed to mentoring and empowering young people and professionals, and he always aimed to make those who worked with him feel valued. He worked with more than 100 non-governmental organizations over thirty-plus years, and he facilitated scholarship and educational opportunities in Africa and the Caribbean through the Education Africa Presidential and Premier Education Awards, Nelson Mandela Presidential Medallions, and the Walter Sisulu Scholarship and Training Fund. He encouraged Africans and Americans alike to envision and achieve personal power and a more prosperous future. Walker believed that a better Africa and Caribbean meant a better United States of America.

Walker is remembered by his partner, children, and grandchildren as a humble and dedicated man. I would like to celebrate a life of service while I offer condolences to those he has left behind.

RECOGNIZING JANINE KIERAN

HON. DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Principal Janine Kieran for her lifelong passion for education.

Born and raised in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, Janine always knew that she wanted to be an educator. After graduating from high school and college, she met the love of her life, Brian, to whom she has been married for over 28 years. At the same time, she started her 33-year long career in education as a Special Education teacher at Brooklyn's George Westinghouse High School, where she has worked ever since. She then went on to serve as a Guidance Counselor, Assistant Principal, and Principal. It is obvious that her students over the years loved having her as a teacher and principal, especially because she made learning fun and exciting. After all, it is hard to imagine a teacher who used to sing and play guitar boring her students.

I cannot say enough about Janine's compassion. Throughout her many years at George Westinghouse High School, she always had an open door if her students ever needed help with their schoolwork or just wanted advice. Her selflessness truly showed in her work. Putting aside the fact that she had a husband and two children at home, Janine was always able to devote equal energy to students and fellow staff members. Furthermore, her kindness and altruism certainly goes without saying. Nevertheless, I am certain that even though she is retiring, she will always treasure her many years as an educator.

Mr. Speaker, after 33 years of nonstop commitment to George Westinghouse High School, Janine Kiernan will soon start her well-deserved retirement. I am sure she will travel a lot more, which she always enjoys. Most importantly, however, she will get to spend more time with her husband and her two sons, Connor and Ryan. I thank her for her decades-long devotion to educating the next generation of leaders, and I wish her a very happy retirement.

CHLOE EAGAN

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chloe Eagan from North Fort Myers High School.

The National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists has selected Chloe as one of the delegates to attend the Congress of Future Medical Leaders at the University of Massachusetts Lowell later this month.

Chloe will be joining hundreds of other students from around the country in an honors-only program for high schoolers who wish to become physicians or go into the medical research field. I am proud that Chloe is representing our southwest Florida community.

She and her fellow delegates will be meeting with a distinguished group that includes Nobel Prize-winning laureates, top medical school deans, and leaders in medical research. The goal of the program is to honor, inspire and direct top students like Chloe toward their desired goals in the medical field.

I commend Chloe for her outstanding performance in her studies which led to her selection to the Congress of Future Medical Leaders. I wish her continued success on her path to fulfilling her aspirations in the medical field.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF CHRISTOPHER BARADAT

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Staff Sergeant Christopher Baradat for heroic actions that were essential in rescuing 150 coalition soldiers in Afghanistan on April 6, 2013, and ultimately earned him the Air Force Cross which was presented to him on April 20, 2017.

Raised in Marin County, Mr. Baradat graduated from San Marin High School in 2007, and enlisted in the United States Air Force shortly thereafter. He served his country for eight years, and is now studying welding and technical skills at Laney College in Oakland, where he lives with his wife Kellie and his three children.

On April 6, 2013, Staff Sgt. Baradat, a special tactics airman assigned to the 21st Special Tactics Squadron, was attached to a U.S. Army Special Forces Team in eastern Afghanistan. He was on his third deployment in Afghanistan. That day, his unit was called to support coalition soldiers who were surrounded and pinned down by Taliban fighters in a valley in the Kunar Province. Upon entering the valley his unit took direct fire from the ridge lines and other surrounding structures, forcing his team to take cover in a compound 400 meters away from coalition forces. Staff Sgt. Baradat's responsibility was to communicate with supporting aircraft and provide pilots with targeting information to strike enemy positions.

Not being able to communicate with support aircraft through the compound walls, Staff Sgt. Baradat rushed out into the direct line of fire in order to communicate Taliban positions. Over the course of the next two hours, Staff Sgt. Baradat utilized 8 aircraft to drop 13 five hundred pound bombs and more than 1,100 rounds of ammunition on enemy positions surrounding his team and the coalition forces. The consistent barrage of fire created the conditions necessary for coalition forces and his team to withdraw from the valley. His heroism did not end there however, as he continued his communication with support aircraft throughout the exit out of the valley. Still putting himself in the direct line of fire, Staff Sgt. Baradat placed himself partially out of an armored carrier in order to maintain a secure communication signal with support aircraft. He would continue to do this until his entire team made it out of the valley.

Because his actions had a decisive impact on the outcome of that day, Staff Sgt. Baradat received the Air Force Cross, which is the second highest military award that a member of the United States Air Force can receive. Staff Sgt. Baradat is only the ninth service member to have received the award since 9/11.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in expressing deep appreciation for Christopher Baradat's extraordinary heroism that day, and for the sacrifices he and his family have made for this country.

HONORING MR. LARRY CASE FOR HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF INSURANCE AGENTS AFTER 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, in 1987, Mr. Case began his employment as the Executive Vice President of the Missouri Association of Professional Insurance Agents. In a few years' time, this organization and the Independent Agents of Missouri consolidated to form what is now known as the Missouri Association of Insurance Agents. In March 1992, he became the Vice Present of Membership Services. On October 30, 1997, he was appointed as the Executive Director of Missouri Association of Insurance Agents. Mr. Case was then appointed to the position of Executive Vice President of the Missouri Association of Insurance Agents on September 1, 1999. The Missouri Association of Insurance Agents is the oldest and largest association of insurance agents in the state of Missouri. With that long standing tradition, approximately 500 independent agencies that are operated by 4,000 agents, brokers, and their employees are members of the association. In 2002, Mr. Case was awarded the Insurance Person of the Year Award for the significant contributions that he has made to the insurance industry.

Mr. Case is passionate about the legislative and regulatory advocacy side of the insurance field and has played an integral part in passing legislation that has helped advance the causes of independent insurance agents in Missouri. He has served in various roles at the national level with the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America and the National Association of Professional Insurance

Agents, not to mention the numerous committees and task forces he has volunteered to serve on during his illustrious career. Additionally, Mr. Case has routinely shared his expertise at the Mid-America Insurance Conference and has earned the respect of many lawmakers, company personnel, and independent insurance agents throughout the great state of Missouri.

I ask you to join me in recognizing Mr. Larry Case on his retirement. The commitment he has shown to the Missouri Association of Insurance Agents and to his community for 30 years is a commendable accomplishment.

CAMERON CHAVEZ

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Cameron Chavez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Cameron Chavez is a student at Arvada High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Cameron Chavez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Cameron Chavez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING FAIRVOTE

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, since its founding in June 1992, FairVote has fought creatively all over America to advance significant voting and electoral reforms that make American democracy more responsive, more accountable, and more representative. I rise to celebrate this visionary non-partisan and nonprofit organization which, I am proud to say, is headquartered in the 8th District of Maryland.

Under the exemplary leadership of its Executive Director Rob Richie and board chairs, former Congressman John B. Anderson and musician Krist Novoselic and with the energy of its youthful, talented staff, FairVote has worked with purpose and imagination to implement ranked-choice voting, proportional representation, redistricting reform, the National Popular Vote agreement and voter preregistration for teenagers nationwide. FairVote's sophisticated educational campaigns have been teaching Americans across the country that these changes are all effective tools of democracy and can help us make certain that all Americans have their voices heard and views represented.

Mr. Richie's distinguished career in public life has been devoted to democratic ideals, voting rights, and the realization of responsive and representative government. He has played a key role in implementing ranked-choice voting in over a dozen cities; in advocating the National Popular Vote plan across the country as states equal to 165 electoral votes have joined the agreement; and in promoting voter registration, voter access and voter participation.

On behalf of FairVote, Mr. Richie has appeared regularly in the media, written for leading national publications, published nine books, and addressed important groups such as the American Political Science Association and National Conference of State Legislatures. Through FairVote, Richie's luminous work has changed America's conception of how we vote, what democracy means and how we can make strong progress this century. Standing with him throughout as a colleague and inspirational reform leader in her own right has been his wife Cynthia Terrell.

As FairVote celebrates 25 years of thoughtful advocacy, I want to commend the group, its leaders and all affiliated with it for their hard work and passionate commitment not only to the principles of democratic inclusion and governance but to the difficult and urgently necessary process of electoral reform across the country. As a champion of electoral reform and the proud Representative from Maryland's 8th Congressional District, I look forward to watching the many important accomplishments still yet to come from Rob Richie and FairVote, American idealists and democratic patriots all.

HONORING THE LIFE OF NOE HERNANDEZ

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Weslaco native, Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Noe Hernandez, one of the seven sailors lost in the tragic collision between the U.S.S. *Fitzgerald* and the *ACX Crystal* in the Philippine Sea on June 17, 2017.

Noe attended Weslaco High School where he participated in United States Army Junior Reserve Officer Training for four years. By the time he graduated in 2009, Noe had reached the rank of cadet major and served as the program's executive officer. Following graduation, he reported to the U.S. Navy Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Illinois.

