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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

Dr. J. Todd Mullins, Christ Fellowship Church, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, Thank You for hearing our prayers today. We are humbled that today, as we call out to You, You listen to us. We ask that You bless the Members of Congress as they lead our great Nation. Grant them wisdom for the decisions they face, and may we remain dependent upon You, never forgetting Psalm 33:12 that says, ''Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.''

We pray for those in Texas, in Florida, in Puerto Rico, and in the Caribbean, who are recovering from the devastating hurricanes. Give them peace and courage as they rebuild their lives. Bless the first responders and those serving the people impacted by these storms. Grant them Your strength for their assignments.

Guide our President. Give him clear vision to steer our Nation during these troubled days, and grant strength to the Members of this House as they represent the people across our land.

We ask this in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

WELCOMING PASTOR J. TODD MULLINS

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today especially pleased to have had my personal pastor, Todd Mullins, give our opening prayer this morning to the House of Representatives.

I am honored to welcome Pastor Mullins onto the floor of the House of Representatives as our guest chaplain this morning, and I thank him for sharing those very important words with our colleagues and that scripture as well.

Todd Mullins is the senior pastor of Christ Fellowship in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, where he served since his father founded the church in 1984.

I can say a great deal about my friend, Pastor Todd Mullins, but the most important thing that I could say about him is that he is a man of God, and that he works every single day to try to help and change lives.

I think that is the most important thing any one of us can do. That is why I am so proud to call him a friend. He is a person who has devoted his life to working on the lives of others.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

SNAP: 40 YEARS OF PROVIDING NUTRITION TO AMERICANS

(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, tomorrow marks the 40th anniversary of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, which was a landmark bill that made the program more effective and more efficient.

Today, we no longer refer to it as food stamps, but as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. In 40 years, there have been numerous changes and updates, but the goal remains the same: to end hunger in America.

SNAP lessens the effects of poverty on some of our most vulnerable citizens. The results are proven. According to the Census Bureau, SNAP lifted 5 million Americans, including 2.2 million children, out of poverty in 2012 alone. SNAP generates $1.80 in economic activity for every $1 in new SNAP benefits.

In 2013, SNAP payment accuracy was 96.8 percent, which was a historic high.

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Participating in SNAP for 6 months decreased food insecurity up to 10 percent, including households with children.

Mr. Speaker, for over four decades, the program has become more effective, more efficient, and more modern. I look forward to continuing our work to improve SNAP, to serve those in need, and to provide pathways out of poverty.

SUPPORT THE DREAM ACT

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

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues in calling for a vote on H.R. 3440, the clean Dream Act, a bipartisan, bicameral bill with 200 cosponsors in the House.

It builds upon the great success of DACA, which opened the door for nearly 800,000 DREAMers who had come forward, passed background checks, and have been granted permission to live and work legally in America without fear of deportation.

They kept their promise to the Nation they know and love, and our government must honor its commitment to protect them. The faith community and business leaders are imploring Congress to pass the Dream Act. Polling shows that the American people strongly believe and support the DREAMers. Eighty-six percent of Americans support a right to residency for undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States as children, according to a recent ABC News/Washington Post poll.

Mr. Speaker, as a proud nation of many immigrants from around the world, the Dream Act honors our history and our heritage. I thank my Republican colleagues who have signed on, and I urge all others to join us. It is the right thing to do for our young people, especially our country. Support H.R. 3440, the Dream Act.

RECOGNIZING HOPE THAT BINDS

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

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Hope That Binds, an organization based out of Carlisle County, Kentucky, that aids in domestic and international adoption services.

The organization was recently recognized as a 2017 Angels in Adoption honoree. Wendy Davis-Wilson, Jeff and Benita Davis, and Brooke Kelly have all dedicated their time to bridging the gaps in the complicated adoption processing. Wendy and Brandon, adoptive parents themselves, have a sincere passion for ensuring resources are available for families wishing to adopt.

Through Hope That Binds, a network of loving families is growing and expanding constantly. To date, more than 40 families have been assisted through the organization's fundraisers and grant programs.

In addition, I would like to recognize Josh and Mandy Thurman, who were also selected as Angels in Adoption honorees. After a 2-year adoption process starting in 2013, the Thurmans brought their son, Townes, home to Simpson County from Ethiopia. Families like the Davises and Thurmans make a major difference in the lives of children who need loving families.

On behalf of the First District of Kentucky, I congratulate both families in their efforts to make the dream of a family a reality for children in need.

ZERO MAJOR LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, here we are 9 months into the year, and the Republican-led Congress has zero major legislative accomplishments to show for it. While Democrats continue to offer an agenda that gives Americans a better deal, really a better life, Republicans are continually obsessed with their Republican healthcare bill, this repeal and replace.

Recently, they have had to pull back again from their Graham-Cassidy approach to this. Why? Because it means less care, less coverage, higher premiums, higher copays. It is bad policy. We ought to be focusing on what we need to do to make it right to fix the problems we see in healthcare, not this obsession to check a political box and repeal healthcare for the American people.

Meanwhile, there is no infrastructure plan. America's roads and bridges are falling apart. There is nothing on the floor of the House to address that—something the American people all agree we need to do. There has been nothing done to make sure that 800,000 DREAMers are not deported away.

They have a tax plan that rewards 5,400 American families with a quarter of a trillion dollars in tax breaks. This is the wrong direction for America.

RECOGNIZING BICENTENNIAL OF PETERSBURG, INDIANA

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

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a notable Hoosier milestone, the bicentennial of the city of Petersburg, Indiana. Located in Pike County, this southern Indiana community was settled on land donated by Peter Brenton in 1817, and was established just 1 year later after Indiana had become a State.

From its earliest days as a pioneer settlement near the Buffalo Trace and the White River, Petersburg is today a vibrant commercial and residential community and the seat of the county government. Blessed with an abundance of natural resources, it is a leader in Indiana's power generation industry.

While rightfully proud of its favorite son, baseball great Gil Hodges, Petersburg is squarely focused on a promising future. It boasts wonderful, new downtown housing, a new county public library, and just dedicated its new fire department. It looks forward to exciting development opportunities along I–69.

I proudly salute the city of Petersburg; its mayor, R.C. Klipsch; and its loyal citizens on this historic occasion.

SENIOR PROTECTION BILL

(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 in support of bipartisan, commonsense legislation to help protect our seniors from elder abuse, fraud, and neglect. The Senior Citizen Protection Act would create a national registry of convicted elder abusers that accredited healthcare providers, and the public could check before hiring employees who will work with seniors.

While some States already have created elder abuse registries, there is currently no nationally searchable database of the State-level data. As our population ages, the problem of those who seek to take advantage of vulnerable seniors continues to grow.

Families deserve the peace of mind that their parents and loved ones will receive the best possible care at senior facilities and nursing homes from qualified staff.

I urge my colleagues to join me and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) on this senior protection legislation; and I urge them to continue to support Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid programs that millions of seniors depend on to live out their retirement years with dignity and security.

RECOGNIZING MIDDLETOWN POLICE OFFICER MEGAN FREER

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, over the course of several weeks this summer, our Nation focused on my district as the tragic news of missing teenagers led the news.

My heart goes out to the families of those boys and our entire community touched by this tragedy. In that darkness, we saw the best of our community shine through: neighbors in prayer; local businesses engaged in investigation efforts; and through it all, the commitment and the dedication of our local law enforcement officers.

One such officer, Middletown Township Police Officer Megan Freer, was recently recognized at the National Liberty Museum in Philadelphia for

her investigatory work. Middletown Police Chief Joe Bartorilla noted well: Megan exemplifies our law enforcement who are committed to doing the very best job they can, day in and day out to protect and safeguard our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of Officer Freer and the entire law enforcement community in Bucks County, to include District Attorney Matt Weintraub, who committed to this investigation. Through their efforts, our community can begin to heal from this terrible tragedy that we suffered.

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HEALTHCARE CRISIS

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

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, we are here, almost 10 months into this congressional session, and what has been accomplished? While TrumpCare supporters have gone back and forth on a plan that would take healthcare away from millions of Americans, raise out-of-pocket costs for people with pre-existing conditions, and force too many rural hospitals to close their doors, they have completely missed a real healthcare crisis that is coming tomorrow. That is when Federal funding runs out for thousands of community health clinics and for millions of low-income children and for pregnant women across our country.

For years, community health clinics and the Children's Health Insurance Program have enjoyed strong bipartisan support from both sides of the aisle here.

So why aren't we voting to protect these critical programs right now? Mr. Speaker, we were sent here to help the hardworking families that we serve and offer them a better deal. Now that the TrumpCare package has thankfully failed again, I hope we can start doing that.

SUPPORTING DACA

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, the decision to end DACA goes against the very core of our American values of the American Dream. The future of 800,000 young people who study, serve in our military, and contribute to our economy, and who serve and protect America is at risk.

DREAMers are understandably worried, anxious, depressed, petrified, and terrified about what will happen 6 months from now.

DREAMers like Juan in my district who was brought here at a young age is a medical student and wants nothing more than to be a doctor and save lives—even your life. For Juan and nearly 1 million DREAMers like him, we must act. That is why I have joined House and Senate leaders to demand a vote on the bipartisan Dream Act.

Mr. Speaker, put politics aside and bring the Dream Act to the floor for a vote as soon as possible.

Rather than ending the DACA program and tearing families apart, instead, let's work together toward comprehensive immigration reform that will secure our Nation's borders, keep our citizens safe, help our economy, and fix our immigration system.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion 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 vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

HURRICANES HARVEY, IRMA, AND MARIA EDUCATION RELIEF ACT OF 2017

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1866) to provide the Secretary of Education with waiver authority for the reallocation rules and authority to extend the deadline by which funds have to be reallocated in the campus-based aid programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965 due to Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma, and Hurricane Maria, to provide equitable services to children and teachers in private schools, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1866

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 ''Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria Education Relief Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. ALLOCATION AND USE OF CAMPUS-BASED HIGHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AFFECTED AREA.—The term ''affected area'' means an area for which the President declared a major disaster or an emergency under section 401 or 501, respectively, of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170 and 5191) as a result of Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma, Hurricane Maria, Tropical Storm Harvey, Tropical Storm Irma, or Tropical Storm Maria.

(2) AFFECTED STUDENT.—The term ''affected student'' means an individual who has applied for or received student financial assistance under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.), and who—

(A) was enrolled or accepted for enrollment on August 25, 2017, at an institution of higher education that is located in an affected area;

(B) is a dependent student who was enrolled or accepted for enrollment on August 25, 2017, at an institution of higher education that is not located in an affected area, but whose parent or parents resided or was employed on August 25, 2017, in an affected area; or

(C) suffered direct economic hardship as a direct result of Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma, Hurricane Maria, Tropical Storm Harvey, Tropical Storm Irma, or Tropical Storm Maria, as determined by the Secretary.

(3) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ''institution of higher education'' has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

(4) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Education.

(b) WAIVERS.—

(1) WAIVER OF NON-FEDERAL SHARE REQUIREMENT.—Notwithstanding sections 413C(a)(2) and 443(b)(5) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070b–2(a)(2) and 1087–53(b)(5)), with respect to funds made available for award years 2016–2017 and 2017–2018—

(A) in the case of an institution of higher education that is located in an affected area, the Secretary shall waive the requirement that a participating institution of higher education provide a non-Federal share to match Federal funds provided to the institution for the programs authorized pursuant to subpart 3 of part A and part C of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070b et seq. and 1087–51 et seq.); and

(B) in the case of an institution of higher education that is not located in an affected area but has enrolled or accepted for enrollment any affected students, the Secretary may waive the non-Federal share requirement described in subparagraph (A) after considering the institution's student population and existing resources.

(2) WAIVER OF REALLOCATION RULES.—

(A) AUTHORITY TO REALLOCATE.—Notwithstanding sections 413D(d) and 442(d) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070b–3(d) and 1087–52(d)), the Secretary shall—

(i) reallocate any funds returned under such section 413D or 442 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 that were allocated to institutions of higher education for award year 2016–2017 to an institution of higher education that is eligible under subparagraph (B); and

(ii) waive the allocation reduction for award year 2018–2019 for an institution of higher education that is eligible under subparagraph (B) returning more than 10 percent of its allocation under such section 413D or 442 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 for award year 2017–2018.

(B) INSTITUTIONS ELIGIBLE FOR REALLOCATION.—An institution of higher education is eligible under this subparagraph if the institution—

(i) participates in the program for which excess allocations are being reallocated; and

(ii)(I) is located in an affected area; or

(II) has enrolled or accepted for enrollment any affected students in award year 2017–2018.

(C) BASIS OF REALLOCATION.—The Secretary shall—

(i) determine the manner in which excess allocations will be reallocated pursuant to this paragraph; and

(ii) give preference in making reallocations to the needs of institutions of higher education located in an affected area.

(D) ADDITIONAL WAIVER AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in order to carry out this paragraph, the Secretary may waive or modify any statutory or regulatory provision relating to the reallocation of excess allocations under subpart 3 of part A or part C of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070b et seq. and 1087–51 et seq.) in order to ensure that

assistance is received by institutions of higher education that are eligible under subparagraph (B).