He was a student at the Recruit Training Command and the Center for Surface Combat Systems in Great Lakes until March 2010. He then served at the Navy Munitions Command in Sigonella, Italy, for three years and then reported to San Diego, California, for Littoral Combat Ship Training and classes at the Center for Surface Combat Systems until October 2015. Later that year, Noe and his family moved to Yokosuka, Japan, where he was stationed at Navy Force Japan and subsequently on the U.S.S. *Fitzgerald*. During his time in the U.S. Navy, Noe became an Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist and earned the rank of Gunner's Mate 2nd Class.

Noe was a first-generation patriot who cared deeply for the United States of America and took pride in serving his country. His friends and family describe him as modest, loving, and kind and many remember him for his selflessness and unwavering faith in God.

Noe is survived by his wife Dora and his son Leon. He loved his country, and he will be sorely missed.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my sincerest condolences to Dora, Leon, the Hernandez family, friends, and loved ones. Our country has lost one of the best South Texas has to offer and I hope his family can find peace in this trying time. I am proud to commemorate the life of Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Noe Hernandez and I thank him for his service to our great nation.

CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF EILEEN SEVANO

HON. JOSH GOTTHEIMER

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Eileen Sevano and her unwavering service as a pillar of the Teaneck Public School system for nearly thirty years. On the occasion of her retirement, I applaud Eileen for an incredible forty years of teaching, spanning from Teaneck and Englewood Cliffs, in New Jersey to Brooklyn and Chinatown in New York. During the course of her career, Eileen touched the lives of many students and helped shaped the minds of the next generation.

William Arthur Ward once said, ''The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.'' As a public-school teacher in elementary and middle school, Eileen inspired her students both inside and outside of the classroom. For years, Eileen coached softball in Teaneck, empowering young women on the field. For fourteen years, as Director of Camp Kookooskoos, Eileen inspired young campers through the arts, science, sports, and by exploring and nurturing the environment. Eileen helped our young people create memories that last a lifetime. By focusing on the breadth of learning, even beyond the classroom, Eileen put the best interests of her students first and helped them grow and thrive.

Generations of students, who Eileen taught, have had limitless potential. They have and continue to launch new businesses in New Jersey, find cures for diseases like cancer, create the next breakthrough in technology, and much more. With the help of a supportive teacher like Eileen, all of this has been possible.

Nobody is surprised to hear that in retirement Eileen will continue her lifetime of service by volunteering with students in her community and babysitting her granddaughters. Encouraging learning and creating a supportive environment for young people is what Eileen enjoys most.

I am lucky to know Eileen and am profoundly thankful for her lifetime of service. I commend her for being a wonderful role model to my children and to many students from across the Fifth District. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Eileen's hard work, and wish her, her husband Dennis, her

daughters Brenna and Perri, and her granddaughters Maddy and Sydney, all the best as Eileen celebrates this new chapter.

In closing, I join countless families across the Fifth District in saying thank you to Eileen for her dedication to children and to her community. The world just would not be the same without her hard work and inspiration.

SUPPORTING H.R. 2866—THE REDUCING BARRIERS FOR RELATIVE FOSTER PARENTS ACT

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, on June 8th, I joined my colleague Rep. LLOYD SMUCKER, in introducing H.R. 2866—the Reducing Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act. This bipartisan bill encourages states to update their licensing requirements for foster parents in order to ensure that relatives have the ability to become foster parents.

Under current law, states have tremendous flexibility to set their own rules and guidelines for licensing foster homes. Unfortunately, many states have outdated regulations that make it difficult for family members to become foster parents. For example, some states fail to notify family members when relative children enter the foster care system. In other states, children can be removed from a family member's home and thrown into the foster care system if the relative adult does not have a separate bedroom for the child.

H.R. 2866 would require that the Department of Health and Human Services create model licensing requirements. States then must either adopt the HHS requirements, or provide an explanation for why the licensing requirements are not ideal for the state. My home state of Alabama has updated, family-friendly licensing standards, so compliance with HHS's standards will be simple. However, families residing in states with antiquated standards would face fewer barriers when trying to become a foster parent.

Many studies prove how beneficial placement with family members can be for foster children. According to Generations United, children in the care of family members experience higher stability, permanency, and positive mental health outcomes. Furthermore, allowing children to stay with their family members gives children the opportunity to maintain strong connections to their community.

I was very pleased that my bill was unanimously supported in the Ways and Means Committee, and I look forward to its passage through the House this evening.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY MR. LEO SHEY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mr. Leo Shey of Pembroke Pines, Florida. Leo was a dear friend of mine who sadly passed away on June 13, 2017.

Leo was born in the Bronx, New York. He served honorably in the United States Navy, and after marrying his wife Bunny in 1950, they moved to Dade County in South Florida in 1958. As a mortgage banker, Leo dedicated many years of his career specializing in low-income housing in Dade and Broward counties, and also served on the board of directors of the Park Place Association for 40 years. Through his contributions, Leo made a profound impact in South Florida.

Leo went on to establish himself in Atlanta, Georgia where he emerged as an ally of the African American business community. At the forefront of civil rights activism, Leo became an esteemed member of the 100 percent Wrong Club.

Distinguishing himself through extraordinary involvement in the community, Leo touched countless lives. He is survived by his wife Bunny, and adored by father of Nina Voges (Dan), Michael (Barbara), like-a-son Seth Brown, and predeceased by Douglas. Beloved and wise grandfather of Tim (Rachel), Caitlin (Todd), Sherri and Terri (Cesar), and blended family Danielle (Jorge del Valle, Arya and Jayley) and Sean Voges (Alice). Adoring Pop-pop of Wilhelmina, Sebastian and Violette Leo.

Mr. Speaker, words cannot express how deeply saddened I am for the passing of such a kind soul. I was devastated to learn of the death of one of the nicest people I have ever known. Leo was not a large man, but he was most among men. It is with a heavy heart that I honor his life arid accomplishments, but most of all, to honor our friendship. My thoughts are with his loved ones, during this most difficult time.

CAMERON GONZALES

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Cameron Gonzales for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Cameron Gonzales is a student at Pomona High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Cameron Gonzales is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Cameron Gonzales for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING THE LIFE OF GEORGE CANON

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize a staunch advocate for the Adirondacks and beloved member of our community.

George Canon was a fixture in local politics. After retiring from the National Lead mines in Newcomb's Tahawus hamlet, Mr. Canon devoted himself to public service by working in many local organizations. Most notably, he was Newcomb supervisor from 1990 to 2015, serving 13 terms in office. During his long and inspiring tenure, Mr. Canon played a significant role in successfully preserving the Satanoni Great Camp and the historic railroad between North Creek and Tahawus.

A lifelong resident of the North Country, Mr. Canon loved the Adirondack Park deeply, cherishing both its history and natural beauty. This appreciation for his surroundings led George to seek out balanced environmental policies by working as a member of the Northern Forest Lands Council Advisory Committee. Through these efforts, Canon coupled his appreciation for the environment with a pragmatic understanding of his constituents' needs.

George Canon also served as president of the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages, where he spent a decade representing and advocating for the citizens of the North Country. I am honored to have taken part in celebrating Mr. Canon's retirement in 2015, and hold a deep admiration for the lasting impact that his service has had on our area.

I would like to offer my deepest condolences to George Canon's family and friends, particularly his wife Monica. He was a true community leader and his legacy of service will endure in New York's 21st District.

DAN CZAHOR AND MADISON HEINRICH

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Dan Czahor of Fort Myers and Madison Heinrich of Naples. It has come to my attention that these two students have been selected to represent the state of Florida at the Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders in Lowell, Massachusetts later this month.

The Congress is an event headed by the National Academy of Future Scientists and Technologists and is an honors-only program whose intention is to motivate the top students of the country, who are interested in a career in science or technology, to achieve their goals. The Academy selects all delegates based on nominations from teachers, proven academic excellence, and leadership ability. Further, their alumni include Nobel Prize winners, top scientific university deans, and other leaders in the STEM field.

It is encouraging to know that Dan and Madison are among these five hundred nationally selected students to go to the conference.

I look forward to the work these two individuals will do in the years to come and wish them the best of luck in their future academic studies.

RECOGNIZING KYLIE HUTCHISON, ASHLEY JOPLIN, KATRIANA SEFCOVIC AND PAIGE SIMPSON

HON. KEN BUCK

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize four high school students who were selected to represent the state of Colorado as delegates at the Congress for Future Medical Leaders. The students are Kylie Hutchison, Ashley Joplin, Katriana Sefcovic, and Paige Simpson.

The Congress of Future Medical Leaders is an honors program that recognizes exceptional high school students who are pursuing career's as a physician or in medical research.

These students are the future leaders of the medical field and our country. Through their studies, they have embodied the meaning of hard work and perseverance to achieve their goals, and will better the health of future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to recognize these students from the fourth district of Colorado for their hard work and service to our community. I wish them the best in their future endeavors.

HONORING THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF MRS. IDA JOHNSON

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and achievements of Mrs. Ida Johnson. Mrs. Johnson dedicated her career to serving her community, both in education and as an advocate for low income youth and families in Merced County. Mrs. Johnson was passionate about the pursuit of equality, driven by her love and compassion for others, and committed to creating opportunities for students and teachers in Merced County.

Mrs. Johnson was born in Nashville, Tennessee. She attended the University of San Francisco, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Human Relations and Organizational Behavior in 1984. Mrs. Johnson then continued her education at Chapman University, where she received a Master's degree in Educational Systems Management in 1988. She worked on gender equity as Director and Coordinator for the California Department of Education for almost 12 years, and also worked for 33 years for the Merced County Schools in various capacities, including teaching computing and business classes.

Beyond her professional career, Mrs. Johnson was elected to the Merced Union High School Governing Board in 2005, where she served 8 years as a Trustee. Additionally, Mrs. Johnson was involved with numerous community and educational organizations, including the Boys and Girls Club, League of Women Voters, and the 4–H Club. She also worked with the Merced Equals Program, where she spent countless hours providing teachers, parents, and students with the tools necessary to improve math skills within the county, and she secured a significant amount of grant money.

With Mrs. Johnson's passing, the Merced community mourns her loss but also rejoices in her lasting impact and legacy. The lives Mrs. Johnson touched with her career in education and devotion to her community will not be forgotten. Her spirit will live on in the hearts of her family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the life and achievements of Mrs. Ida Johnson. Mrs. Johnson's achievements cannot be measured through grants or educational programs, but in the lives she touched. Mrs. Johnson's trajectory as an educator has given students and teachers in Merced County a role model to admire and emulate as they move towards the future.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last year Al-Qaeda nearly downed an airliner in Somalia using an explosive disguised as a laptop. This bomb got past X-ray machines and blew a gaping hole in the aircraft.

Al-Qaeda has been working for years to create sophisticated explosives that can target airplanes. It came as no surprise that last week the Department of Homeland Security announced new security restrictions on electronics on board certain U.S.-bound flights.

These new restrictions are deadly serious. Al-Qaeda has units deployed in places like Syria, Pakistan, and Turkey that are dedicated to planning attacks against the West.

The hysteria around this announcement is purely political. Everyone should be concerned about the growing threat from al-Qaeda. We must not allow politics to divide us in the face of a mortal enemy seeking to kill and injure as many Americans as possible.

I commend the Department of Homeland Security for responding to crucial intelligence and taking this step to protect the American people. And that's just the way it is.

BRIAHNA HORTON

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Briahna Horton for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Briahna Horton is a student at Oberon Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Briahna Horton is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Briahna Horton for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

HONORING TECHNICAL SERGEANT MARSHALL PRICE

HON. MATT GAETZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with great respect and admiration to honor Technical Sergeant Marshall Price.

After 12 years of active duty, Technical Sergeant Price is medically retiring from the United States Air Force following injuries sustained during his deployments to Africa. Technical Sergeant Price has been a dedicated servant to our Nation since 2005, when he first enlisted at the age of 19, and today we celebrate his service.

Throughout his notable career, Technical Sergeant Price has been stationed at Moody AFB in Valdosta, Georgia, Fairchild AFB in Spokane, Washington, and Hulburt Field in Florida's First Congressional District. Marshall has been an active supporter of our national security interests, participating in various undisclosed missions in both Djibouti and Afghanistan. Additionally, he has earned recognition for his distinguished service from the 9th Special Operations Squadron.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, and a grateful community, I am privileged to recognize Technical Sergeant Price for his commitment to our country and the sacrifices he has made on its behalf. On his retirement from the United States Air Force, I thank him and his family for his honorable service, and wish them all the best going forward.

IN RECOGNITION OF EDWARD BABOR, PRESIDENT OF THE TAMINENT REGULAR DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF NEW YORK CITY

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to my dear friend and longtime staff member Edward Babor, as he steps down from his twenty-six year tenure as the president of the Taminent Regular Democratic Club.

The Taminent Regular Democratic Club (the Taminent) was founded in 1933 in the Astoria neighborhood of Queens County. Today, the members of the Taminent work tirelessly to advocate for Astoria residents on issues affecting the community. I have attended countless events hosted by the Taminent and I am extraordinarily grateful to Ed Babor for his

leadership as club president and the extraordinary number of hours he has volunteered to ensure the club continues to thrive in the 21st century. In fact the only thing that might be more apparent than Ed's dedication to the Taminent is the universal respect and admiration that the club's members show for Ed. While Ed Babor may be stepping down as president, I am confident that he will always be a proud member of the Taminent. For decades, Ed has offered his advice and mentorship to younger generations of Western Queens advocates including incoming Taminent president, Loren Amor.

Ed Babor serves on a host of civic, political, cultural, and service organizations in the Astoria and Long Island City neighborhoods. Along with his work with the Taminent, Ed is on the board of the Powhatan and Pocahontas Regular Democratic Club, another Astoria political organization. He has been an active member of Queens Community Board Number 1 for over a decade, and is currently the Executive Secretary. Ed also serves on the boards of the Astoria Civic Association, which advocates for the needs of Astoria residents and runs the successful Judge Charles J. Vallone Scholarship Fund, and SHAREing and CAREing, a nonprofit dedicated to working with cancer patients and their families without regard to insurance status to provide education on prevention and wellness, links to cancer treatment and practical needs, and ongoing cancer support.

In his career, Ed Babor has demonstrated the same commitment to community and public service. Ed Babor worked for the New York Department of Motor Vehicles for over thirty years. Ed has been an invaluable addition to my staff for over eight years. He has an encyclopedic knowledge about the neighborhoods of Western Queens and the issues which they face. This institutional knowledge comes both from the fact that Ed is at every meeting that takes place in Western Queens and from his sincere interest in the neighborhoods' well-being, because Ed truly loves Queens.

Ed lives in Astoria with his wife Patricia Babor, to whom he has been married for 39 years. Ed and Pat are active parishioners at Immaculate Conception Church in Astoria. Ed has been actively involved with Catholic War-Veterans Post No. 1, having served with the National Guard. Proud of his Czech heritage, Ed is involved with several cultural organizations including the Czech Catholic Union and the Bohemian Historical Society.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the many accomplishments of Edward Babor. His hard work, character, and love for his community and the people who live there, make him an outstanding leader and an incredible friend.

HONORING CORPORAL RICK COSTELLO

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize my constituent, Corporal Rick Costello, who will be departing from his role with the Purcellville Police Department after over 15 years of service to our community.

Corporal Costello's commitment to serving others did not start until 1999 when he began volunteering with the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office. In fact, he served with the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War before starting his career for a building supply company, where he worked for over thirty years. As a volunteer with the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, Corporal Costello served as a member of the community advisory committee, assisting police officers in Loudoun County, but soon afterwards, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office offered him a position on the force. Despite his age difference with the majority of the other trainees, Corporal Costello passed the six-month, rigorous training and served for three years with the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office and twelve more years with the Purcellville Police Department.

As an officer, Corporal Costello became well known for his information technology skills, helping advance the Purcellville Police Department's communications systems and managing the department's accreditation process. In fact just last month, The Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission unanimously voted to award the Purcellville Police Department with its second re-accreditation certificate, largely due to the framework that Corporal Costello has set up over the years.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the entire 10th District, I thank Corporal Rick Costello for his dedicated career of service to Loudoun County, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing a truly commendable public servant. I wish him and his family all of the best in their future endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF NANCY KRUPIARZ FOR HER DISTINGUISHED SERVICE WITH THE MICHIGAN TRAILS AND GREENWAYS ALLIANCE

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Nancy Krupiarz for her outstanding career working on behalf of the State of Michigan and its residents. As Executive Director for the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, Ms. Krupiarz has helped promote a healthy and more prosperous Michigan by making it one of the foremost trail states in the country.

Originally founded in 1986, the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance is a nonprofit organization that promotes the development of non-motorized trails throughout Michigan and provides a statewide voice for users of these trails. The group consists of approximately 1,000 members and provides information for Michiganders about trails throughout the state. Additionally, it advocates for assistance at the state and federal level to safeguard state and federal funding for the preservation of Michigan's natural heritage and the upkeep of its trails. As a result of the efforts of the MTGA, Michigan has built and maintained a comprehensive network of over 3,000 miles of non-motorized trails throughout the state. These include cross-state trails from South Haven to Port Huron, as well as from Ironwood to Belle Isle.

Ms. Krupiarz has served as the organization's executive director since the group's founding and has been a catalyst for the growth and success of MTGA. Her tireless efforts have helped create a cohesive and effective organization that has effectively served the people of Michigan by coordinating efforts to build trails and preserve Michigan's natural areas. Due to her leadership and efforts, Michigan now boasts the most trail miles out of any U.S. state and is widely recognized for its conservation efforts and outdoor recreation offerings. Ms. Krupiarz's career with MTGA has left a lasting legacy, and it is my hope that the new leadership of the organization continues to build on her work in the years ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ms. Nancy Krupiarz for her leadership with the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance. Her career has resulted in a more livable state for Michigan's residents.

BERNADETTE KIBERINKA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Bernadette Kiberinka for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Bernadette Kiberinka is a student at Everitt Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Bernadette Kiberinka is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Bernadette Kiberinka for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

HONORING THE MATTATUCK DRUM BAND

HON. ELIZABETH H. ESTY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Mattatuck Drum Band, which this week commemorates the 250th Anniversary of its founding. This band is our nation's oldest continuously active fife and drum band and is a celebrated institution of our Waterbury, Connecticut community.

The Mattatuck Drum Band was founded in 1767, and over the past two and a half centuries, the band has been an invaluable group in supporting our country's battles and preserving the heritage of our state and country. The band was first formed to play martial music for military training exercises in the towns of Farmingbury and Waterbury. The fifers and drummers were some of the earliest patriots to join the American Revolution in the

spring of 1775, at a time when musicians and drummers were instrumental in maintaining order and routine for military camps.

The band joined many parades in support of President Lincoln's 1860 campaign, and then joined recruiting efforts to support the Union's fight in the Civil War. Almost a century later during World War II, despite gas rationing and the deployment of many members, the band still turned out to play in parades to support our country's service members and maintain solidarity during a difficult time for the country. Today, the dedicated members of the band keep musical tradition alive, and the band's performances are an essential part of our community's celebrations.