(3) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS DATE EXTENSION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law—

(A) any funds available to the Secretary under sections 413A and 441 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070b and 1087–51) for which the period of availability would otherwise expire on September 30, 2017, shall be available for obligation by the Secretary until September 30, 2018, for the purposes of the programs authorized pursuant to subpart 3 of part A and part C of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070b et seq. and 1087–51 et seq.); and

(B) the Secretary may recall any funds allocated to an institution of higher education for award year 2016–2017 under section 413D or 442 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070b–3 and 1087–52), that, if not returned to the Secretary as excess allocations pursuant to either of those sections, would otherwise lapse on September 30, 2017, and reallocate those funds in accordance with paragraph (2)(A).

(c) EMERGENCY REQUIREMENT.—This section is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 4(g) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (title I of Public Law 111–139; 2 U.S.C. 933(g)).

(d) REPORT.—Not later than October 1, 2018, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives information on—

(1) the total volume of assistance received by each eligible institution of higher education under subsection (b)(2); and

(2) the total volume of the non-Federal share waived for each institution of higher education under subsection (b)(1).

(e) SUNSET.—The provisions of subsection (b) shall cease to be effective on September 30, 2018.

SEC. 3. PROJECT SERV AND EQUITABLE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND TEACHERS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

Section 8501(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7881(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''and'';

(2) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(F) section 4631, with regard to Project SERV.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ALLEN. 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 S. 1866.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 1866, the Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria Education Relief Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, September has been a difficult month for many students and families in areas such as Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Puerto Rico, and even my State of Georgia, just to name a few.

We have all seen the truly saddening images of families who have been impacted by the likes of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and now we must come together as a nation to help our fellow Americans recover from these life-changing storms.

These storms have left many Americans with questions on how to continue living their daily lives as they try to return to a sense of normalcy, and students are no exception. Hundreds of thousands of students have been impacted by these storms, and the Federal Government must be ready to address the needs of students, as well as their institutions of learning, so that their education may continue.

The Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria Education Relief Act of 2017 allows the Department of Education, as well as other Federal entities, to use the emergency tools at their disposal to immediately assist students impacted by the storms of this past month without the need of additional appropriations from Congress.

First, the bill equips the Department of Education with temporary authority to waive certain rules governing campus-based aid programs for those institutions impacted by recent hurricanes.

Second, the legislation ensures students and teachers at private schools receive services under the Project SERV grant program. This program helps school districts and institutions of higher education reestablish a safe learning environment after a violent or traumatic crisis. The program has issued grants to school districts, State educational agencies, and institutions of higher education after natural disasters, including Superstorm Sandy. These funds have helped reopen schools or, in some cases, provided resources to operate a school at an alternative site while the original site is being repaired.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has the power to use its resources to help students and families return to a sense of normalcy after these terrible storms, and we should do everything within our authority to help students remain on a pathway to success even in the aftermath of these storms.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support S. 1866, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1866, but I also stand concerned about the humanitarian crisis going on in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the wake of Hurricane Maria and also the other hurricanes that have been in the area.

More than 3.4 million people reside in Puerto Rico alone—U.S. citizens who are in need of full support of the Federal Government. This is more than the population of Wyoming, Vermont, North Dakota, and Alaska combined—U.S. citizens, yet they have no voting Members of Congress.

U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands serve in our military. In fact, Puerto Ricans serve in our military at a rate twice the general U.S. population, and they are hurting. They are fighting to survive, and they are in desperate need of food, clean water, medical supplies, and security.

Hurricane Maria essentially wiped out ports, roads, electricity, communications, water supply, crops, and many homes. Today, 97 percent of Puerto Rico's residents are still without power, and 40 percent do not have access to clean drinking water. So Americans in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are now homeless, displaced, and without food, water, fuel, and medication.

Congress and this administration have an obligation to act swiftly and to act boldly to ease the suffering of our fellow Americans in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. This bill, the Hurricane Relief Act, is well-intentioned and a good starting point.

But make no mistake, the limited flexibility offered to those affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria in this bill will be helpful, but the bill does not go far enough to provide the kind of relief that is needed in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

These Americans do not have voting representation in Congress that allows their representatives to most effectively advocate on their behalf. Therefore, it is incumbent on all of us to stand shoulder to shoulder with our fellow citizens and provide them with the support that they desperately need.

This is a life-and-death situation, and any further delay for aid will lead to unnecessary tragedy. So I urge this body to bring a full emergency supplemental bill to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to a vote. The citizens affected by the hurricane are running out of time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we pass the bill, but, after we pass it, get right to work on a full relief bill for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to add that this legislation does not call for additional appropriations on the part of Congress and provides the Department of Education with limited authority to act until it has sufficiently assisted the students and families of these impacted regions.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation for the people impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of S. 1866, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1866.

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.

CONTROL UNLAWFUL FUGITIVE FELONS ACT OF 2017

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 533, I call up the bill (H.R. 2792) to amend the Social Security Act to make certain revisions to provisions limiting payment of benefits to fugitive felons under titles II, VIII, and XVI of the Social Security Act, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 533, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, printed in the bill, is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

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

H.R. 2792

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 ''Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. REVISIONS TO PROVISIONS LIMITING PAYMENT OF BENEFITS TO FUGITIVE FELONS UNDER TITLE XVI OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.

(a) FUGITIVE FELON WARRANT REQUIREMENT.—Section 1611(e)(4)(A)(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1382(e)(4)(A)(i)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''fleeing to avoid'' and inserting ''the subject of an arrest warrant for the purpose of'';

(2) by striking ''the place from which the person flees'' the first place it appears and inserting ''the jurisdiction issuing the warrant''; and

(3) by striking ''the place from which the person flees'' the second place it appears and inserting ''the jurisdiction''.

(b) PROBATION AND PAROLE WARRANT REQUIREMENT.—Section 1611(e)(4)(A)(ii) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1382(e)(4)(A)(ii)) is amended to read as follows:

''(ii) the subject of an arrest warrant for violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under Federal or State law.''.

(c) DISCLOSURE.—Section 1611(e)(5) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1382(e)(5)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''any recipient of'' and inserting ''any individual who is a recipient of (or would be such a recipient but for the application of paragraph (4)(A))''; and

(2) by striking ''the recipient'' each place it appears and inserting ''the individual''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall be effective with respect to benefits payable for months that begin on or after January 1, 2021.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) each will control 30 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 materials on the bill 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 in support of H.R. 2792, the Control of Unlawful Fugitive Felons Act of 2017. In 1996, Congress and President Clinton worked together to reform welfare and reignite the American Dream for families in need.

Aligned with this goal was a provision prohibiting a range of welfare benefits—including Supplemental Security Income—to fugitive felons and violators of probation and parole because safety net programs need to be protected from abuse so they can remain in place for those individuals who need them.

Individuals who evade justice violate the social contract that grants them this safety net. Simply put, it is incoherent and self-defeating that a nation of laws would pay a wanted person and prolong their flight from justice. Unfortunately, due to a number of factors involving the courts, these provisions have been watered down in recent years and rendered ineffectual.

Through the CUFF Act, Congress can stand up, once again, on behalf of our communities and affirm what every participant in our society should understand: if you have an outstanding warrant for your arrest, you have an obligation to face justice or clear your name.

This legislation not only stops benefits from going to those who are not following the law, but it also helps law enforcement apprehend those suspects. A 2007 report by SSA's inspector general found that this policy aided law enforcement in apprehending almost 60,000 individuals who were evading arrest for outstanding warrants. In fact, law enforcement thinks this policy is so effective that the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, and the South Dakota Sheriffs' Association have expressed support for the CUFF Act.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that this commonsense bill is endorsed by law enforcement and has a proven track record of success, I anticipate that my colleagues across the aisle may try to convince you otherwise.

I have heard many of their arguments when the Ways and Means Committee considered this bill and when the Rules Committee also considered this bill.

So let's take each of those concerns in turn.

Some may say that this is an old, failed policy.

In reality, this policy has a long track record of success. In 2015, the Social Security inspector general said, at a hearing, that this bill would stop hundreds of millions of dollars in payments to individuals with felony warrants.

Some may say this bill targets people with outdated warrants.

In reality, SSA already has a wide authority to exempt individuals if the alleged offense is nonviolent and not drug related.

□ 0930

Some may say that this bill would throw beneficiaries off the rolls with no warning. In reality, the SSA provides beneficiaries advance notice of 35 days before suspending SSI benefits, and there is a robust appeal process for recipients who have had their benefits suspended.

Some may say that this policy is burdensome to law enforcement. In reality, this bill is supported by the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, and the South Dakota Sheriffs' Association because it helps them do their job to locate individuals.

Finally, some may raise concerns that it targets minority populations caught up in overcriminalization or overly harsh sentencing. To those concerns, I say that these issues are absolutely important, and I look forward to us having those conversations about criminal justice reforms here in Congress. However, that conversation is outside the scope of the legislation that we have before us today.

My legislation does not speak to the content of a warrant, just the fact that one exists. The decision to grant a warrant is made by a judge in a court of law, not by the Social Security Administration. It should not be the duty of the American taxpayer to subsidize individuals who are wanted by the police.

Simply put, Mr. Speaker, if an individual has an outstanding warrant, it must be addressed and cleared. This bill does nothing to change that.

Under my bill, nobody will lose their SSI benefits because of misdemeanor offenses such as merely having a parking ticket, petty theft, or even driving under the influence. This bill stops payments to individuals who have outstanding warrants for felonies. These are crimes like murder, rape, and kidnapping. It also stops payments to individuals with probation and parole violations, limiting their ability to evade arrest.

Supplemental Security Income is a lifeline to those who are in need. We must ensure we are not further facilitating criminal activity in communities that are all too often already struggling.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the time that we are spending to consider this important legislation, and I appreciate the opportunity to stand in support of my bill today.

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, my mother used to say: Right is right if nobody is right, and

wrong is wrong if everybody is wrong. H.R. 2792 is wrong. It is cruel. It is discriminatory.

I strongly oppose this Republican effort to strip low-income seniors and those with severe disabilities of Supplemental Security Income benefits, or SSI. I join in opposition with over 110 civil rights, disability, and aging advocates who have warned that H.R. 2792's harsh cuts will discriminate based on age, race, ethnicity, ability, income, and will further criminalize poverty.

I also strongly oppose the majority's decision to condition the reauthorization of our successful home visiting program on this bill's harm to the elderly and infirm.

SSI is only available to people who are elderly, who are severely disabled, and who have little or no assets. The typical SSI recipient lives on less than $750 a month. So, by design, H.R. 2792, will only harm very poor, elderly, and disabled people. Within the population of adult recipients of SSI, approximately 83 percent are disabled, one-third are age 65 and older, and two-thirds are age 50 and older.

I reject proponents' claims that this bill will only target fugitive felons. In reality, current law terminates benefits for fugitive felons. This bill strikes the current restriction against fugitive felons and, instead, expands the benefit cutoff beyond those who are actually fleeing and encompasses everybody who had some unresolved run-in with the justice system based on allegation, not conviction.

I reject proponents' claim that only individuals charged with violent crimes or costly financial theft are affected by this bill. By undermining the constitutional presumption of innocence and depriving individuals of due process adjudication in a court of law, H.R. 2792 magnifies the deep inequities in our criminal justice system based on race, ethnicity, and income.

As an African-American man, I am very familiar with the decades of research documenting the racial-ethnic discrimination in our justice system. As an advocate for criminal justice reform, I know the dozens of studies documenting the faulty criminal justice data system on which benefit terminations will pivot solely because this bill removes due process by adjudication.

I reject proponents' claim that no one who has a misdemeanor or minor offense will be harmed. No uniform threshold for a felony exists. Indeed, four States—Florida, Massachusetts, Virginia, and New Jersey—have the lowest thresholds in the country, defining felonies as losses of $300 or less, which is vastly different than the $2,500 threshold set in Texas and Wisconsin. This bill cuts off an elderly or disabled person's lifeline benefits for a decades-old offense of $300.

Also, we know that courts across the country are criminalizing poverty and raising revenue with fines and fees. Individuals on probation for misdemeanor offenses like vagrancy, shoplifting, and traffic violations get probation and fines or fees. When poor people can't pay these fees, arrest warrants are issued for a violation of their probation. As in the past, H.R. 2792 clearly terminates SSI benefits for such alleged violations without any due process.

I urge my colleagues to do what they know is right: stand up for our most vulnerable citizens, honor their most fundamental rights, and oppose H.R. 2792.

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

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD two letters of support. One is from the over 330,000 members of the National Fraternal Order of Police, and the other is from the National Sheriffs' Association.

NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE,
Washington, DC, June 29, 2017.

Hon. KRISTI L. NOEM,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. SAMUEL R. JOHNSON,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES NOEM AND JOHNSON: I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our support for H.R. 2792, the ''Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons (CUFF) Act.''

In August 1996, President Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act into law, which restricted the eligibility of fugitive felons, and probation and parole violators for Social Security benefits. The Social Security Administration's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reported that this law has contributed to over 59,000 arrests since the inception of the program in 1996.

However, three different court decisions have eroded the law's effectiveness and the original intent of Congress, allowing fugitives to continue to collect benefits while on the run. This legislation will restore the original intent of the law by prohibiting an individual who is the subject of an outstanding arrest warrant for a felony or parole violation from receiving Social Security benefits.

The legislation will apply only to felony charges and amend the Social Security Act to make clear that the suspension of benefits is not just in cases of ''escape, flight to avoid prosecution, or confinement, and flight-escape.'' The American taxpayer should not be forced to support those who are evading justice.

On behalf of the more than 330,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, thank you for your support for law enforcement. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or Jim Pasco, my Senior Advisor, in my Washington office.

Sincerely,

CHUCK CANTERBURY,
National President.

NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION,
Alexandria, VA, June 20, 2017.

Hon. DAVE REICHERT,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Trade, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN REICHERT: On behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association, I write today to endorse H.R. 2792, the ''Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons (CUFF) Act.'' Too often, criminal felons receive federal benefits they are not entitled to collect. We believe this clarifying legislation will help remediate this recurring problem and strike the right balance.

The bill does a number of important things including: amending the Social Security Act to prohibit an individual who is the subject of an outstanding arrest warrant for a felony or parole violation from receiving Social Security Benefits; restoring the original intent of the 1996 law, revising current law to discontinue benefits for individuals who are ''the subject of an arrest warrant . . .'' compared to the previous language of ''fleeing to avoid'' arrest, which was the main legal challenge; and applying only to felony charges, or a crime carrying a minimum term of one or more years in prison. This policy does not intend to punish individuals convicted of misdemeanors, such as outstanding parking tickets, as some have alleged.

Like you, I believe this is a commonsense bill that will give more Americans piece of mind in knowing that tax dollars aren't supporting criminal activity through continued benefits to those breaking the law. I applaud your efforts on this issue and look forward to working with you to ensure the passage of this key legislation.

Sincerely,

JONATHAN F. THOMPSON,
Executive Director and CEO.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is all about Republicans refusing to pay for an important public service that they know works. It is about their meager 6 percent solution, where they decline to extend services that empower families, that support young children and their parents, to extend that to the other 94 percent of eligible Americans, despite the fact that there is evidence-based indication that these services perform so well, and in one area, helped to prevent child abuse. It is about their refusal to respond in a fiscally responsible manner to support this program, despite what their own experts say about the effectiveness of the program.

So, instead of providing a reliable source of necessary funding for public services, Republicans insist upon being willing to remove life-sustaining resources from some of our country's most vulnerable citizens. It is really a punitive, mean-spirited effort to demonize the poor.

Let's look at who will be hurt by this retread proposal, because they tried this a few years ago and it was rejected.

SSI, or Supplemental Security Income, is an initiative to help some of our most disadvantaged Americans. The SSI program pays modest cash benefits that can be obtained only by, essentially, showing that you have got nothing—well, not exactly nothing. You can have total assets other than your home of $2,000. You can't have more than $735 a month in income. If you are younger than 65, you must be disabled, perhaps a victim of cancer, chronic heart failure, or blindness.

There is strict enforcement of these standards, with over 70 percent of those who apply being denied.

What kind of person will they finance this child abuse prevention program from? Well, the 50-year-old man who had an arrest warrant—this is a true case—that had been issued when he failed to show up for court.

Why did he do that? Shouldn't he be punished?

Well, it turns out he was in a coma at the time that the arrest warrant was issued. He was unable to breathe without a long plastic tube surgically inserted in his throat and connected to an oxygen tank on his wheelchair. By the time his case was resolved before a judge, the medical supply company was taking away the breathing equipment.

Or Rosa Martinez, who got confused with another Rosa Martinez, and she had to go to court even though she wasn't the person being accused.

Each of these people and so many others, like those suffering from dementia in a nursing home and who may never have been convicted of anything, are the type of people from whom they will take resources in order to fund a necessary program.

Republicans on our committee are so motivated by their rigid ideology that they would not even permit a discussion with our staff of how to move forward on this initiative unless we committed to funding every dollar by taking it away from some other vital social service program within our committee's jurisdiction.

It ought not be necessary to rob Paula in order to provide valuable services to little Pauline. Even when they know how much is at stake, such as child abuse and disadvantaged children, and even when we have a way to address those problems and prevent that abuse, they won't add a single dollar of additional revenue.

Mr. DAVIS and I offered a variety of different ways to pay for this program and to actually see it serve more than 6 percent of eligible people.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. DOGGETT. You don't have to raise taxes. For one of those different ways, just enforce our current law. If someone receives an alimony payment, require documentation so they will know and the IRS will know that that money is due. That will raise a significant amount of money that would fund much of this reauthorization.

But because they are so opposed to adding a dollar to serve even an effective program, they take from the person with dementia at the nursing home. It is wrong. It demonizes people who deserve to be treated fairly.

We should reject this bill.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify exactly what this legislation does.

This legislation will take SSI benefits from individuals and stop those payments to those who have felony arrest warrants or who have violated their probation and parole.

I want to go through the process so that everybody recognizes that there is plenty of time for individuals to go through the appeal process. Notice is given if there is a warrant that they need to get rectified with the jurisdiction that has authority. So let me step through this process.

Step one is through the Office of Inspector General. Law enforcement agencies give OIG information about individuals who have outstanding felony arrest warrants or who are violating conditions of probation or parole.

Then OIG compares this information to its computer files of individuals receiving these dollars or serving as representative payees. If there is a match, OIG verifies the identity of the individual, ensures that the warrants for the individual are still active, works with local law enforcement to attempt to locate the person, and then OIG refers the cases to SSA to begin the suspension process.

When this process gets to the Social Security Administration, SSA sends an advance notice to the individual. This notice proposes the suspension of benefit payments and informs the individual of their right to appeal the suspension decision, payment continuation, and the timeframe to take such actions after receiving the advance notice.

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This notice includes why the SSA is suspending benefits and where, why, and when the warrant was issued. If SSA finds out, through a data match, 35 days is given for the individual to protest. If the individual protests, SSA will not suspend benefits until it figures out if the individual qualifies for a good cause exception. If the individual does not appeal his or her advance notice, then the SSA will suspend the benefits.

If the individual does appeal and gives his or her advance notice and provides evidence for the payment continuation, the SSA verifies the evidence and then continues the payments.

Other things that we should know about this legislation and what this includes is that warrants may only be resolved in the issuing jurisdiction. Grounds for dismissal of a warrant include identity theft, administrative error, and the individual's own move from the jurisdiction, especially if low income.

Warrants for misdemeanors remain warrants for misdemeanors and cannot become felonies. There is also latitude for the Commissioner to make decisions in special areas where there may be something to be considered, such as dementia or low-income abilities.

Mr. Speaker, this bill has been thoroughly vetted. We are making sure that the only people who are denied their SSI benefits are those who have felony warrants for their arrest or have violated probation or parole and have not gotten straight with law enforcement and rectified that past infraction.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), an icon for human rights.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this bill. For many years, I have been a proud member to serve on the Ways and Means Committee, the oldest committee in the U.S. Congress. Our committee has a responsibility to put people before politics. We have a commitment to act in the best interest of all, not just a select few. Most importantly, we have a duty to protect and preserve the United States Constitution.

Today, Mr. Speaker, it hurts my soul that our committee will pass a bill that attacks the constitutional principle that you are innocent until proven guilty.

Where is the reason? Where is the compassion? What is the purpose? How can you gamble with the livelihood of those who are most in need? How can we punish the sick, the disabled, and the elderly? How can we pass a bill that targets Latinos, African Americans, and Native Americans? Mr. Speaker, how can you rob Peter to pay Paul?

Mr. Speaker, I urge each and every one of my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this mean and spiteful bill. It should never have seen the light of day. The American people deserve better, much better. We can do better. This bill should not be on the floor of the House. It is not worthy of the paper that it is written on.

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

Mr. Speaker, I live in the State of South Dakota. I have some of the poorest counties in the Nation in my State, and they happen to be my Native American Tribes. They face 80 to 90 percent unemployment, poverty like no other place in the country, and they are isolated. They also have very high drug and crime rates.

In fact, we have seen a record number of murders in these communities, especially on the Pine Ridge Reservation, in this calendar year, and it is deeply discouraging and disheartening to me to think of someone who could have committed a murder in one of my communities in the State of South Dakota, that there is a felony warrant out for their arrest, and that we may not be able to find them. This bill will fix that situation.

If that individual is receiving SSI payments, that helps law enforcement locate those individuals who have gone out and committed crimes against innocent people. Rape, murder, kidnapping, they all happen in my Native

American Tribes, and this helps law enforcement find them and bring them to justice. It is one of the important things that this legislation will help us do in some of our most vulnerable communities.

I also recognize that the previous speaker talked about the fact that we need criminal justice reforms, and that is a very good debate that we should be having in Congress. But this is not the bill to talk about criminal justice reforms because this is not germane to the discussion that we are having today.

I wanted to speak for a minute on what is good cause because there is latitude for good cause within statute today, and I think there is some confusion as to exactly how this bill would be interpreted when it is signed into law.

In some cases, the SSI will not suspend or seek an overpayment of payments for good cause exceptions. There are two types of good cause exceptions that already exist in statute. The mandatory good cause exception is the SSA cannot suspend payments if a court has found an individual not guilty or has dismissed charges. If a court has vacated the warrant or issued any similar exoneration, then they cannot suspend payments. They also cannot suspend payments if there is a mistaken identity due to identity fraud.

The other exception in statute today is discretionary good cause exceptions. The SSA may suspend benefits for mitigating circumstances under two options:

Option A is the individual must prove that the criminal offense was nonviolent and not drug related. We also have that the individual has not been convicted of a felony crime since the warrant was issued, and the other point is that the law enforcement agency that issued the warrant reports that it will not act on the warrant. That is other exceptions for good cause.

Option B, the individual must prove all of these factors: if the criminal offense was nonviolent and not drug related; the individual has not been convicted of a felony crime since the warrant was issued; the warrant is the existing warrant and was issued 10 or more years ago and the individual lacks the mental capacity to resolve the warrant, which includes those living in a nursing home or mental treatment facility.

So as we have listened to opponents of this bill talk, they have discussed all of these issues as to how these benefits could be taken away from individuals that are clearly covered by good cause exceptions that are already in statute, and those situations are not relevant to the debate that we are having today.

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. JUDY CHU).

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, MIECHV Program is an effective evidence-based program that I am proud to support because I know it results in healthier families and stronger communities, but I am shocked at the way Republicans are choosing to pay for it.

Instead of enacting commonsense tax changes that could easily raise the needed revenue, Republicans have reached to the bottom of the barrel to find vulnerable people to harm.

In order to come up with a way to pay for this important bipartisan program, they are choosing to take Supplemental Security Income away from vulnerable seniors, low-income individuals, or those with disabilities; and they are doing it by maligning them as fugitives and felons just because they have an outstanding warrant. But the truth is a very different story.

The people who will be hurt by this bill are not hardened criminals. They haven't even had their day in court yet. In fact, many may not even know about the warrant because the police have decided that it is not worth pursuing. That is because the warrants are for small issues like writing a bad check or failing to appear for a hearing many years ago.

Worse, these individuals are elderly, poor, or sick. They deserve support and help, not to be treated as a piggybank. Actually, piggybanks generally indicate savings. This is a policy equivalent of reaching into a couch cushion for change. We are talking about individuals who have a warrant from when they were a teenager or somebody with a mental illness who may not even remember the incident in question. This is cruel and unbecoming of this Congress.

I know because we have tried this before. The last time this penalty was used, it meant catastrophe for very low-income people with disabilities and for seniors. It hurt people like J.H., a Californian with an intellectual disability and other mental impairments. J.H. had his SSI benefits stopped because of an Ohio warrant issued when he was 12 years old and running away to escape an abusive stepfather. This 4-foot-7-inch-tall, 85-pound boy was charged with assault for kicking a staff member at a detention center where he was being held until his mother could pick him up. Many years later, he had no recollection of the incident or the charges, but his SSI benefits were stopped nonetheless.

Is that really how we want to pay for home visitations: Impoverishing one person to help another?

That is why I worked to curb this bill's negative effects, by offering amendments that would protect those with dementia or keep it from increasing homelessness. Unfortunately, Republicans rejected both my amendments on a party line basis, so now we are stuck with this overly broad punitive bill that I cannot support.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, taxpayers should not be subsidizing those who have felony warrants for their arrest or violating parole and probation.

I wanted to remind everyone today that in 1996, the same provision was amended into other programs that we have at the Federal Government level. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families—cash welfare—has these same provisions included in that program.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—SNAP or food stamps—has these same provisions in the program. Housing programs, such as public housing, Section 8 vouchers, project-based Section 8, all have these same provisions in that program.

In addition, there are similar provisions added to Social Security disability and retirement programs, and the Department of Veterans Affairs benefits has this same provision that we are putting back into statute today when it comes to SSI payments.

Mr. Speaker, you can clearly see that this is bringing this program up to the same level of accountability to taxpayers and not subsidizing those who commit crimes against innocent individuals, and is an entirely appropriate debate here today.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time I have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois has 15 minutes remaining, and the gentlewoman from South Dakota has 18 minutes remaining.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2792, the hopelessly misnamed Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons Act.

As has become sadly routine in this Chamber under Republican rule, this bill considers those merely accused of a crime as if they were convicted felons without bothering with little niceties like due process. Having dispensed with basic constitutional protections, the bill then cuts off vital government assistance to some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Under current law, the Social Security Administration helps law enforcement track down individuals with an outstanding arrest warrant for an alleged felony or an alleged violation of probation or parole. Those who are actively fleeing law enforcement can also have their Supplemental Security Income, or SSI, benefits terminated. Under this bill, however, SSI benefits, which serve as a lifeline for low-income seniors and people with disabilities, would be terminated, whether or not people are actually attempting to evade justice.

The mere issuance of a warrant or an alleged parole violation with no arrest,

no trial, and no conviction would be enough to cut off vital benefits to the neediest among us. This is not just unconstitutional, it is inhumane. The bill would ensure that many low-income seniors and people with disabilities will lose their benefits unfairly and unnecessarily.