Mr. Speaker, the Mattatuck Drum Band celebrates our history in Connecticut and America, and its dedicated musicians and leaders have preserved an important part of our community's heritage for the past 250 years. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor the band and everyone who has ensured its preservation and success here today.

RECOGNIZING PRIYA VULCHI

HON. BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Priya Vulchi—a remarkable young woman who, this year, earned the 2017 Congressional Gold Medal.

A resident of Princeton, Ms. Vulchi demonstrated an immeasurable passion for the education and advancement of our nation's leaders. Working with Princeton Public Schools, Ms. Vulchi created a racial literacy tool to assist educators initiate dialogues around race-related topics in the classroom. Ms. Vulchi is also a co-founder of Princeton CHOOSE—a student-led organization that aims to overcome racism and inspire harmony through exposure, education and empowerment. Further, Ms. Vulchi is a published author of a racial literacy teaching tool that was piloted in Princeton Public school in the spring of 2016 and officially used by all 5th grade teachers in the school district for the 2016–2017 school years.

Along with her commitment to education, Ms. Vulchi pursued journalism and became the Head Copy Editor for her school's monthly newspaper. Finally, Ms. Vulchi crossed the country in her travels to Hawaii to visit the Haleakal National Park. There she visited the Eats Maui Volcano and learned more about volcanism and the ecosystems of the National Park.

Beyond the Congressional Gold Medal program, extraordinary individuals like Ms. Vulchi exemplify the best and brightest of our nation's future. As a resident of New Jersey's 12th Congressional District, I couldn't be more proud of her for taking up such a difficult challenge and making a positive change for themselves in their community.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that my colleagues will join me in congratulating Ms. Vulchi on her amazing accomplishment.

HONORING STEVE SHISSLER ON HIS RETIREMENT AFTER MORE THAN 26 YEARS OF SERVICE IN LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I offer my sincere congratulations to my constituent, Lieutenant Steve Shissler, on his upcoming retirement after more than 26 years of service to the Hampden Township Police Department in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.

Lt. Shissler climbed the ranks of the Hampden Township Police Department, starting as a patrolman, then to Corporal, Sergeant and, ultimately, Lieutenant. He has been in charge of the Department's Criminal Investigation Division for the last several years.

Lt. Shissler's tireless dedication, professionalism and sacrifice has touched the lives of countless people and challenged all with whom he served to be the best. His legacy of service to our community truly is admirable.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District, I thank and congratulate Steve Shissler on his service to our Nation and wish him and his family continued great success in their future adventures.

IN RECOGNITION OF SEAN RATTAY ON HIS OFFER OF APPOINTMENT TO ATTEND THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to pay special tribute to an outstanding student from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. I am pleased to announce that Sean Rattay of Monclova, Ohio has been offered an appointment to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

Sean's offer of appointment permits him to attend the United States Naval Academy this fall with the incoming Class of 2021. Attending one of our nation's military academies not only offers the opportunity to serve our country, but also guarantees a world-class education while undertaking one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of their lives.

Sean brings an enormous amount of leadership, service, and dedication to the incoming Class of 2021. While attending St. John's Jesuit High School in Toledo, Ohio, Sean was a member of the National Honor Society, a peer tutor and a school ambassador.

Throughout high school, Sean participated in varsity football, earning numerous achievements and accolades along the way. Sean also led Christmas on Campus and volunteered at Swan Creek Care Center, an assisted living center in Toledo, Ohio. I am confident that Sean will carry the lessons of his student and athletic leadership to the Naval Academy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Sean Rattay on his offer of appointment to the United States Naval Academy. Our service academies offer the finest military training and education available. I am positive that Sean will excel during his career at Annapolis, and I ask my colleagues to join me in extending their best wishes to him as he begins his service to our Nation.

DANTE PORCHETTA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Dante Porchetta for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Dante Porchetta is a student at Wayne Carle Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Dante Porchetta is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Dante Porchetta for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

JEFFREY PASSANTINO

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Jeffrey Passantino, who was drafted by the Chicago Cubs in the 2017 Major League Baseball draft. Passantino is an alumnus of Bishop Verot High School in Fort Myers, and most recently played at Limpscomb University.

This season at Limpscomb, Jeffrey had a 4–3 record with a 3.09 Earned Run Average and 95 strikeouts. During his career at Bishop Verot, he helped lead the Vikings to three straight state title appearances, which included one championship in 2011. It was during this time that he also posted an impressive 22–4 record on the mound.

I would like to congratulate Jeffrey for his hard-work, dedication, and leadership on and off the field. I look forward to hearing about his future accomplishments.

HONORING TONY NAPOLI

HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take some time today to honor one of my constituents, Mr. Tony Napoli, for his immense dedication to serving Santa Ana's youth.

Mr. Napoli is an accomplished businessman with a background in technology, having graduated from the Connecticut College of Electricians as an electronic technician. But Mr.

Napoli is far more than just a businessman. In his spare time, Mr. Napoli volunteers as a Chamber Ambassador to the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce, and his great service earned him the Ambassador of the Year Award in 2011.

Mr. Napoli fully embodies the value of community service in all aspects of his life. Concerned with local high school graduation rates and skill level of recent graduates, Mr. Napoli with the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce partnered with the Santa Ana Unified School District to start the High School Incorporated Program, a unique collaboration that seeks to provide vocational training and career advice to high school students.

Passionate about investing in youth, Mr. Napoli chose to give even more of his free time to this program, especially the Automotive and Transportation division. Mr. Napoli also serves as a Business Advisor, advising the division on budget matters and providing valuable mentorship while also consistently visiting the inspirational students in class.

Mr. Napoli's dedication and service has helped raise the graduation rate for the program to 95 percent with many students already fully certified and well equipped for their bright futures.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Napoli is an example to us all of the incredible value found in community engagement. I am honored to recognize Mr. Napoli for doing his part in bridging the gap, and thank him for the positive impact he has made on the Santa Ana and Orange County community.

HONORING THE WESTERN HERITAGE OF COLORADO SPRINGS

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the proud and important Western Heritage of Colorado Springs.

Whether it is the 81st Western Street Breakfast, the 77th Annual Pikes Peak of Bust Rodeo, or the 68th Pikes Peak Range Ride, our Colorado Springs community has supported this heritage for many generations. I would also like to note that the proceeds from these events go to supporting our brave men and women in uniform at our five local military installations.

If you are one of the 10,000 people at the Street Breakfast, the many thousands at the Rodeo, or the two hundred plus Range Riders, you are taking part in a long and commendable tradition. And, with your continued enthusiastic support, it's one I know will last forever.

Thank you so much to the staffers, board members, and dedicated volunteers who make each of these events possible. Each June and July Colorado Springs shows the entire world what is so special about the heritage of the West.

IN HONOR OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT GEORGE MASON MAP CLINIC

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the award-winning Mason and Partners (MAP) health care clinic and to congratulate George Mason University School of Nursing and its partners on the establishment of a permanent MAP Clinic in Manassas Park, Virginia. The clinic provides residents of medically underserved areas with a variety of health care services, including physicals, screenings, health care counseling, and acute primary care treatment while, at the same time, offering George Mason University nursing students and those in related studies the invaluable practical experience of treating and counseling patients who utilize the clinic.

George Mason launched its first MAP clinic in 2013, originally offering its services at the Manassas Park Community Center. Since then, the operation has expanded to three Northern Virginia sites while also broadening the services they provide. The clinic strives to serve as a bridge for patients with no access to healthcare until they are able to arrange for more formal healthcare coverage for themselves.

The MAP clinic program has also greatly benefitted our students at George Mason University. By offering an active learning lab, nursing and health and human services students are able to receive real-life experience working on interprofessional teams, a learning opportunity that is not available to many students across the nation. These clinical opportunities have been so well-received that the federal government's Health Resources Service Administration (HRSA) has awarded the school $2 million to support the education of Mason School of Nursing students.

Mr. Speaker, I take great pride in celebrating with you and our colleagues the establishment of the first permanent structure of the MAP clinic in Manassas Park, Virginia. In addition, I ask that you join me in congratulating the George Mason University School of Nursing and its partners, Dr. Allison Ansher of the Prince William Health District, the Parks and Recreation and Education Departments of the City of Manassas Park, the city's Community Development Office and interim director Calvin O'Dell, the Potomac Health Foundation, and the students and faculty of George Mason's College of Health and Human Services, for the extraordinary success of this visionary, nurse-led program. I wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

HONORING MAYOR MATTHEW MARCHANT'S SERVICE TO THE CITY OF CARROLLTON, TEXAS

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my son, Matthew H. Marchant, for his public service as Mayor of the City of Carrollton, Texas.

Matthew finishes his six outstanding years in office as mayor of Carrollton later this evening, but that will not end his passionate commitment to serving his fellow citizens. Local leaders play a tremendous role in improving the quality of life on a daily basis for their residents and visitors—Matthew's constant stewardship on behalf of those who live and work in Carrollton is to be wholeheartedly congratulated. His leadership and service have touched many, and many more will be able to enjoy the benefits for years to come.

Matthew was first elected mayor of Carrollton in 2011 and was re-elected in 2014. Prior to his election as mayor, Matthew served as councilmember for nine years from 2002 to 2011. In conjunction with Matthew's role as councilmember and mayor, he served in other leadership positions including Chairman of the Redevelopment Subcommittee, member of the Transit Oriented Development Subcommittee, member of the Carrollton Festival at the Switchyard Subcommittee, member of the Audit and Finance Committee, and member of the Judicial Committee. In addition, Matthew has served as Carrollton's voting member on the Regional Transportation Council.

Starting in 2011, Matthew led Carrollton through an economic development campaign to invest in the city's future. He championed an innovative project to revitalize Downtown Carrollton with new restaurants, retail, and greenspaces, while capturing the historic feel of Carrollton's past. In 2015, the City of Carrollton was awarded the ''Best Public Improvement Project'' by the Texas Downtown Association for its work in the downtown square. In 2010, striving to introduce new patrons to the Carrollton Square, Matthew worked with local and national musicians to host the Festival at the Switchyard concert series. Last year, more than 30,000 people were on hand to discover the unique stores, eclectic restaurants, and music all in the heart of Downtown Carrollton.

During Matthew's tenure as mayor, he has worked diligently with the Carrollton Police and Fire Departments to equip them with the tools needed to serve and protect the city's citizens. As a result, Carrollton now has one the lowest crime rates in its recent history. Matthew collaborated with neighboring cities to secure funding for the North Texas Emergency Communications Center which was launched in 2016 as a regional emergency dispatch command. Additionally, Matthew oversaw the construction of the new Carrollton Police Department Headquarters and Fire Station #8 which have helped lower the response time for medical emergencies by 12 percent across the city.

As Matthew leaves office, the property tax base of Carrollton is approximately $13.3 billion, an impressive increase of 49 percent since his first election as mayor. In addition, Matthew has met his commitment to lowering the property tax rate for homeowners. During his 15 years serving in Carrollton city government, the population of the city expanded from around 115,000 to nearly 135,000, making it one of the top 25 most populous cities in Texas. Additionally, many small and large corporations such as AmeriSource Bergen, Interceramic, CyrusOne, and others have also joined Carrollton's growing and diverse economic landscape.

In 1998, Matthew earned his Bachelor of Science degree from Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, Oklahoma. Matthew continued his studies at the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, Texas where he received his law degree in 2000. Outside of his duties as a public servant, Matthew works as legal counsel at Holly Frontier Corporation. He has been a lifetime resident of the Carrollton-area where he lives with his wife, Lindsay, and two children, Kendall and Hayden.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 24th Congressional District of Texas, I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in recognizing my son, Matthew Marchant, for his service to the people of Carrollton.

DE'VON REWERTS

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud De'Von Rewerts for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

De'Von Rewerts is a student at Drake Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by De'Von Rewerts is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to De'Von Rewerts for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

CELEBRATING THE SERVICE OF THOMAS O'KEEFE

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize Thomas O'Keefe for his dedication to the safety of our nation and the well-being of his fellow citizens.

Mr. O'Keefe began his long career in government in 1984, working for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. In 2003, he transferred to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, where he has served diligently for the past fourteen years. As a member of Customs and Border Protection, Mr. O'Keefe worked each day to protect the security of the United States and its citizens.

In addition to his work for the federal government, Mr. O'Keefe played an active role in the National Treasury Employees Union, serving as President of Northern New York's Chapter since 1995. The Chapter grew dramatically during his tenure, increasing both in membership and territorial reach. As Chapter President, Mr. O'Keefe fought for the rights of employees and sought to secure fair treatment for everyone he represented.

I want to thank Mr. O'Keefe for his years of work for the United States Government and the people of Upstate New York. His commitment to protecting our nation exhibits his strong character, and we commend his fine service.

HONORING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BLUE GRASS ARMY DEPOT

HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the marking of a very special occasion—the 75th Anniversary of the Blue Grass Army Depot in Richmond, Kentucky. Since 1942, the Blue Grass Army Depot's dedicated civilian workforce has been called upon time after time to fulfill their critical role as key ammunition suppliers to our nation's joint warfighters by providing ready and reliable ammo at the right place and right time, every time.

Throughout the course of our nation's history, our great success in establishing our country as a beacon of hope to the world has been largely defined by the everyday bravery and dedication of individual citizens. The Blue Grass Army Depot has exemplified that bravery and dedication through direct civilian support of our warfighters.

From World War II to the Korean War, the War in Vietnam, the Gulf War, and through today's ongoing Global War on Terrorism, wherever and whenever our men and women are engaged in conflict and risking their lives fighting on the front lines, the Blue Grass Army Depot has been there.

The civilian employees of the Blue Grass Army Depot are amongst the thousands of often unsung heroes who have provided, and continue to provide, unwavering support for our nation's ongoing fight to defend and preserve democracy and freedom. Their work has ensured that our nation's joint war fighters are victorious, and sustains the reputation of the United States Armed Forces as the world's preeminent military.

The Blue Grass Army Depot and its workforce are to be commended for their service, dedication to duty, and loyalty to our nation. I join with a grateful nation in thanking them and wishing them the best in years to come.

It is my privilege to represent such an outstanding military installation and civilian workforce among my constituents in Kentucky's Sixth Congressional District, and to honor the Blue Grass Army Depot and its workforce before the United States House of Representatives.

INTRODUCTION OF BANNING THE USE OF ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES ON AIRPLANES ACT OF 2017

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Banning the Use of Electronic Cigarettes on Airplanes Act of 2017. The bill prohibits the use of electronic cigarettes and vaping devices on commercial airplanes by including use of these devices within the definition of smoking. Smoking tobacco products on commercial airplanes has been banned for years, but with the increase in use of electronic cigarettes and vaping devices in their place, it is necessary to update our laws to reflect this new nuisance and health risk on airplanes. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued a final rule in March 2016 banning the use of these devices on airplanes, but Congress should make a permanent, statutory change to include the use of these devices within the definition of ''smoking.'' Last Congress, my bill received bipartisan support from the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and was added as an amendment to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill, the Aviation Innovation, Reform, and Reauthorization (AIRR) Act. The amendment was also included in the Senate's long-term FAA reauthorization bill.

Electronic cigarette use has increased over the last decade with the increased education of the general public about the dangers and public health threats caused by traditional cigarettes to smokers and nonsmokers alike. For example, between 2010 and 2011, e-cigarette use among adults doubled. Researchers and public health experts have voiced concerns over the use of electronic cigarettes because there are still so many unknowns about the chemicals these devices can produce. The American Lung Association (ALA) has cited many concerns about the lack of regulation of e-cigarettes because they are being marketed to the public while the potential harm from secondhand e-cigarette emissions is unknown. ALA has identified two studies that show formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, benzene, tobacco-specific nitrosamines, and other harmful irritants coming from e-cigarette emissions. In addition, the temperature of an e-cigarette can affect how harmful the chemicals are, but with no configuration standards, it is too difficult to uniformly assess the health effects of smoking e-cigarettes. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a proposed rule in 2014 that would extend new regulatory authority to e-cigarettes by subjecting e-cigarettes to registration and product listing requirements, restrictions on marketing products prior to FDA review, and a prohibition on providing free samples as with traditional tobacco products.

It has been over 25 years since legislation was passed banning smoking on domestic flights in the United States. In the 1960s, the U.S. Surgeon General identified smoking as a cause of increased mortality and by 1986, the U.S. Surgeon General had named secondhand smoke a serious health risk. The National Academy of Sciences, in its report ''The Airliner Cabin Environment: Air Quality and Safety,'' recommended a ban on smoking on all domestic commercial flights. The Association of Flight Attendants can be credited with urging the smoking ban due to the negative health impacts flights attendants suffered working in cramped, closed-off spaces when a third or more passengers smoked in-flight. Congress used this information to include an amendment authored by then-Representative DICK DURBIN (D–IL) in the Federal Aviation Act that made domestic flights of two hours or less smoke-free. By 1990, this smoking ban was

extended to all domestic flights of six hours or less, and, in 2000, the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act made all flights to and from the United States smoke-free. All of this was done even in the face of the strong tobacco industry's opposition because of the undeniable health impacts of cigarettes and cigarette smoke. Many flyers do not remember a time without ''No Smoking'' signs located throughout a commercial airplane.

In 2016, DOT issued its final rule to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes on U.S. airplanes. Legislation is necessary to make this update applicable to all airlines, and permanent. Under current FAA policy, battery-powered electronic cigarettes, vaporizers, vape pens, atomizers, and electronic nicotine systems are prohibited in checked baggage, and the FAA recommends that such devices only be carried in the aircraft cabins because of safety issues.

The current statutory smoking ban applies to the smoking of tobacco products on all scheduled passenger flights and on scheduled passenger flight segments on foreign air carriers in the U.S. and between the U.S. and foreign countries, unless a waiver is granted based on bilateral negotiations. The Banning the Use of Electronic Cigarettes on Airplanes Act of 2017 will amend the statutory definition of smoking in 49 U.S.C. 41706 to include the use of electronic cigarettes, defined as ''a device that delivers nicotine or other substances to a user of the device in the form of a vapor that is inhaled to simulate the experience of smoking.''

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

THE CHARITY TRANSPARENCY ACT

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in 2001 the U.S. Government shut down the Texas-based Holy Land Foundation for its role in sending money to Hamas. But some of the Holy Land Foundation's employees are now working at 501(c)(3) ''charities'' that are leading the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement in the U.S. against Israel.

Charitable American donors have no way of knowing of the questionable histories of some of the employees of these charities before they donate. My bill, The Charity Transparency Act, will require organizations applying for 501(c)(3) status to disclose if any of their key employees once worked for such organizations.