The vast majority of people affected by this bill have outstanding warrants that law enforcement chooses not to bother serving, often because they are for very old or minor offenses. Many people do not even know that an arrest warrant has been issued for them, but this bill would consider them as felons fleeing justice.

Many warrants are issued on the basis of mistaken identity, inaccuracies, or paperwork errors. It can take months to resolve such errors, which might involve traveling to a distant jurisdiction, hiring an attorney, and working through an overloaded court system.

And supporters of this bill expect people living on less than $750 a month to do all of this: to go to a different jurisdiction, to hire an attorney, to do all of this while the benefits they rely on to subsist are cut off?

That is outrageous.

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We heard from the gentlewoman from South Dakota about various exceptions to the bill, you can go through this process and that process. With what attorney? With what money? Does this bill have an appropriation in it to supply attorneys for people faced with this cutoff, people who, by definition, are the poorest people, who can't afford an attorney?

This legislation is a blatant violation of due process, and it will cause untold suffering to the people who need our help the most. At a time when Republicans are unveiling their proposal for massive tax cuts for the wealthy, this bill is a shameful illustration of the majority's priorities.

It is also a shameful illustration of something we have seen on this floor too often, and that is the assumption that anyone accused of something is guilty and that we don't have to bother with a trial, we don't have to bother with proof, and we don't have to bother with due process. That eviscerates much of the reason for the existence of this country, to vindicate due process, to give people rights and not to assume that anyone who a judge or someone thinks may have committed a crime is automatically guilty. We believe in due process in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this bill's defeat.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Resources. I thank him for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2792 and to thank the gentlewoman from South Dakota for her tremendous effort on this piece of legislation.

This is a good bill which improves existing law and sends an important message: taxpayers should not provide benefits to individuals wanted by the police under outstanding warrants or parole violations for felonies or other serious crimes. Let me say that again. This improves existing, actually, bipartisan law, and it is not a new concept. It only applies to individuals with outstanding warrants for serious crimes.

The bill provides 4 years for the Social Security Administration to implement this law and to ensure benefits are not unfairly or improperly discontinued.

It also provides a process under which SSA notifies beneficiaries of issues with an outstanding warrant or parole violation and provides time for them to address the concern with law enforcement.

In addition, SSA is empowered to provide compassionate allowances for those with serious disabilities or medical concerns who are unable to clear their warrant in a timely fashion.

Mr. Speaker, this is a narrow bill which protects both law-abiding beneficiaries and taxpayers. It is important that we have these funds to help the needy families who are benefiting from the MIECHV program, the home visitation program, a unique Federal program that actually shows that it makes a positive difference in the lives of young people and young families.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we look at the entire issue in a fiscally responsible way, where we have the funds through this bill to pay for the needs among needy families across America.

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

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first, let me thank the gentleman from Illinois for yielding and for his tireless leadership for families everywhere.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 2792, the so-called Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons Act. This cruel and misguided bill would terminate Supplemental Security Income benefits for vulnerable seniors and people with disabilities who have an outstanding warrant.

Let me be clear. This is a horrible bill. It is mean-spirited and it is unfair. Despite this bill's misleading title, Americans who would be harmed by this bill are not felons and they are not fugitives.

In reality, this bill would rip benefits from individuals who haven't been arrested, tried, or even convicted. They have only been accused. This violates the basic principle of innocent until proven guilty, and it would terminate benefits without due process.

What is worse, most of these outstanding warrants are decades old and involve minor infractions when people are unable to pay for court fines and fees. This is awful.

This bill criminalizes families living in poverty, and it disproportionately harms communities of color. One in five SSI recipients are African Americans. Without this critical program, believe you me, African Americans will struggle even more.

Make no mistake; cutting off SSI benefits would put all families at risk of being unable to keep a roof over their heads, put food on the table, and meet other basic needs. And for what? To pay for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program.

We know that this is an important program and helps millions of struggling families, but we cannot afford to rob Peter to pay Paul. Lives are at risk here. This is as sinister as it gets.

Taking an ax to these lifesaving benefits is cruel and heartless. That is why 120 civil rights, disability, and retirement organizations oppose this, including the NAACP, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the National Council of Churches, and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, this should really be a wake-up call to this Chamber to defeat this bill immediately. Instead of ramming through a bill that would push more people into poverty, we should be working to create good-paying jobs and expand opportunities for all.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this mean-spirited and heartless bill.

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

I just want to remind everyone that the bill we are debating here today would suspend SSI benefits for those who have felony warrants for their arrest and those who have violated probation or parole. That is the discussion that we are having here today. And let's go back over, in summary, what the policy actually does and says.

This policy should not be thought of in isolation. This is part of a larger effort to reauthorize the evidence-based, outcome-focused Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program.

H.R. 2824, which passed this Chamber on Tuesday, will be joined with this bill upon passage. It helps to improve the lives of families in at-risk communities, focusing on the first years of a child's life.

Unlike most Federal social programs, MIECHV funding is tied to real results, which ensures limited taxpayer dollars are actually delivering the intended results and helping those that are most in need.

Under current law, the program is 100 percent federally funded, but H.R. 2824 introduces a Federal match similar to what States must already do in other social programs, such as foster care,

Medicaid, child support enforcement, childcare, and others. The rest of the package ensures this program remains a shining example of evidence-based policy by expecting the program to continue to demonstrate effective outcomes. That reauthorization is fully offset by the bill that we are considering here today, H.R. 2792.

Instead of focusing on our Nation's debt, we should be doing more of what we are doing right here in these bills: prioritizing Federal spending and focusing on what works by improving the integrity of one program to provide funding for another.

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 Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Illinois for yielding and the gentlewoman from South Dakota for managing this bill.

The crux of this bill, however, is, again, to support and fund the multi-trillion-dollar tax cuts that have just been introduced, that will give millions, if not billions, if not trillions, to the richest of Americans, and that is a very sad commentary.

I oppose the Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons Act because it is not that. It will terminate essential benefits for poor people, deprive poor people of due process, and increase mass incarceration.

If the Rules Committee had simply taken my amendment, it would have remedied these criminal justice defects, which struck the arrest warrant language because it recklessly targets vulnerable people. This bill deprives citizens of due process, particularly where many poor individuals are completely unaware of a pending warrant.

Let me be very clear. What you have is a situation where you may have a mentally ill individual in a nursing home who now has a warrant that they are not aware of. You will then cut off their benefits.

What does that do to those families.

Prohibiting SSI payments to individuals with an outstanding warrant or parole or probation violation without due process is simply inhumane. This bill would terminate those benefits from very low-income seniors and people with disabilities. They may not even know that they have these warrants.

Now, I am a strong supporter of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program, and I tell you that the Democrats on the Ways and Means Committee had an amendment to pay for a 5-year reauthorization of that program, doubling the funding, by closing a tax loophole. They were not allowed to even vote on that amendment.

What does that say? This is a conspiracy.

There are 110 organizations that are against this, including the Alliance for Retired Americans, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Hand in Hand: The Domestic Employers Network, and the Coalition on Human Needs.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a document with the names of all of these organizations.

JUNE 26, 2017.

DEAR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: On behalf of the 119 undersigned organizations, we urge you to oppose efforts to cut Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to offset the costs of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV program).

H.R. 2824 would reauthorize the MIECHV program, which funds voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs for at-risk pregnant women and parents with young children up to kindergarten entry. The current MIECHV program has demonstrated beneficial outcomes associated with improved maternal and child health, including increased access to screening and early intervention for childhood disabilities.

Unfortunately, H.R. 2824 proposes to pay to extend this valuable maternal and child home visiting program by cutting off SSI entirely for certain adolescents and adults with disabilities, as well as seniors.

H.R. 2824 would revive an old, failed policy that had catastrophic effects for many people with disabilities and seniors, employing procedures that did not withstand judicial scrutiny. The Social Security Act currently prohibits SSI payments to individuals fleeing from law enforcement to avoid prosecution or imprisonment. The existing system is already working to ensure that those who shouldn't be paid SSI benefits don't receive them.

The proposed cut, Section 201 of H.R. 2824, would bar payment of SSI benefits to people with an outstanding arrest warrant for an alleged felony or for an alleged violation of probation or parole. Most of the warrants in question are decades old and involve minor infractions, including warrants routinely issued when a person was unable to pay a fine or court fee, or a probation supervision fee.

Based on prior experience with SSA's failed former policy, the people who would be affected are those whose cases are inactive and whom law enforcement is not pursuing. Many people are not even aware that a warrant was issued for them, as warrants are often not served on the individual. A very high percentage of people who would lose benefits have mental illness or intellectual disability. Many are unaware of the violation, may not have understood the terms of parole or probation, or may have other misunderstandings about their case.

Warrant databases are notoriously inaccurate. Fourteen percent of the arrest warrants processed by the federal Warrant Information Network in 2004 were later dismissed by the court or returned unexecuted. The state of Alabama, even with an audit mechanism in place, reported a 13% error rate in its arrest warrant databases. Due to these kinds of inaccuracies, some people will have their SSI benefits cut off as a result of mistaken identity, or paperwork errors, which can take months or even years to resolve.

When this failed policy was previously implemented by SSA, many of those who had their benefits cut off had no arrest warrant outstanding against them. For example, Rosa Martinez, the lead plaintiff in Martinez v. Astrue was, in 2008, a 52-year old woman who received notice from SSA that she was losing her disability benefits because of a 1980 arrest warrant for a drug offense in Miami, Florida. Ms. Martinez had never been to Miami, never been arrested, never used illegal drugs, and is eight inches shorter than the person described in the warrant. Despite an obvious case of mistaken identity, Ms. Martinez was left without her sole source of income. It was only after filing a lawsuit in federal court that Ms. Martinez was able to have her benefits restored.

Resolving outstanding warrants can be very difficult and costly. People often must go before a judge in the issuing jurisdiction, and typically need counsel to assist them in navigating the process. Often, people have moved in the intervening years and live far away from the issuing jurisdiction. The proposed offset would cut off all SSI income. Losing this income will cause many people to become homeless and unable to meet their basic needs, much less resolve a warrant, a case of mistaken identity, or an error in the warrant database. Completely cutting off SSI benefits will leave people with little recourse to resolve an outstanding warrant, representing a step backward in bipartisan efforts towards criminal justice reform.

By relying on databases of outstanding arrest warrants, this proposal seeks to punish people by presuming their guilt, undermining the presumption of innocence that is the bedrock of our criminal justice system. The existence of an arrest warrant does not establish that any criminal conduct has occurred. Many arrests do not result in criminal charges, or the charges are eventually dismissed. Even if an individual is charged and subsequently prosecuted, he or she is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The proposed offset also will have a disproportionate impact on people of color. People who are on probation are particularly susceptible to having an outstanding arrest warrant. Parolees and probationers are disproportionately people of color—in 2015, 13% of adults on probation were Hispanic, and 30% of adults on probation were African American.

Finally, the proposed offset could harm some of the very same children who we seek to help through home visiting. In any given month, approximately 2.7 million children are estimated to live with a family member who is a senior or adult with a disability who receives SSI. These children's families are overwhelmingly the same types of families served by the MIECHV program: over 3 in 5 families with a SSI recipient age 18 or older have a total family income below 150% of the federal poverty level, and SSI makes up on average about 40 percent of these families' income. Cutting off SSI income would put families at risk of being unable to keep a roof over their heads, put food on the table, and meet other basic needs—including children's and mothers' health needs.

H.R. 2824 would also harm Social Security beneficiaries—since over half of SSI recipients who are elderly, and almost one-third of SSI recipients with disabilities, are Social Security beneficiaries.

In closing, we reiterate that although the MIECHV program has demonstrated beneficial outcomes, and reauthorization must be a priority, it should not come at the expense of cuts to SSI, which would harm seniors, adolescents and adults with disabilities, and their families, and should not be raided as a pay-for for an unrelated program. We urge the U.S. Congress to reject any proposals to offset the costs of reauthorizing the MIECHV program by cutting SSI benefits.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

AFL–CIO; AFSCME; Aging Life Care Association; Alliance for Children's Rights; Alliance for Retired Americans; American Academy of Pediatrics; American Psychological Association; Association of Jewish Aging Services; Association of University Centers

on Disabilities; Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law; Center for American Progress; Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP); Coalition on Human Needs; Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Social Security Task Force; Defending Rights and Dissent; Easterseals; Economic Policy Institute Policy Center; FedCURE; FORGE, Inc.; Gray Panthers.

Hand in Hand: The Domestic Employers Network; Harm Reduction Coalition; Institute for Science and Human Values; Justice in Aging; Justice Strategies; Latinos for a Secure Retirement; Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; League of United Latin American Citizens; Legal Services for Prisoners with Children; Lutheran Services in America Disability Network; NAACP; NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.; National Alliance on Mental Illness; National Association of Disability Representatives; National Black Justice Coalition; National Center for Lesbian Rights; National Center for Transgender Equality; National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare; National Council of Churches; National Disability Rights Network.

National Employment Law Project; National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund; National Organization for Women; National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives (NOSSCR); National Women's Law Center; Paralyzed Veterans of America; People Demanding Action; PolicyWorks, Inc.; Polio Survivors Association; Prison CONversation; Rainbow PUSH Coalition; Resources for Independent Living; Root & Rebound; Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law; Service Employees International Union; Social Security Works; StoptheDrugWar.org; The Arc of the United States; Union for Reform Judaism.