It would require no new paperwork and give the IRS no new authorities. It would just require one more disclosure on the already existing IRS documents.

It would also not penalize any of these charities. It would simply protect charitable American citizens and arm them with the information they need to make better informed decisions regarding where they donate their hard earned money.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

And that's just the way it is.

DIANA ROGOZYAN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Diana Rogozyan for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Diana Rogozyan is a student at Drake Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Diana Rogozyan is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Diana Rogozyan for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

RECOGNIZING RAUL ORTIZ

HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from my constituent Raul Ortiz, age 8, to President Trump on World Refugee Day.

DEAR PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP. Please receive a respectful greeting in my name and all the children and families that are part of LULAC's Child Refugees United for Freedom group. My name is Raul Ortiz and I come from Honduras. I want to express to you my fear for the situation of many refugees that have arrived to the United States of America seeking refuge. I must share with you our sad reality that we live in because our countries of origin are full of crime and violence. This is why our parents risked our lives to bring us to safety in the USA. Here we are safe and have hope to see another tomorrow.

Mr. President, we respectfully ask for your help, we ask you, a great man that is a responsible person dedicated to the USA, to please meet with us and listen to our stories and consider granting us protection.

Abraham Lincoln is my favorite president. He ran as president under the National Union Party which was the name used by the Republican party for the 1864 presidential election, during the Civil War. The Republican party at this time under President Lincoln was successful in abolishing slavery.

My favorite president Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves so I believe and have faith you President Trump can do the same thing with granting freedom to the Central American refugees just like me.

God Bless You President Trump and God Bless The USA!

Respectfully,

RAUL ORTIZ,
8 yrs old.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MR. JOHN A. SHANLEY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Mr. John Aloysius Shanley. John was a loving husband and father. He passed away peacefully on June 5, 2017, in the comfort of his home, surrounded by his family, after a hard fought battle against ALS.

John was known for his sense of humor, his youthful heart, and his successful business, P.G. Tire Inc. Known to his family as ''PopPop,'' John is survived by his wife Marlene Shanley and four loving children Genevieve and Charles Hawk, Nicholle and Kenneth Simpson, Joseph and Natalie Shanley, and Marilyn Shanley, as well as his sister, Sharon Shanley of Las Vegas, NV. He has 7 grandchildren, Andrew Simpson, Ryleigh Simpson, Elizabeth Hawk, Colin Hawk, Maggie Shanley, Jack Shanley and Blaise Ingoglia.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. John Aloysius Shanley will be remembered as a humorous and humble man, beloved by his family and friends. I am very pleased to honor his life and legacy here on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends during this most difficult time.

SAM KEATING

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Sam Keating and his recent selection to the San Diego Padres in the 2017 MLB draft. Keating, a right-handed pitcher, was selected in the fourth round and has already signed with the organization.

Keating's high school career was one to be remembered as he led the Canterbury Cougars to back-to-back Class 3A championships. In his senior year, he went 11–1 on the mound with a 1.06 Earned Run Average and 93 strikeouts.

I would like to congratulate Keating for taking the first step into the professional realm. His hard-work and dedication are paying off, and I look forward to hearing about his successes in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING CAITLYN BAUDER, SADIE KRAUSE, MIGUEL ORTIZ, DEVAN RUDER, ASHTON SHOEMAKER, BRENNA SYDOW, ATHENA TAYLOR, AND KYLE YAMADA

HON. KEN BUCK

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize eight high school students who have

been chosen to represent the state of Colorado as delegates at the Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders. The students are Caitlyn Bauder, Sadie Krause, Miguel Ortiz, Devan Ruder, Ashton Shoemaker, Brenna Sydow, Athena Taylor, and Kyle Yamada.

The Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders is an honors program that recognizes exceptional high school students who are pursuing careers as engineers, scientists, or technologists.

These students are the future leaders of the STEM fields and our country. Through their studies, they have embodied the meaning of hard work and perseverance to achieve their goals, and will advance science and technology for future generations

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to recognize these students from the fourth district of Colorado for their hard work and service to our community. I wish them the best in their future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING MR. ED WAITS

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a gentleman from my home state whose work in the area of respiratory care has undoubtedly saved countless lives.

Mr. Ed Waits spent four decades working many long hours every day to serve patients in North Central, Alabama.

Mr. Waits began his career in 1954 working in inhalation therapy at the Walker Oxygen Company. Waits would deliver oxygen tanks to local hospitals.

In 1958, one of the hospitals Waits delivered oxygen to, West End Baptist Hospital, offered him a fulltime position as an inhalation therapist. As part of this position, he also provided the same service for Highland Baptist Hospital.

Mr. Wait's workday began at 6:30 a.m. when most of us are just waking up. He would perform his duties at West End Hospital and then ride in a laundry truck to complete his days' work at Highland Baptist.

The job performed by Mr. Waits could at times be very grueling. If the elevator did not work, he would have to carry oxygen tanks, weighing between 75 and 100 pounds, up five flights of stairs slung over his shoulder. Mr. Waits also had to be on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as he was the only inhalation therapy employee. He performed this non-stop service for four years before additional employees were hired.

In 1963, Mr. Waits became the first president of the Alabama Society of Inhalation Therapists. He has also received honorary doctorate degrees from Miles College and the American Pulmonary Medical Institute. He retired from Princeton Baptist Hospital in 1994.

Mr. Waits is also a veteran of our military. He served in the United States Navy from 1951 to 1955.

He is a true servant to his community, his state and to our country. This is why, for posterity's sake, his accomplishments should forever be enshrined.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. Ed Waits for his sacrifice and hard work on behalf of so many Alabamians over the years and for being an example for younger generations to look up to.

ELIAS VIGIL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Elias Vigil for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Elias Vigil is a student at Arvada K–8 School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Elias Vigil is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Elias Vigil for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

INTRODUCTION OF A BIPARTISAN RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR ADDRESSING THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT IN A CONCURRENT TRACK WITH THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE PROCESS AND COMMENDING ARAB AND MUSLIM-MAJORITY STATES THAT HAVE IMPROVED BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bipartisan resolution supporting the concurrent-track approach to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. I want to acknowledge and thank Representative ELIOT ENGEL, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and my friend and colleague across the aisle, Representative DAVID SCHWEIKERT, for introducing this resolution with me.

There is no reason to parse words: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict presents an immensely difficult challenge. There are no easy answers. Successive United States Presidential administrations have pursued peace agreements between the parties for over 30 years, from the 1982 Reagan Plan for Middle East Peace to the 1993 Oslo Accords, Camp David Summit, Clinton Parameters, Annapolis Conference, and efforts to restart the peace process under the Obama Administration. Today, it seems as if progress has ground to a halt.

The relationship between America and Israel is paramount. We stand with our ally and continue to support efforts to move the peace process forward, whenever and in any way possible. Despite lack of progress, Israel and some of her Arab neighbors have worked quietly and behind the scenes to improve bilateral relations in recent years. Common threats posed by Iran and the Islamic State have allowed for new limited dialogues to emerge. However limited they may be, these interactions present a new approach for improving the outlook of the Middle East.

The concurrent-track approach, sometimes referred to as the ''outside-in'' approach, encourages Arab and Muslim-majority states to improve bilateral relations with Israel, as Israel and the Palestinian Authority concurrently work to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Although there are rarely, if ever, easy solutions to challenges as complex as bringing lasting peace to the Middle East, Congress should encourage and support those states willing to engage in that endeavor.

The resolution expresses support for the concurrent track approach, and commends Arab and Muslim-majority states that have already taken steps to improve their bilateral relations with Israel. I, like nearly all of my colleagues in Congress, continue to support a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, negotiated between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and resulting in two states for two peoples, living side-by-side in peace, security, and mutual recognition. I believe this is the only way to ensure that both the Israeli people and the Palestinian people can have a sovereign homeland. The inability to achieve a two-state solution threatens the State of Israel's security and identity as the democratic homeland of the Jewish people, just as it impedes the well-being and self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Earlier this month, we marked the 50th Anniversary of Israel's Six-Day War and the anniversary of the re-unification of Jerusalem. For the 19 years Jerusalem was divided, Jews were forced from the Jewish Quarter and the Old City, barred from Holy sites, and Jewish cemeteries and synagogues were vandalized. In the days leading up to the six-day war, the armies of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria massed on Israel's borders, threatening the Jewish people with annihilation for the second time in just two decades. The Israeli people fought for their survival and achieved a miraculous victory. In reuniting the city, Jerusalem once again became a place where people of all faiths can worship.

Despite this victory, the final status of Jerusalem and the safety of the State of Israel and its people, regardless of ethnicity or religion, will not be secured until peace is achieved.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce this bipartisan resolution today, and urge its speedy consideration and passage by this body.

RECOGNIZING MASTER AT ARMS FIRST CLASS JOSEPH PELLICANO FROM PACE, FLORIDA

HON. MATT GAETZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the incredibly heroic Master at Arms

First Class Joseph Pellicano from Pace, Florida, who is stationed at Naval Air Station Whiting Field, for the role that he played in saving the life of young Kaysin Willis.

On January 16, 2017, MA1 Pellicano, while en route to work at NAS Whiting Field, drove upon a two-car accident and stopped to render aid. A small child had been injured in the incident and upon realization that the child was unresponsive and had no vital signs, MA1 Pellicano began CPR on the child.

He was able to successfully resuscitate the child, and then assisted the medical team as they prepared the child for transport to the local children's hospital. The child's injuries were extensive, yet Kaysin was able to make a full recovery and is now home with his family. This would not have been possible without the quick thinking and selfless initiative that MA1 Pellicano demonstrated on this day.