STATE/LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

2–1–1 California; ABD Productions/Skywatchers; ADAPT Montana; Alameda County Community Food Bank; Berkeley Food Network; BNICEH (Black Network In Children's Emotional Health); California Association of Food Banks; California Association of Public Authorities for In-Home Supportive Services; California Church IMPACT; California Council of the Blind; California Food Policy Advocates; California In-Home Supportive Services Consumer Alliance; California Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman; California OneCare; California Partnership; Californians for Disability Rights, Inc.; Californians for SSI; Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY; Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations; Columbia Legal Services.

Community Legal Services of Philadelphia; Community Service Society of New York; Communities Actively Living Independent & Free; Disability Law Center, Massachusetts; Disability Law Center, Utah; Disability Policy Consortium of Massachusetts; Disability Rights California; DisAbility Rights Idaho; Disability Rights New Jersey; Disability Rights North Carolina; Disability Rights Wisconsin; Empire Justice Center; Friends In Deed; GetTogether Adult Day Health Care Center; Homeboy Industries; Hunger Action Los Angeles; IMPRUVE (Independent Movement of Paratransit Riders for Unity, Vehicles, Equality); Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles; Kentucky Protection and Advocacy; Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County.

Legal Council for Health Justice; Little Tokyo Service Center; MFY Legal Services, Inc.; National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter; Northern California ADAPT; Ohio Association of Local Reentry Coalitions; Personal Assistance Services Council; Public Counsel; PUEBLO People United For a Better Life in Oakland; Pushing Limits Radio (KPFA); Rubicon Programs; San Francisco Senior & Disability Action; Senior and Disabled Fund of San Bernardino County; Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County; Sonoma County Homeless Action!; St. Anthony Foundation; St. Mary's Center; UC Hastings Community Justice Clinics' Individual Representation Clinic; Urban Justice Center; Western Center on Law and Poverty.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. In addition, let me share with you the reality of this: Rosa Martinez. Yes, the Social Security Administration was doing this before, but they had to stop it.

We are now reigniting it because Rosa Martinez filed a suit in 2008. She was a 52-year-old disabled woman from Redwood, California, who received a notice from SSA last December that she was losing her only source of income, her disability benefits, because of a 1980 arrest warrant for a drug offense in Miami, Florida.

Ms. Martinez has never been to Miami, has never been arrested, and has never used illegal drugs. In addition, she is 8 inches shorter than the Rosa Martinez identified in the warrant.

Do you want this random, reckless cutting off of SSI benefits because of misidentification? Identity theft is rampant. So this bill is failed, it is a failure, and it has a number of Achilles' heels that will not work.

The bill will also increase mass incarceration. We should allow law enforcement to do their job. I don't mind giving them the tools that they need, but I refuse to allow individuals to suffer because of this very abusive bill.

I kneeled on this floor because of injustice. This is a bill that is full of injustices.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2792.

I oppose this bill for the following reasons:

SSI is a needs-based program for people with limited income and resources.

It will terminate essential benefits of poor people.

It will deprive poor people of due process.

It will increase mass incarceration.

My amendment would have remedied these criminal justice defects in H.R. 2792, which struck the arrest warrant language because (1) it recklessly targets vulnerable and innocent individuals; (2) this bill deprives citizens of due process, particularly where many poor individuals are completely unaware of any pending warrant, and (3) there have been cases in which warrants were either decades old or, in many instances, it was a matter of a mistaken identity.

The bill amends the Social Security Act (SSA) to make certain revisions that limit payment of benefits to fugitive felons under titles II, VIII, and XVI of the (SSA), by prohibiting Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments to individuals with an outstanding felony warrant or parole or probation violation.

"Almost none of the individuals who would be affected by this provision are actual fugitives from justice and most of the warrants in question are many years old and involve minor infractions," the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities said in a letter to Senators who tried to implement this policy.

This bill is merely a continuation of President Trump's $1.7 trillion budget cuts of programs designed to help the millions of poor and low-income families that need these programs for survival.

Plainly stated, this bill will terminate SSI benefits of very low-income seniors and people with disabilities, because SSI is granted based on financial need.

In creating this bill, the sponsors essentially agree that it is best to incarcerate economically vulnerable people in order to fund the Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV).

As the Center for Law and Social Policy, a nonprofit group focused on low-income Americans, previously reported of the Trump's budget scheme, this bill would likewise, create an overall assault on a wide range of ordinary Americans for the purpose of providing tax cuts to the wealthiest.

My Democratic colleagues on Ways and Means offered amendments to fully pay for a 5-year reauthorization of the MIECHV program and doubling the funding by closing a tax loophole called the "stretch IRA". Republicans however, would not let my colleagues vote on those amendments.

My amendment and those of my colleagues would have made this bad bill a lot more palatable.

Instead, the Republicans have chosen, once again, to lock people up, and do so in a manner that deprives poor people of their sole source of income, while purporting to safeguard against fugitive felons that are recipients of these SSI benefits.

This bill is unnecessary because under current law, SSI and Social Security payments are already prohibited to people fleeing prosecution or confinement.

Most alarming, this bill will terminate these benefits without any judicial determination of guilt, and thus, usurping recipients' rights to due process.

The presumption of "innocent until proven guilty" is the constitutional principle at the bedrock of our criminal justice system. This principle guarantees that the government cannot deprive citizens of their rights without due process of the law.

The bill maintains that payments could be immediately restored once the individual resolves any outstanding issues, a potentially lengthy and time-consuming process.

Ask the thousands of individuals swept under this broad policy if that is true. SSA already tried to implement this very ill-advised policy and it resulted in thousands of court challenges in 2009 forcing the agency to repay billions of dollars it had withheld from people deemed fugitives.

For example, Miami resident Joseph Sutrynowics' Social Security Disability Insurance benefits were halted in 2008 because of a bad check he'd written to cover groceries in Texas more than a decade earlier.

Under this policy, SSA agreed to repay $700 million in benefits that were withheld from 80,000 people whose benefits have been suspended or denied since January 1, 2007 in the Martinez v. Astrue case. SSA could also, reportedly, repay close to $1 billion in benefits to 140,000 individuals in the Clark v. Astrue case.

We have already tried this before and failed miserably. Let us not waste tax payers' money in litigation, while causing poor folks to go

hungry. As the old adage says: "don't continue to do the same thing and expect a different result, that's insanity".

Past experiences proved that this policy was detrimental then, and it is so now. It will further exacerbate the epic tragedy of mass incarceration, and the attendant costs incurred by taxpayers, particularly in the well-documented higher cost of incarcerating the elderly and those in poor health.

Even conservative coalitions like Freedom Works, American Conservative Union Foundation, Generation Opportunity, and Taxpayers Protection Alliance agreed that mass incarceration is extremely costly to taxpayers.

In addition to tax dollars in litigation fees, incarceration cost taxpayers $407.58 per person per day and $148,767 per person per year.

Criminalizing poor individuals, depriving them of their social security income benefits, and increasing the incarceration rate in this fashion will NOT solve the fugitive problem this bill purports it will do.

In fact, this bill will expand existing problems of mass incarceration by increasing the likelihood for recidivism. Statistics show that incarceration does not serve as deterrence, nor does it keep our communities safe.

For the reasons stated above, I oppose this bill.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL), a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in opposition to H.R. 2792, the misleadingly titled Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons Act of 2017, which would prohibit the payment of Supplemental Security Income benefits to anyone with an unresolved arrest warrant for an alleged violation of a condition of probation or parole or an alleged felony offense.

H.R. 2792's title falsely claims to target fugitive felons. In fact, fugitive felons are already prohibited from receiving benefits under current law. If this bill were enacted, some of our country's most vulnerable low-income seniors and disabled Americans, who are neither fugitives nor felons, would not be able to get their SSI benefits.

While proponents of H.R. 2792 continue to claim that the bill only targets violent fugitive felons, H.R. 2792 threatens many other individuals, like those who received arrest warrants because of an inability to pay court fines or fees. Just last week, the United States Commission on Civil Rights published a report, titled, ''Targeted Fines and Fees Against Low-Income Communities of Color: Civil Rights and Constitutional Implications,'' which found that many local jurisdictions rely on court fees or other fines to support their municipal budgets, including fees charged to those under court supervision.

Some of the people charged with these fees are elderly or disabled SSI beneficiaries who are unable to work and have no way to pay court costs. When they cannot pay, a warrant is routinely issued for their arrest. If this bill were enacted, these people would lose their SSI benefits, which is the only source of income for many of these low-income disabled individuals.

During the markup of H.R. 2792, I offered a commonsense amendment which would have prevented SSI benefits from being cut off if the result would be the loss of benefits for individuals whose arrest warrants were issued for nonpayment of court costs. Unfortunately, my Republican colleagues rejected the amendment, as well as all other Democratic amendments to this bill.

I stand united with over 119 national, State, and local organizations who oppose efforts to cut SSI benefits, and I urge opposition to the final passage of this bill.

Further, I would like to go on the record to say that we should have a clean reauthorization of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program, MIECHV, which expires on September 30. The majority's decision to tie home visiting to this harmful cut for our most vulnerable citizens only makes this harder to accomplish.

MIECHV programs are proven programs, evidence-based programs that work. We actually should reauthorize these programs, but we should not tie it to this horrible bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge opposition to the bill.

□ 1015

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

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2792 is a harsh, unfair bill. It would undermine the foundation of American justice, innocent until proven guilty, and it would do so for Americans who are impoverished and already at a severe disadvantage because of age, disability, education, race, and ethnicity. It would strip people of basic income, in many cases all they have to live on, based on a mere accusation.

I reject the majority's contention that people in nursing homes, people with dementia and cognitive impairments, and others with nowhere else to turn will not be harmed by this bill because of the very limited authority current law gives the Social Security commissioner to issue good cause exemptions.

We know the good cause process is complicated and very difficult to navigate. Not surprisingly, the last time the policy was in effect, only a tiny fraction of the people who lost their basic income were able to follow the instructions in the six-page letter from SSA and apply for relief, the good cause process that the majority repeatedly touts, as few as 10 days before benefit termination. SSI recipients have extremely limited financial resources and are severely disabled, elderly.

Resolving errors within the criminal justice system is a long process that typically must be done in the geographic jurisdiction of the court and necessitates legal costs.

The goal of H.R. 2792 is the same: raise $2.1 billion by cutting off benefits for tens of thousands of impoverished, elderly, and disabled people, be they cognitively impaired, victims of mistaken identity, facing homelessness, those who committed minor offenses, or those who are too poor to pay their court fees and fines.

Mr. Speaker, there are no protections in this bill. There is no reason, no rational benefit, but there are instances where individuals will be forced to suffer even more than they currently do, so let's not cut off their Social Security Income benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a ''no'' vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, in closing, the CUFF Act is commonsense. The American taxpayer should not subsidize individuals who are fleeing from law enforcement.

Because the Social Security Administration already possesses in place processes that will ensure due process and protect beneficiaries, claims about this bill are overblown and, quite frankly, they are wrong.

I am proud that this bill is supported by the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, and the South Dakota Sheriffs' Association.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 533, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

DISASTER TAX RELIEF AND AIRPORT AND AIRWAY EXTENSION ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule XIX, further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3823) to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the

Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to provide disaster tax relief, and for other purposes, will now resume.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I am opposed in its current form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Nadler moves to recommit the bill H.R. 3823 to the Committee on Ways and Means with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Page 58, strike lines 6 through 13, and insert the following:

(1) PAYMENTS TO POSSESSIONS.—

(A) UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall pay to the United States Virgin Islands amounts equal to 400 percent of the loss in revenues to the United States Virgin Islands by reason of this title (determined without regard to this subsection and subsection (e)). Such amounts shall be determined by the Secretary of the Treasury based on information provided by the United States Virgin Islands.

(B) COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall pay to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico amounts equal to the per capita equivalent of amounts paid to the United States Virgin Islands under subparagraph (A). For purposes of the preceding sentence, the term ''per capita equivalent'' means the ratio of—

(i) the population of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, determined on the basis of the most recent census estimate released by the Bureau of Census before September 4, 2017, divided by

(ii) the population of the United States Virgin Islands, as so determined.

(C) USE OF FUNDS.—Subparagraphs (A) and (B) shall apply only to the extent that the United States Virgin Islands or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as the case may be, has a plan, which has been approved by the Secretary of the Treasury, under which possession will use such amounts for one or more of the following purposes:

(i) Repair or surface infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and tunnels.

(ii) Repair of water and sewage systems.

(iii) Repair and replacement of electric transmission and distribution systems, telecommunications infrastructure, cellular networks, and broadband infrastructure.

(iv) Repair and replacement of hospitals.

(v) Repair and replacement of elementary and secondary schools.

(vi) Repair, replacement, and creation of residential housing.

(vii) Environmental remediation.

(viii) Health care costs of individuals.

The preceding sentence shall not apply to so much of the amounts paid to the United States Virgin Islands as do not exceed 100 percent of the loss in revenues described in subparagraph (A).

Page 59, line 10, insert ''(and by reason of such possession having a mirror code tax system)'' after ''by reason of this title''.

Page 59, after line 13, insert the following:

(e) EXTENSION OF APPLICATION TO PUERTO RICO OF DEDUCTION FOR INCOME ATTRIBUTABLE TO DOMESTIC PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 199(d)(8)(C) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(A) by striking ''first 11 taxable years'' and inserting ''first 16 taxable years'', and

(B) by striking ''January 1, 2017'' and inserting ''January 1, 2023''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2016.

(f) SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS AND PUERTO RICO THROUGH LONG-TERM EXTENSION OF RUM COVER OVER.—It is the sense of Congress that, as soon as possible, section 7652(f)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 should be extended retroactively, and for no fewer than five years, to support the long-term economic recovery of the United States Virgin Islands and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Page 59, after line 23, insert the following:

SEC. 506. TIME FOR PAYMENT OF CORPORATE ESTIMATED TAXES.

Notwithstanding section 6655 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, in the case of a corporation with assets of not less than $1,000,000,000 (determined as of the end of the preceding taxable year)—

(1) the amount of any required installment of corporate estimated tax which is otherwise due in July, August, or September of 2018 shall be increased by 1.75 percent of such amount (determined without regard to any provision of law which is not included in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986), and

(2) the amount of the next required installment after an installment referred to in paragraph (1) shall be appropriately reduced to reflect the amount of the increase by reason of such paragraph.

SEC. 507. EXPENSING OF QUALIFIED DISASTER EXPENSES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part VI of subchapter B of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after section 198 the following:

''SEC. 198A. EXPENSING OF QUALIFIED DISASTER EXPENSES.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—A taxpayer may elect to treat any qualified disaster expenses which are paid or incurred by the taxpayer as an expense which is not chargeable to capital account. Any expense which is so treated shall be allowed as a deduction for the taxable year in which it is paid or incurred.

''(b) QUALIFIED DISASTER EXPENSE.—For purposes of this section, the term 'qualified disaster expense' means any expenditure—

''(1) which is paid or incurred in connection with a trade or business or with business-related property,

''(2) which is—

''(A) for the abatement or control of hazardous substances that were released on account of a federally declared disaster occurring during the period beginning—

''(i) after December 31, 2007, and before January 1, 2010, or

''(ii) after December 31, 2011, and before January 1, 2016,

''(B) for the removal of debris from, or the demolition of structures on, real property which is business-related property damaged or destroyed as a result of a federally declared disaster occurring during any such period, or

''(C) for the repair of business-related property damaged as a result of a federally declared disaster occurring during any such period, and

''(3) which is otherwise chargeable to capital account.

''(c) OTHER DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) BUSINESS-RELATED PROPERTY.—The term 'business-related property' means property—

''(A) held by the taxpayer for use in a trade or business or for the production of income, or

''(B) described in section 1221(a)(1) in the hands of the taxpayer.

''(2) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER.—The term 'federally declared disaster' has the meaning given such term by section 165(i)(5)(A).

''(d) DEDUCTION RECAPTURED AS ORDINARY INCOME ON SALE, ETC.—Solely for purposes of section 1245, in the case of property to which a qualified disaster expense would have been capitalized but for this section—

''(1) the deduction allowed by this section for such expense shall be treated as a deduction for depreciation, and

''(2) such property (if not otherwise section 1245 property) shall be treated as section 1245 property solely for purposes of applying section 1245 to such deduction.

''(e) COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROVISIONS.—Sections 198, 280B, and 468 shall not apply to amounts which are treated as expenses under this section.

''(f) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe such regulations as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of this section.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for part VI of subchapter B of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 198 the following item:

''Sec. 198A. Expensing of qualified disaster expenses.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to amounts paid or incurred after December 31, 2011, in connection with disasters declared after such date.

SEC. 508. INCREASED LIMITATION ON CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS FOR DISASTER RELIEF.

(a) INDIVIDUALS.—Paragraph (1) of section 170(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating subparagraphs (F) and (G) as subparagraphs (G) and (H), respectively, and by inserting after subparagraph (E) the following new subparagraph:

''(F) QUALIFIED DISASTER CONTRIBUTIONS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Any qualified disaster contribution shall be allowed to the extent that the aggregate of such contributions does not exceed the excess of 80 percent of the taxpayer's contribution base over the amount of all other charitable contributions allowable under this paragraph.

''(ii) CARRYOVER.—If the aggregate amount of contributions described in clause (i) exceeds the limitation under clause (i), such excess shall be treated (in a manner consistent with the rules of subsection (d)(1)) as a charitable contribution to which clause (i) applies in each of the 5 succeeding years in order of time.

''(iii) COORDINATION WITH OTHER SUBPARAGRAPHS.—For purposes of applying this subsection and subsection (d)(1), contributions described in clause (i) shall not be treated as described in subparagraph (A) and such subparagraph shall be applied without regard to such contributions.

''(iv) QUALIFIED DISASTER CONTRIBUTIONS.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term 'qualified disaster contribution' means any charitable contribution if—

''(I) such contribution is for relief efforts related to a federally declared disaster (as defined in section 165(h)(3)(C)(i)),

''(II) such contribution is made during the period beginning on the applicable disaster date with respect to the disaster described in subclause (I) and ending on December 31, 2015, and

''(III) such contribution is made in cash to an organization described in subparagraph (A) (other than an organization described in section 509(a)(3)).

Such term shall not include a contribution if the contribution is for establishment of a new, or maintenance in an existing, donor advised fund (as defined in section 4966(d)(2)).

''(v) APPLICABLE DISASTER DATE.—For purposes of clause (iv)(II), the term 'applicable disaster date' means, with respect to any federally declared disaster described in clause (iv)(I), the date on which the disaster giving rise to the Presidential declaration described in section 165(i)(5)(A) occurred.

''(vi) SUBSTANTIATION REQUIREMENT.—This paragraph shall not apply to any qualified disaster contribution unless the taxpayer obtains from such organization to which the contribution was made a contemporaneous written acknowledgment (within the meaning of subsection (f)(8)) that such contribution was used (or is to be used) for a purpose described in clause (iv)(III).''.

(b) CORPORATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 170(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D) and by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following new subparagraph:

''(C) QUALIFIED DISASTER CONTRIBUTIONS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Any qualified disaster contribution shall be allowed to the extent that the aggregate of such contributions does not exceed the excess of 20 percent of the taxpayer's taxable income over the amount of charitable contributions allowed under subparagraph (A).

''(ii) CARRYOVER.—If the aggregate amount of contributions described in clause (i) exceeds the limitation under clause (i), such excess shall be treated (in a manner consistent with the rules of subsection (d)(1)) as a charitable contribution to which clause (i) applies in each of the 5 succeeding years in order of time.

''(iii) QUALIFIED DISASTER CONTRIBUTION.—The term 'qualified disaster contribution' has the meaning given such term under paragraph (2)(F)(iv).

''(iv) SUBSTANTIATION REQUIREMENT.—This paragraph shall not apply to any qualified disaster contribution unless the taxpayer obtains from such organization to which the contribution was made a contemporaneous written acknowledgment (within the meaning of subsection (f)(8)) that such contribution was used (or is to be used) for a purpose described in paragraph (1)(F)(iv)(III).''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Subparagraph (A) of section 170(b)(2) of such Code is amended by striking ''subparagraph (B) applies'' and inserting ''subparagraphs (B) and (C) apply''.

(B) Subparagraph (B) of section 170(b)(2) of such Code is amended by striking ''subparagraph (A)'' and inserting ''subparagraphs (A) and (C)''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to disasters arising in taxable years ending after December 31, 2011.

SEC. 509. LOSSES ATTRIBUTABLE TO DISASTERS IN 2012, 2013, 2014, AND 2015.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 165(h) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively, and by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

''(3) SPECIAL RULE FOR LOSSES IN FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTERS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If an individual has a net disaster loss for any taxable year, the amount determined under paragraph (2)(A)(ii) shall be the sum of—

''(i) such net disaster loss, and

''(ii) so much of the excess referred to in the matter preceding clause (i) of paragraph (2)(A) (reduced by the amount in clause (i) of this subparagraph) as exceeds 10 percent of the adjusted gross income of the individual.

''(B) NET DISASTER LOSS.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'net disaster loss' means the excess of—

''(i) the personal casualty losses—

''(I) attributable to a federally declared disaster occurring during the period beginning after December 31, 2007, and before January 1, 2010, or during the period beginning after December 31, 2011, and before January 1, 2016, and

''(II) occurring in a disaster area, over

''(ii) personal casualty gains.

''(C) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER.—For purposes of this paragraph—

''(i) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER.—The term 'federally declared disaster' has the meaning given such term by subsection (i)(5)(A).

''(ii) DISASTER AREA.—The term 'disaster area' has the meaning given such term by subsection (i)(5)(B).''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (4) of section 165(h) of such Code, as so redesignated, is amended by striking ''paragraph (2)'' and inserting ''paragraphs (2) and (3)''.

(c) LOSS ALLOWED WHETHER OR NOT INDIVIDUAL ITEMIZED DEDUCTIONS.—Section 62(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after paragraph (21) the following new paragraph:

''(22) DISASTER CASUALTY LOSSES.—Any net disaster loss (as defined in section 165(h)(3)(B)).''.

(d) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Subparagraph (A) of section 165(i)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting ''major'' after ''means any''.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to disasters declared in taxable years beginning after December 31, 2011.

(f) USE OF AMENDED INCOME TAX RETURNS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT RECEIPT OF CERTAIN CASUALTY LOSS GRANTS BY DISALLOWING PREVIOUSLY TAKEN CASUALTY LOSS DEDUCTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, if a taxpayer—

(A) claims a deduction for any taxable year with respect to a casualty loss to a principal residence (within the meaning of section 121 of such Code) resulting from any federally declared disaster (as defined in section 165(h)(3)(C) of such Code) occurring during the period beginning after December 31, 2011, and before January 1, 2016, and

(B) in a subsequent taxable year receives a grant under any Federal or State program as reimbursement for such loss,

such taxpayer may elect to file an amended income tax return for the taxable year in which such deduction was allowed (and for any taxable year to which such deduction is carried) and reduce (but not below zero) the amount of such deduction by the amount of such reimbursement.

(2) TIME OF FILING AMENDED RETURN.—Paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to any grant only if any amended income tax returns with respect to such grant are filed not later than the later of—

(A) the due date for filing the tax return for the taxable year in which the taxpayer receives such grant, or

(B) the date which is 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) WAIVER OF PENALTIES AND INTEREST.—Any underpayment of tax resulting from the reduction under paragraph (1) of the amount otherwise allowable as a deduction shall not be subject to any penalty or interest under such Code if such tax is paid not later than 1 year after the filing of the amended return to which such reduction relates.

SEC. 510. NET OPERATING LOSSES ATTRIBUTABLE TO DISASTERS IN 2012, 2013, 2014, AND 2015.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 172(b)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(G) CERTAIN LOSSES ATTRIBUTABLE FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTERS.—In the case of a taxpayer who has a qualified disaster loss (as defined in subsection (i)), such loss shall be a net operating loss carryback to each of the 5 taxable years preceding the taxable year of such loss.''.

(b) RULES RELATING TO QUALIFIED DISASTER LOSSES.—Section 172 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating subsection (i) a subsection (j) and by inserting after subsection (h) the following:

''(i) RULES RELATING TO QUALIFIED DISASTER LOSSES.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The term 'qualified disaster loss' means the lesser of—

''(A) the sum of—

''(i) the losses allowable under section 165 for the taxable year—

''(I) attributable to a federally declared disaster (as defined in section 165(i)(5)(A)) occurring during the period beginning after December 31, 2007, and before January 1, 2010, or during the period beginning after December 31, 2011, and before January 1, 2016, and

''(II) occurring in a disaster area (as defined in section 165(i)(5)(B)), and

''(ii) the deduction for the taxable year for qualified disaster expenses which is allowable under section 198A(a) or which would be so allowable if not otherwise treated as an expense, or

''(B) the net operating loss for such taxable year.

''(2) COORDINATION WITH SUBSECTION (b)(2).—For purposes of applying subsection (b)(2), a qualified disaster loss for any taxable year shall be treated in a manner similar to the manner in which a specified liability loss is treated.

''(3) ELECTION.—Any taxpayer entitled to a 5-year carryback under subsection (b)(1)(G) from any loss year may elect to have the carryback period with respect to such loss year determined without regard to subsection (b)(1)(G). Such election shall be made in such manner as may be prescribed by the Secretary and shall be made by the due date (including extensions of time) for filing the taxpayer's return for the taxable year of the net operating loss. Such election, once made for any taxable year, shall be irrevocable for such taxable year.

''(4) EXCLUSION.—The term 'qualified disaster loss' shall not include any loss with respect to any property described in section 1400N(p)(3).''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to losses arising in taxable years beginning after December 31, 2011, in connection with disasters declared after such date.

SEC. 511. WAIVER OF CERTAIN MORTGAGE REVENUE BOND REQUIREMENTS FOLLOWING 2012, 2013, 2014, AND 2015 DISASTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (13) of section 143(k) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''before January 1, 2010'' in subparagraphs (A)(i) and (B)(i) of such paragraph and inserting ''during the period beginning after December 31, 2007, and before January 1, 2010, or during the period

beginning after December 31, 2011, and before January 1, 2016''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to disasters occurring after December 31, 2011.

SEC. 512. INCREASED EXPENSING AND BONUS DEPRECIATION FOR QUALIFIED DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROPERTY FOLLOWING 2012, 2013, 2014, AND 2015 DISASTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subclause (I) of section 168(n)(2)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''before January 1, 2010'' and inserting ''during the period beginning after December 31, 2007, and before January 1, 2010, or during the period beginning after December 31, 2011, and before January 1, 2016''.