I would like to extend my gratitude to MA1 Pellicano for his valiant efforts that resulted in saving this young child's life. His exceptional character is evidenced by his courageous and extraordinary actions.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, and a grateful community, I am privileged to recognize Master at Arms First Class Joseph Pellicano for his bravery and thank him for his service.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF DANIELLE BERMUDEZ

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Ms. Danielle Bermudez. Ms. Bermudez has been chosen as a Fulbright scholar, the first to ever be chosen from the University of California, Merced. Her accomplishment brings great pride to the Merced community and to all who have witnessed her hard work.

The idea behind the Fulbright Program began in 1945, when Senator J. William Fulbright introduced a bill to the United States Congress calling for the use of surplus war property in order to fund the 'promotion of international good will through the exchange of students in the fields of education, culture, and science.' President Harry S. Truman signed that bill into law in 1946 and Congress created the Fulbright Program. This international educational exchange program has fostered bilateral relationships, allowing both citizens and governments of other countries to work together with the United States and set joint priorities to shape the program's shared needs. Since the beginning of the program, there have been more than 360,000 Fulbright participants from the United States and other countries and Fulbright alumni from 14 countries have been awarded 57 Nobel prizes, 82 Pulitzer prizes, and 37 alumni have become heads of state or government.

The Fulbright program currently awards approximately 1,900 United States student grants annually in all fields of study. In March of 2017, Ms. Bermudez was selected as a Fulbright scholarship recipient. Ms. Bermudez is a fourth year doctoral student in the Interdisciplinary Humanities at the University of California, Merced. She was nominated for Outstanding Student Leadership in 2015, 2016, and 2017. She has also demonstrated an exceptional academic and professional record, outstanding personal qualifications, and language preparation among many other qualifications to receive this award. Additionally, she served as an intern for California Assemblymember Adam Gray in 2014. Ms. Bermudez shows her dedication and hard work as the first student from the University of California, Merced to ever receive a Fulbright scholarship.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the achievements of Ms. Danielle Bermudez for receiving this prestigious award. I know she will continue to encourage the Fulbright program's goals of promoting mutual understanding among nations through her engagement in her host community and look forward to hear what else she will accomplish next.

IN HONOR OF FREEDOM HIGH SCHOOL'S ODYSSEY OF THE MIND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a group of students from Freedom High School, who recently won the Odyssey of the Mind World Championship on May 27, 2017. Leading up to this global competition in Michigan, the Freedom High School team won a Virginia Regional competition as well as the Virginia state championship, and these extraordinary achievements show how far dedication, hard work, and commitment to teamwork can take a group as they competed with some of the best student teams across the world.

The Odyssey of the Mind World Championship is a STEM-based scholastic competition in which students devise innovative solutions to challenges, such as assembling vehicles and integrating them into timed skits. These problems and programs allow students to convert their ideas and knowledge into tangible results in a stimulating and competitive atmosphere. During the world championship, each team participated in three competitions, including a spontaneous problem solving challenge, a style competition, and finally a long term problem, which the team has worked on for 6 to 7 months.

Under the leadership of Coaches Bill and Judy Munley, Freedom High School's championship winning team consisted of seniors Michael Munley, Aditi Shukla, Manisha Kusuma, Apekchha Pradhan and juniors Virginia Campbell, Zander Rodriguez, and Sarana Adhikari. While the team has qualified for 5 world competitions in the past 10 years, this is the only Loudoun County team to ever win the championship at the global level.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Freedom High School's Odyssey of the Mind team for winning the Odyssey of the Mind World Championship and representing Virginia's 10th Congressional District with such distinction. I wish Bill, Judy, and the entire team the best in their future endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF WE KAYAK GROSSE ILE ON THE DATE OF ITS SECOND ANNUAL BLESSING OF THE FLEET

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize WE Kayak Grosse Ile on the date of the organization's second annual Blessing of the Fleet. WE Kayak provides structured recreational activities accessible to all members of the Downriver community in the Grosse Ile's waterways.

Originally started in 2012, WE Kayak is a Grosse Ile-based organization that organizes weekly paddles available to the general public on the waterways in and around Grosse Ile, Michigan. The organization is active from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and has grown substantially from its initial group of six kayakers. Today, WE Kayak hosts several dozen members of the community each week to participate in exploring the waters while engaging with each other. The organization also hosts an annual Blessing of the Fleet, where WE Kayak, along with other members of the community, honor Kayakers who have passed and bless those who regularly go out on the water. This free community initiative has helped engage Grosse Ile residents while providing opportunities for physical recreation.

Initiatives like WE Kayak help bring the community together while allowing members to explore and appreciate the natural beauty around the Grosse Ile area. As the only organized public paddle on Grosse Ile, WE Kayak has played a key role in promoting physical activity and engagement while introducing new members of the organizations to a community of like-minded kayakers and nature enthusiasts. The group also serves as a forum for individuals to exchange information about other water sports events in the area, and it is my hope that WE Kayak continues to provide access opportunities for recreation for all individuals in the Grosse Ile area in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring WE Kayak on the date of the organization's second annual Blessing of the Fleet. WE Kayak has helped individuals explore Grosse Ile's waterways and foster a strong community.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE COALINGA POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Coalinga Police Department, and honor the Ninetieth Anniversary of its founding.

In 1927, the Coalinga Police Department was established to serve and protect the City of Coalinga, California, located in the Pleasant Valley of Western Fresno County, and its 2,900 residents. At the time of its formation, the Department consisted of two officers and operated under Coalinga's first Police Chief,

Walter Hayes. Since its humble beginnings, both the Police Department and the City of Coalinga have grown exponentially. Today, the Coalinga Police Department has a total of thirty-one sworn officers, a twenty-four hours a day dispatch center, and serves approximately 18,000 citizens.

While the Police Department has grown immensely in the last ninety years, it's commitment to public safety has remained constant. The force has continued to provide a safe and peaceful environment in the city through effective and impartial law enforcement. From body camera implementation and advanced investigative techniques to cannabis regulation, the department strives to be on the cutting edge of law enforcement tactics and services. They are also committed to meeting the needs of residents and businesses through active participation and community partnerships. The Coalinga Police Department hosts annual community events including blood drives, animal vaccination clinics, and Christmas toy drives. The Department provides security detail services at Coalinga City and Chamber of Commerce events, such as the Coalinga Horned Toad Derby, an event that has brought visitors to the City for the past eighty-two years. This strategy encourages a stronger partnership between the community and the Police Department.

Additionally, the Coalinga Police Department prides itself on being the first Police Department in the State of California to have a female Police Chief. Chief Luella ''Kay'' Holloway was the first female law enforcement executive to be appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown in 1975 to chair the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. In acknowledgement of the contributions made to ensure the safety and betterment of its local residents, the Coalinga Police Department was presented with the Community Service Award from the Coalinga Chamber of Commerce. The Police Department has continued to exemplify extraordinary service to the People of Coalinga over the past nineteen years, and their bravery is worthy of recognition.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing the Coalinga Police Department on their Ninetieth Anniversary and wish them another ninety years of success in serving the community.

CATHERINE WINCKLER

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Catherine Winckler for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Catherine Winckler is a student at Warren Tech North and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Catherine Winckler is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Catherine Winckler for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

IN HONOR OF THE 48TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MINISTRY OF PASTOR ERASTUS AND ELECT LADY ANNIE PEARL GODFREY

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the House's attention to recognize the 48th anniversary of Pastor Erastus Godfrey and his wife, Elect Lady Annie Pearl Godfrey, serving in the ministry.

Before his birth, Pastor Godfrey's mother received a prophetic work to name him Erastus, because she knew he would grow up to preach the gospel.

Pastor Godfrey was called into the ministry in 1969 at the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church. After four years, he was called to be pastor at the Shiloh Baptist Church in Silverun, Alabama, for six years. He then became pastor of Union Baptist Church in Stewartville, Alabama, for 23 years.

On March 14, 2004, Pastor Godfrey founded the New Beginning Ministries in Sylacauga, Alabama, and still serves there today.

He received his biblical education at Shocco Springs in Talladega, Alabama and at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama.

Pastor Godfrey has been married to Elect Lady Annie Pearl Godfrey for over 50 years and is a second-generation minister.

He has three sons, one daughter and a daughter-in-law who have also been called into the ministry. His wife is an inspiration to the church family at New Beginning Ministries.

Their children include: Kenneth Collins, Erastus Herbert Godfrey, Terry Fuller, Etta Taylor, Jeannette Godfrey, DeForest Godfrey and Mary Thompson.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Pastor Erastus and Elect Lady Annie Pearl Godfrey for their 48 years of service in the ministry.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S3615–S3655

Measures Introduced: Seven bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 1380–1386, and S. Res. 195. **Page S3650**

Measures Reported:

H.R. 494, to expand the boundary of Fort Frederica National Monument in the State of Georgia, with amendments. (S. Rept. No. 115–114) **Page S3648**

Mandelker Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Crimes. **Page S3616**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 94 yeas to 5 nays (Vote No. 149), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S3620**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at approximately 12 noon, on Wednesday, June 21, 2017; and that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment and Leader remarks count post-cloture on the nomination. **Page S3654**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 95 yeas to 4 nays (Vote No. EX. 148), Brock Long, of North Carolina, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security. **Pages S3619–20, S3655**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Anna Maria Farias, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Marvin Kaplan, of Kansas, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring August 27, 2020.

Patrick Pizzella, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor.