(b) REMOVAL OF EXCLUSION.—Section 168(n)(2)(B)(i) of such Code is amended by inserting ''and'' at the end of subclause (I), by striking '', and'' at the end of subclause (II) and inserting a period, and by striking subclause (III).

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to property placed in service after December 31, 2011, with respect to disasters declared after such date.

SEC. 513. INCREASE IN NEW MARKETS TAX CREDIT FOR INVESTMENTS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ENTITIES SERVING 2012, 2013, 2014, AND 2015 DISASTER AREAS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (f) of section 45D of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) INCREASED SPECIAL ALLOCATION FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ENTITIES SERVING DISASTER AREAS WITH RESPECT TO DISASTERS OCCURRING IN ANY OF CALENDAR YEARS 2012 THROUGH 2015.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of each calendar year which begins after 2012 and before 2017, the new markets tax credit limitation shall be increased by an amount equal to $500,000,000, to be allocated among qualified community development entities to make qualified low-income community investments within any covered federally declared disaster area.

''(B) ALLOCATION OF INCREASE.—The amount of the increase in limitation under subparagraph (A) shall be allocated by the Secretary under paragraph (2) to qualified community development entities and shall give priority to such entities with a record of having successfully provided capital or technical assistance to businesses or communities within any covered federally declared disaster area or areas for which the allocation is requested.

''(C) APPLICATION OF CARRYFORWARD.—Paragraph (3) shall be applied separately with respect to the amount of any increase under subparagraph (A).

''(D) COVERED FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER AREA.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'covered federally declared disaster area' means any disaster area resulting from any federally declared disaster occurring after December 31, 2011, and before January 1, 2016. For purposes of the preceding sentence, the terms 'federally declared disaster' and 'disaster area' have the meanings given such terms in section 165(i)(5).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to calendar years beginning after 2012.

SEC. 514. SPECIAL RULES FOR USE OF RETIREMENT FUNDS IN CONNECTION WITH FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTERS IN 2012, 2013, 2014, AND 2015.

(a) TAX-FAVORED WITHDRAWALS FROM RETIREMENT PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 72(t) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(H) DISTRIBUTIONS FROM RETIREMENT PLANS IN CONNECTION WITH FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTERS DURING IN ANY CALENDAR YEARS AFTER 2011.—Any qualified disaster recovery distribution.''.

(2) QUALIFIED DISASTER RECOVERY DISTRIBUTION.—Section 72(t) of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(11) QUALIFIED DISASTER RECOVERY DISTRIBUTION.—For purposes of paragraph (2)(H)—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the term 'qualified disaster recovery distribution' means, with respect to any federally declared disaster occurring in any calendar year beginning after 2011 and before January 1, 2016, any distribution from an eligible retirement plan made on or after the applicable disaster date and before the date that is 1 year after the applicable disaster date, to an individual whose principal place of abode on the applicable disaster date, is located in the disaster area and who has sustained an economic loss by reason of such federally declared disaster.

''(B) DOLLAR LIMITATION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this subsection, the aggregate amount of distributions received by an individual with respect to any federally declared disaster occurring during in any calendar year beginning after 2011 shall not exceed $100,000.

''(ii) TREATMENT OF PLAN DISTRIBUTIONS.—If a distribution to an individual would (without regard to clause (i)) be a qualified disaster recovery distribution, a plan shall not be treated as violating any requirement of this title merely because the plan treats such distribution as a qualified disaster recovery distribution, unless the aggregate amount of such distributions from all plans maintained by the employer (and any member of any controlled group which includes the employer) to such individual with respect to any federally declared disaster occurring in any calendar year beginning after 2011 exceeds $100,000.

''(iii) CONTROLLED GROUP.—For purposes of clause (ii), the term 'controlled group' means any group treated as a single employer under subsection (b), (c), (m), or (o) of section 414.

''(C) AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED MAY BE REPAID.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Any individual who receives a qualified disaster recovery distribution may, at any time during the 3-year period beginning on the day after the date on which such distribution was received, make one or more contributions in an aggregate amount not to exceed the amount of such distribution to an eligible retirement plan of which such individual is a beneficiary and to which a rollover contribution of such distribution could be made under section 402(c), 403(a)(4), 403(b)(8), 408(d)(3), or 457(e)(16), as the case may be.

''(ii) TREATMENT OF REPAYMENTS OF DISTRIBUTIONS FROM ELIGIBLE RETIREMENT PLANS OTHER THAN IRAS.—For purposes of this title, if a contribution is made pursuant to clause (i) with respect to a qualified disaster recovery distribution from an eligible retirement plan other than an individual retirement plan, then the taxpayer shall, to the extent of the amount of the contribution, be treated as having received the qualified disaster recovery distribution in an eligible rollover distribution (as defined in section 402(c)(4)) and as having transferred the amount to the eligible retirement plan in a direct trustee to trustee transfer within 60 days of the distribution.

''(iii) TREATMENT OF REPAYMENTS FOR DISTRIBUTIONS FROM IRAS.—For purposes of this title, if a contribution is made pursuant to clause (i) with respect to a qualified disaster recovery distribution from an individual retirement plan (as defined by section 7701(a)(37)), then, to the extent of the amount of the contribution, the qualified disaster recovery distribution shall be treated as a distribution described in section 408(d)(3) and as having been transferred to the eligible retirement plan in a direct trustee to trustee transfer within 60 days of the distribution.

''(D) INCOME INCLUSION SPREAD OVER 3-YEAR PERIOD.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any qualified disaster recovery distribution, unless the taxpayer elects not to have this paragraph apply for any taxable year, any amount required to be included in gross income for such taxable year shall be so included ratably over the 3-taxable-year period beginning with such taxable year.

''(ii) SPECIAL RULE.—For purposes of clause (i), rules similar to the rules of subparagraph (E) of section 408A(d)(3) shall apply.

''(E) OTHER DEFINITIONS.—

''(i) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER; DISASTER AREA.—The terms 'federally declared disaster' and 'disaster area' have the meanings given such terms under section 165(i)(5).

''(ii) APPLICABLE DISASTER DATE.—The term 'applicable disaster date' means, with respect to any federally declared disaster, the date on which such federally declared disaster occurs.

''(iii) ELIGIBLE RETIREMENT PLAN.—The term 'eligible retirement plan' shall have the meaning given such term by section 402(c)(8)(B).

''(F) SPECIAL RULES.—

''(i) EXEMPTION OF DISTRIBUTIONS FROM TRUSTEE TO TRUSTEE TRANSFER AND WITHHOLDING RULES.—For purposes of sections 401(a)(31), 402(f), and 3405, qualified disaster recovery distributions shall not be treated as eligible rollover distributions.

''(ii) QUALIFIED DISASTER RECOVERY DISTRIBUTIONS TREATED AS MEETING PLAN DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS.—For purposes of this title, a qualified disaster recovery distribution shall be treated as meeting the requirements of sections 401(k)(2)(B)(i), 403(b)(7)(A)(ii), 403(b)(11), and 457(d)(1)(A).''.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to distributions with respect to disaster declared after December 31, 2011.

(b) LOANS FROM QUALIFIED PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (p) of section 72 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) INCREASE IN LIMIT ON LOANS NOT TREATED AS DISTRIBUTIONS WITH RESPECT TO DISASTERS IN ANY CALENDAR YEAR AFTER 2011.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any loan from a qualified employer plan to a qualified individual made during the applicable period—

''(i) clause (i) of paragraph (2)(A) shall be applied by substituting '$100,000' for '$50,000', and

''(ii) clause (ii) of such paragraph shall be applied by substituting 'the present value of the nonforfeitable accrued benefit of the employee under the plan' for 'one-half of the present value of the nonforfeitable accrued benefit of the employee under the plan'.

''(B) DELAY OF REPAYMENT.—In the case of a qualified individual with an outstanding loan on or after the applicable disaster date from a qualified employer plan—

''(i) if the due date pursuant to subparagraph (B) or (C) of paragraph (2) for any repayment with respect to such loan occurs during the 1-year period beginning on the applicable disaster date, such due date shall be delayed for 1 year,

''(ii) any subsequent repayments with respect to any such loan shall be appropriately

adjusted to reflect the delay in the due date under clause (i) and any interest accruing during such delay, and

''(iii) in determining the 5-year period and the term of a loan under subparagraph (B) or (C) of paragraph (2), the period described in clause (i) shall be disregarded.

''(C) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this paragraph—

''(i) QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL.—The term 'qualified individual' means, with respect to any federally declared disaster occurring during in any calendar year beginning after 2011, an individual whose principal place of abode on the applicable disaster date is located in the disaster area and who has sustained an economic loss by reason of such federally declared disaster.

''(ii) APPLICABLE PERIOD.—The applicable period is the period beginning on the applicable disaster date and ending on December 31, 2016.

''(iii) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER; DISASTER AREA.—The terms 'federally declared disaster' and 'disaster area' have the meanings given such terms under section 165(i)(5).

''(iv) APPLICABLE DISASTER DATE.—The term 'applicable disaster date' means, with respect to any federally declared disaster, the date on which such federally declared disaster occurs.''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall apply to loans made with respect to disaster declared after December 31, 2011.

(c) PROVISIONS RELATING TO PLAN AMENDMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If this subsection applies to any amendment to any plan or annuity contract, such plan or contract shall be treated as being operated in accordance with the terms of the plan during the period described in paragraph (2)(B)(i).

(2) AMENDMENTS TO WHICH SUBSECTION APPLIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—This subsection shall apply to any amendment to any plan or annuity contract which is made—

(i) pursuant to any provision of, or amendment made by, this section, or pursuant to any regulation issued by the Secretary or the Secretary of Labor under any provision of, or amendment made by, this section, and

(ii) on or before the last day of the first plan year beginning on or after January 1, 2016, or such later date as the Secretary may prescribe.

In the case of a governmental plan (as defined in section 414(d)), clause (ii) shall be applied by substituting the date which is 2 years after the date otherwise applied under clause (ii).

(B) CONDITIONS.—This subsection shall not apply to any amendment unless—

(i) during the period—

(I) beginning on the date that the provisions of, and amendments made by, this section or the regulation described in subparagraph (A)(i) takes effect (or in the case of a plan or contract amendment not required by the provisions of, or amendments made by, this section or such regulation, the effective date specified by the plan), and

(II) ending on the date described in subparagraph (A)(ii) (or, if earlier, the date the plan or contract amendment is adopted),

the plan or contract is operated as if such plan or contract amendment were in effect, and

(ii) such plan or contract amendment applies retroactively for such period.

SEC. 515. ADDITIONAL EXEMPTION FOR HOUSING QUALIFIED DISASTER DISPLACED INDIVIDUALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 151 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(f) ADDITIONAL EXEMPTION FOR CERTAIN DISASTER-DISPLACED INDIVIDUALS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any taxable year beginning in any calendar year beginning after 2011, there shall be allowed an exemption of $500 for each qualified disaster-displaced individual with respect to the taxpayer for the taxable year.

''(2) LIMITATIONS.—

''(A) DOLLAR LIMITATION.—The exemption under paragraph (1) shall not exceed $2,000, reduced by the amount of the exemption under this subsection for all prior taxable years.

''(B) INDIVIDUALS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT ONLY ONCE.—An individual shall not be taken into account under paragraph (1) if such individual was taken into account under this subsection by the taxpayer for any prior taxable year.

''(C) IDENTIFYING INFORMATION REQUIRED.—An individual shall not be taken into account under paragraph (1) for a taxable year unless the taxpayer identification number of such individual is included on the return of the taxpayer for such taxable year.

''(3) QUALIFIED DISASTER-DISPLACED INDIVIDUAL.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'qualified disaster-displaced individual' means, with respect to any taxpayer for any taxable year, any qualified individual if such individual is provided housing free of charge by the taxpayer in the principal residence of the taxpayer for a period of 60 consecutive days which ends in such taxable year. Such term shall not include the spouse or any dependent of the taxpayer.

''(B) QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL.—The term 'qualified individual' means any individual who—

''(i) on the date of a federally declared disaster occurring in calendar years beginning after 2011 and before 2016 maintained such individual's principal place of abode in the disaster area declared with respect to such disaster, and

''(ii) was displaced from such principal place of abode by reason of the federally declared disaster.

For purposes of the preceding sentence, the terms 'federally declared disaster' and 'disaster area' have the meanings given such terms in section 165(i)(5).

''(4) COMPENSATION FOR HOUSING.—No deduction shall be allowed under this subsection if the taxpayer receives any rent or other amount (from any source) in connection with the providing of such housing.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2011.

SEC. 516. EXCLUSIONS OF CERTAIN CANCELLATIONS OF INDEBTEDNESS BY REASON OF 2012, 2013, 2014, AND 2015 DISASTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 108 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(j) DISCHARGE OF INDEBTEDNESS FOR INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY DISASTERS IN ANY CALENDAR YEAR AFTER 2011.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), gross income shall not include any amount which (but for this subsection) would be includible in gross income by reason of any discharge (in whole or in part) of indebtedness of a natural person described in paragraph (3) by an applicable entity (as defined in section 6050P(c)(1)) during the applicable period.

''(2) EXCEPTIONS FOR BUSINESS INDEBTEDNESS.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to any indebtedness incurred in connection with a trade or business.

''(3) PERSONS DESCRIBED.—A natural person is described in this paragraph if the principal place of abode of such person on the applicable disaster date was located in the disaster area with respect to any federally declared disaster occurring during any calendar year beginning after 2011 and before 2016.