Lance Allen Robertson, of Oklahoma, to be Assistant Secretary for Aging, Department of Health and Human Services. **Page S3655**

Executive Communications: **Pages S3646–48**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Pages S3648–50**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S3650–51**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S3651–54**

Additional Statements: **Pages S3644–46**

Notices of Intent: **Page S3654**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S3625**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—149) **Page S3620**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:39 p.m., until 12 noon on Wednesday, June 21, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S3654.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: FDA

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Food and Drug Administration, after receiving testimony from Scott Gottlieb, Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services.

APPROPRIATIONS: FCC

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Federal Communications Commission, after receiving testimony from Ajit Pai, Chairman, and Mignon L. Clyburn, and Michael O'Rielly, each a Commissioner, all of the Federal Communications Commission.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee ordered favorably reported 995 nominations in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

NOMINATION

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Patrick M. Shanahan, of Washington, to be Deputy Secretary of Defense, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senator Cantwell, testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

THE USF AND RURAL BROADBAND

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet concluded a hearing to examine the Universal Service Fund and rural broadband, after receiving testimony from Michael J. Balhoff, Charlesmead Advisors, LLC, Columbia, Maryland; Shirley Bloomfield, NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association, Arlington, Virginia; Eric B. Graham, C Spire, Ridgeland, Mississippi; and Karen S. Rheuban, University of Virginia Center for Telehealth, Charlottesville.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUDGET

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of the Interior, after receiving testimony from Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior.

REVIEWING CONGRESSIONAL AUMF

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine reviewing Congressional authorizations for the use of military force, after receiving testimony from John B. Bellinger, III, Arnold and Porter Kaye Scholer LLP, and Kathleen H. Hicks, Center for Strategic and International Studies, both of Washington, D.C.

FIRST AMENDMENT ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the assault on the First Amendment on college campuses, after receiving testimony from Zachary R. Wood, Uncomfortable Learning, Williamstown, Massachusetts; Frederick M. Lawrence, The Phi Beta Kappa Society, and Fanta Aw, American University, both of Washington, D.C.; Eugene Volokh, University of California School of Law, Los Angeles; J. Richard Cohen, Southern Poverty Law Center, Montgomery, Alabama; Floyd Abrams, Cahill Gordon and Reindel LLP, New York, New York; and Issac Smith, Cincinnati, Ohio.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 35 public bills, H.R. 2936–2970; and 3 resolutions, H. Res. 393–395 were introduced. **Pages H4991–93**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H4994–96**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 1551, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for production from advanced nuclear power facilities, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–183);

H.R. 2190, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's real property portfolio, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–184);

H.R. 2842, to provide for the conduct of demonstration projects to test the effectiveness of subsidized employment for TANF recipients, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–185); and

H. Res. 392, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1873) to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands by facilitating vegetation management on such lands, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1654) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate Federal and State permitting processes related to the construction of new surface water storage projects on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to designate the Bureau of Reclamation as the lead agency for permit processing, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–186). **Page H4991**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:09 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H4946**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:03 p.m. and reconvened at 3:06 p.m. **Page H4946**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act of 2017: H.R. 1393, to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States; **Pages H4947–51**

Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act: H.R. 2847, to make improvements to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and related provisions, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 391 yeas to 8 nays, Roll No. 309; **Pages H4951–55, H4978–79**

Reducing Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act: H.R. 2866, amended, to review and improve licensing standards for placement in a relative foster family home, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 382 yeas to 19 nays, Roll No. 310; **Pages H4955–58, H4979**

Amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for production from advanced nuclear power facilities: H.R. 1551, amended, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for production from advanced nuclear power facilities; **Pages H4958–63**

Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act: H.R. 2742, to amend title IV of the Social Security Act to require States to adopt an electronic system to help expedite the placement of children in foster care or guardianship, or for adoption, across State lines, and to provide funding to aid States in developing such a system; **Pages H4963–66**

Partnership Grants to Strengthen Families Affected by Parental Substance Abuse Act: H.R. 2834, amended, to improve the well-being of, and improve permanency outcomes for, children and families affected by heroin, opioids, and other substance abuse; **Pages H4966–68**

Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act: H.R. 2857, amended, to support foster care maintenance payments for children with parents in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse; **Pages H4968–70**

Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017: H.R. 2484, to ensure that the United States promotes the meaningful participation of women in mediation and negotiation processes seeking to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict; **Pages H4970–74**

Traveler Redress Improvement Act of 2017: H.R. 2132, amended, to require the implementation of a redress process and review of the Transportation Security Administration's intelligence-based screening rules for aviation security; **Pages H4975–76**

Reporting Efficiently to Proper Officials in Response to Terrorism Act of 2017: H.R. 625, amended, to provide for joint reports by relevant Federal agencies to Congress regarding incidents of terrorism; **Pages H4976–78**

Department of Homeland Security Morale, Recognition, Learning and Engagement Act of 2017: H.R. 2283, amended, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to improve morale within the Department of Homeland Security workforce by conferring new responsibilities to the Chief Human Capital Officer, establishing an employee engagement steering committee, requiring action plans, and authorizing an annual employee award program; and **Pages H4980–82**

Streamlining DHS Overhead Act: H.R. 2190, amended, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's real property portfolio. **Pages H4982–84**

Securing our Agriculture and Food Act: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and concur in the Senate amendments to H.R. 1238, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism. **Pages H4974–75**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H4946.

Senate Referral: S. 782 was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. **Pages H4946, H4990**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H4978–79, H4979. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Committee Meetings

APPROPRIATIONS—DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the Department of Energy. Testimony was heard from Rick Perry, Secretary, Department of Energy.

WATER SUPPLY PERMITTING COORDINATION ACT; ELECTRICITY RELIABILITY AND FOREST PROTECTION ACT

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 1654, the ''Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act''; and H.R. 1873, the ''Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act''. The Committee granted a structured rule for H.R. 1873. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule makes in order as original text for the purpose of amendment the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in Part A of the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in Part A of the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Additionally, the rule grants a structured rule for H.R. 1654. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule makes in order as original text for the purpose of amendment the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in Part B of the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in Part B of the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Testimony was heard from Representatives McClintock and LaMalfa.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of the Interior, 9:30 a.m., SD–124.

Subcommittee on Department of Defense, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of the Air Force, 10:30 a.m., SD–192.

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of Energy, 2:30 p.m., SD–138.

Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 and 2019 for the Department of Veterans Affairs, 2:30 p.m., SD–124.

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Government Accountability Office and the Congressional Budget Office, 3 p.m., SD–192.

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on SeaPower, to hold hearings to examine Navy shipbuilding programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2018 and the Future Years Defense Program, 9 a.m., SR–232A.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of David P. Pekoske, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining, to hold an oversight hearing to examine collaborative initiatives, focusing on restoring watersheds and large landscapes across boundaries through state and Federal partnerships, 10 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2018 and the trade policy agenda, 10:15 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to receive a closed briefing on preparing for the 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report, 11 a.m., S–116, Capitol.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: business meeting to consider the nominations of Russell

Vought, of Virginia, to be Deputy Director, and Neomi Rao, of the District of Columbia, to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, both of the Office of Management and Budget, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine cybersecurity regulation harmonization, 10:30 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine the MS–13 problem, focusing on investigating gang membership, its nexus to illegal immigration, and Federal efforts to end the threat, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold hearings to examine Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, budget hearing on the Office of Management and Budget, 2 p.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies, budget hearing on the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 3 p.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, markup on H.R. 2810, the ''National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018'', 2:30 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, markup on H.R. 2810, the ''National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018'', 4 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, hearing entitled ''Defining and Mapping Broadband Coverage in America'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Full Committee, to continue markup on H.R. 2868, the ''National Flood Insurance Program Policyholder Protection Act of 2017''; H.R. 2874, the ''21st Century Flood Reform Act of 2017''; H.R. 1422, the ''Flood Insurance Market Parity and Modernization Act''; H.R. 1558, the ''Repeatedly Flooded Communities Preparation Act''; H.R. 2246, the ''Taxpayer Exposure Mitigation Act of 2017''; H.R. 2565, to require the use of replacement cost value in determining the premium rates for flood insurance coverage under the National Flood Insurance Act, and for other purposes; and H.R. 2875, the ''National Flood Insurance Program Administrative Reform Act of 2017'', 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, hearing entitled ''Grading the Egyptian and Tunisian Enterprise Funds'', 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 495, the ''Protection of Children Act of 2017''; H.R. 2826, the ''Refugee Program Integrity Restoration Act of 2017''; and H.R. 1096, the ''Judgment Fund Transparency Act of 2017'', 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing on legislation to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to provide that extraction of helium from gas produced under a Federal mineral lease shall maintain the lease as if the helium were oil and gas, 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs, hearing on H.R. 2662, the ''Restoring Accountability in the Indian Health Service Act of 2017'', 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 2842, the ''Accelerating Individuals into the Workforce Act'', 3 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment, hearing entitled ''Leading the Way: Examining Advances in Environmental Technologies'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Partners in Commerce: The Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee'', 11 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Russia Investigation Task Force, hearing entitled ''Hearing with Former Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson'', 10 a.m., HVC–210.

Subcommittee on National Security Agency and Cybersecurity, hearing entitled ''Ongoing Intelligence Activities: FY 18 Budget Request'', 1:30 p.m., HVC–304.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

12 noon, Wednesday, June 21

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Crimes, post-cloture.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, June 21

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of H.R. 1873—Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of H.R. 1654—Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act (Subject to a Rule).

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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