''(4) APPLICABLE PERIOD.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'applicable period' means the period beginning on the applicable disaster date and ending on the date which is 14 months after such date.

''(5) OTHER DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER; DISASTER AREA.—The terms 'federally declared disaster' and 'disaster area' have the meanings given such terms under section 165(i)(5).

''(B) APPLICABLE DISASTER DATE.—The term 'applicable disaster date' means, with respect to any federally declared disaster, the date on which such federally declared disaster occurs.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to discharges made on or after December 31, 2011.

SEC. 517. SPECIAL RULE FOR DETERMINING EARNED INCOME OF INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 32 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(n) SPECIAL RULE FOR DETERMINING EARNED INCOME OF TAXPAYERS AFFECTED BY FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTERS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a qualified individual with respect to any federally declared disaster occurring during any calendar year beginning after 2011, if the earned income of the taxpayer for the taxable year which includes the applicable disaster date is less than the earned income of the taxpayer for the preceding taxable year, the credit allowed under this section and section 24(d) may, at the election of the taxpayer, be determined by substituting—

''(A) such earned income for the preceding taxable year, for

''(B) such earned income for the taxable year which includes the applicable date.

''(2) QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'qualified individual' means, with respect to any federally declared disaster occurring during in any calendar year beginning after 2011 and before 2016, any individual whose principal place of abode on the applicable disaster date, was located—

''(A) in any portion of a disaster area determined by the President to warrant individual or individual and public assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act by reason of the federally declared disaster, or

''(B) in any portion of the disaster area not described in subparagraph (A) and such individual was displaced from such principal place of abode by reason of the federally declared disaster.

''(3) OTHER DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this paragraph—

''(A) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER; DISASTER AREA.—The terms 'federally declared disaster' and 'disaster area' have the meanings given such terms under section 165(i)(5).

''(B) APPLICABLE DISASTER DATE.—The term 'applicable disaster date' means, with respect to any federally declared disaster, the date on which such federally declared disaster occurs.

''(4) SPECIAL RULES.—

''(A) APPLICATION TO JOINT RETURNS.—For purposes of paragraph (1), in the case of a joint return for a taxable year which includes the disaster date—

''(i) such paragraph shall apply if either spouse is a qualified individual, and

''(ii) the earned income of the taxpayer for the preceding taxable year shall be the sum

of the earned income of each spouse for such preceding taxable year.

''(B) UNIFORM APPLICATION OF ELECTION.—Any election made under paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to both section 24(d) and this section.

''(C) ERRORS TREATED AS MATHEMATICAL ERROR.—For purposes of section 6213, an incorrect use on a return of earned income pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be treated as a mathematical or clerical error.

''(D) NO EFFECT ON DETERMINATION OF GROSS INCOME, ETC.—Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, this title shall be applied without regard to any substitution under paragraph (1).''.

(b) CHILD TAX CREDIT.—Section 24(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraph:

''(3) SPECIAL RULE FOR DETERMINING EARNED INCOME OF TAXPAYERS AFFECTED BY FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTERS.—For election by qualified individuals with respect to certain federally declared disasters to substitute earned income from the preceding taxable year, see section 32(n).''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2011.

SEC. 518. INCREASE IN REHABILITATION CREDIT FOR BUILDINGS IN 2012, 2013, 2014, AND 2015 DISASTER AREAS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 47 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(e) SPECIAL RULE FOR EXPENDITURES MADE IN CONNECTION WITH CERTAIN DISASTERS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of qualified rehabilitation expenditures paid or incurred during the applicable period with respect to any qualified rehabilitated building or certified historic structure located in a disaster area with respect to any federally declared disaster occurring in, subsection (a) shall be applied—

''(A) by substituting '13 percent' for '10 percent' in paragraph (1) thereof, and

''(B) by substituting '26 percent' for '20 percent' in paragraph (2) thereof.

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

''(A) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER; DISASTER AREA.—The terms 'federally declared disaster' and 'disaster area' have the meanings given such terms under section 165(i)(5).

''(B) APPLICABLE PERIOD.—The term 'applicable period' means the period beginning on the applicable disaster date and ending on December 31, 2015.

''(C) APPLICABLE DISASTER DATE.—The term 'applicable disaster date' means, with respect to any federally declared disaster, the date on which such federally declared disaster occurs.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to amounts paid or incurred after December 31, 2011.

SEC. 519. ADVANCED REFUNDINGS OF CERTAIN TAX-EXEMPT BONDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 149(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating paragraph (7) as paragraph (8) and by inserting after paragraph (6) the following new paragraph:

''(7) SPECIAL RULE WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN NATURAL DISASTERS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to a bond described in subparagraph (C), one additional advance refunding after the date of the enactment of this paragraph and before January 1, 2018, shall be allowed under the rules of this subsection if—

''(i) the Governor of the State designates the advance refunding bond for purposes of this subsection, and

''(ii) the requirements of subparagraph (E) are met.

''(B) CERTAIN PRIVATE ACTIVITY BONDS.—With respect to a bond described in subparagraph (C) which is an exempt facility bond described in paragraph (1) or (2) of section 142(a), one advance refunding after the date of the enactment of this paragraph and before January 1, 2018, shall be allowed under the applicable rules of this subsection (notwithstanding paragraph (2) thereof) if the requirements of clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (A) are met.

''(C) BONDS DESCRIBED.—A bond is described in this paragraph if, with respect to any federally declared disaster, such bond—

''(i) was outstanding on the applicable disaster date, and

''(ii) is issued by an applicable State or a political subdivision thereof.

''(D) AGGREGATE LIMIT.—The maximum aggregate face amount of bonds which may be designated under this subsection by the Governor of a State shall not exceed $4,500,000,000.

''(E) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—The requirements of this subparagraph are met with respect to any advance refunding of a bond described in subparagraph (C) if—

''(i) no advance refundings of such bond would be allowed under this title on or after the applicable disaster date,

''(ii) the advance refunding bond is the only other outstanding bond with respect to the refunded bond, and

''(iii) the requirements of section 148 are met with respect to all bonds issued under this paragraph.

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

''(i) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER; DISASTER AREA.—The terms 'federally declared disaster' and 'disaster area' have the meanings given such terms under section 165(i)(5).

''(ii) APPLICABLE DISASTER DATE.—The term 'applicable disaster date' means, with respect to any federally declared disaster, the date on which such federally declared disaster occurs.

''(iii) APPLICABLE STATE.—The term 'applicable State' means, with respect to any federally declared disaster, any State in which a portion of the disaster area is located.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to bonds issued after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 520. QUALIFIED DISASTER AREA RECOVERY BONDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart A of part IV of subchapter B of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after section 146 the following new section:

''SEC. 146A. QUALIFIED DISASTER AREA RECOVERY BONDS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this title, any qualified disaster area recovery bond shall—

''(1) be treated as an exempt facility bond, and

''(2) not be subject to section 146.

''(b) QUALIFIED DISASTER AREA RECOVERY BOND.—For purposes of this section, the term 'qualified disaster area recovery bond' means any bond issued as part of an issue if—

''(1) 95 percent or more of the net proceeds of such issue are to be used for qualified project costs,

''(2) such bond is issued by a State or any political subdivision thereof any part of which is in a qualified disaster area,

''(3) the Governor of the issuing State designates such bond for purposes of this section, and

''(4) such bond is issued after the date of the enactment of this section and before January 1, 2017.

''(c) LIMITATION ON AMOUNT OF BONDS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The maximum aggregate face amount of bonds which may be designated under this section by any State shall not exceed $10,000,000,000.

''(2) MOVABLE PROPERTY.—No bonds shall be issued which are to be used for movable fixtures and equipment.

''(3) TREATMENT OF CURRENT REFUNDING BONDS.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to any bond (or series of bonds) issued to refund a qualified disaster area recovery bond, if—

''(A) the average maturity date of the issue of which the refunding bond is a part is not later than the average maturity date of the bonds to be refunded by such issue,

''(B) the amount of the refunding bond does not exceed the outstanding amount of the refunded bond, and

''(C) the net proceeds of the refunding bond are used to redeem the refunded bond not later than 90 days after the date of the issuance of the refunding bond.

For purposes of subparagraph (A), average maturity shall be determined in accordance with section 147(b)(2)(A).

''(d) QUALIFIED PROJECT COSTS.—For purposes of this section, the term 'qualified project costs' means the cost of acquisition, construction, reconstruction, and renovation of—

''(1) residential rental property (as defined in section 142(d)),

''(2) nonresidential real property (including fixed improvements associated with such property),

''(3) a facility described in paragraph (2) or (3) of section 142(a), or

''(4) public utility property (as defined in section 168(i)(10)),

which is located in a qualified disaster area and was damaged or destroyed by reason of a federally declared disaster.

''(e) SPECIAL RULES.—In applying this title to any qualified disaster area recovery bond, the following modifications shall apply:

''(1) Section 147(d) (relating to acquisition of existing property not permitted) shall be applied by substituting '50 percent' for '15 percent' each place it appears.

''(2) Section 148(f)(4)(C) (relating to exception from rebate for certain proceeds to be used to finance construction expenditures) shall apply to the available construction proceeds of bonds issued under this section. For purposes of the preceding sentence, the following spending requirements shall apply in lieu of the requirements in clause (ii) of such section:

''(A) 40 percent of such available construction proceeds are spent for the governmental purposes of the issue within the 2-year period beginning on the date the bonds are issued.

''(B) 60 percent of such proceeds are spent for such purposes within the 3-year period beginning on such date.

''(C) 80 percent of such proceeds are spent for such purposes within the 4-year period beginning on such date.

''(D) 100 percent of such proceeds are spent for such purposes within the 5-year period beginning on such date.

''(3) Repayments of principal on financing provided by the issue—

''(A) may not be used to provide financing, and

''(B) must be used not later than the close of the first semiannual period beginning after the date of the repayment to redeem bonds which are part of such issue.

The requirement of subparagraph (B) shall be treated as met with respect to amounts received within 5 years after the date of issuance of the issue (or, in the case of a refunding bond, the date of issuance of the original bond) if such amounts are used by the close of such 5 years to redeem bonds which are part of such issue.

''(4) Section 57(a)(5) shall not apply.

''(f) SEPARATE ISSUE TREATMENT OF PORTIONS OF AN ISSUE.—This section shall not apply to the portion of an issue which (if issued as a separate issue) would be treated as a qualified bond or as a bond that is not a private activity bond (determined without regard to paragraph (1)), if the issuer elects to so treat such portion.

''(g) QUALIFIED DISASTER AREA; FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER.—

''(1) QUALIFIED DISASTER AREA.—The term 'qualified disaster area' means any area determined to warrant individual or individual and public assistance from the Federal Government under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act by reason of a federally declared disaster occurring during the period beginning after December 31, 2011, and before January 1, 2016.

''(2) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER.—The term 'federally declared disaster' has the meaning given to such term under section 165(i)(5).''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for subpart A of part IV of subchapter B of chapter 1 of such Code is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 146 the following new item:

''Sec. 146A. Qualified disaster area recovery bonds.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to obligations issued after December 31, 2015.

SEC. 521. ADDITIONAL LOW-INCOME HOUSING CREDIT ALLOCATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (3) of section 42(h) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to limitation on aggregate credit allowable with respect to projects located in a State) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(J) INCREASE IN STATE HOUSING CREDIT FOR STATES DAMAGED BY NATURAL DISASTERS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of calendar year 2016, the State housing credit ceiling of each State any portion of which includes any portion of a qualifying disaster area shall be increased by so much of the aggregate housing credit dollar amount as does not exceed the applicable limitation allocated by the State housing credit agency of such State for such calendar year to buildings located in qualifying disaster areas.

''(ii) APPLICABLE LIMITATION.—For purposes of clause (i), the applicable limitation is the greater of—

''(I) $8 multiplied by the population of the qualifying disaster areas in such State, or

''(II) 50 percent of the State housing credit ceiling (determined without regard to this subparagraph) for 2015.

''(iii) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE.—For purposes of this section, the applicable percentage with respect to any building to which amounts allocated under clause (i) shall be determined under subsection (b)(2), except that subparagraph (A) thereof shall be applied by substituting 'January 1, 2016' for 'January 1, 2015'.

''(iv) ALLOCATIONS TREATED AS MADE FIRST FROM ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION AMOUNT FOR PURPOSES OF DETERMINING CARRYOVER.—For purposes of determining the unused State housing credit ceiling under subparagraph (C) for any calendar year, any increase in the State housing credit ceiling under clause (i) shall be treated as an amount described in clause (ii) of such subparagraph.

''(v) QUALIFYING DISASTER AREA.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term 'qualifying federally declared disaster area' means—

''(I) each county which is determined to warrant individual or individual and public assistance from the Federal Government under a qualifying natural disaster declaration described in clause (vi)(I), and

''(II) each county not described in subclause (I) which is included in the geographical area covered by a qualifying natural disaster declaration described in subclause (II) or (III) of clause (vi).

''(vi) QUALIFYING NATURAL DISASTER DECLARATION.—For purposes of clause (v), the term 'qualifying natural disaster declaration' means—

''(I) a federally declared disaster (as defined in section 165(i)(5)) occurring during the period beginning after December 31, 2011, and before January 1, 2016,

''(II) a natural disaster declared by the Secretary of Agriculture in 2011 due to damaging weather and other conditions relating to Hurricane Irene or Tropical Storm Lee under section 321(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1961(a)), or

''(III) a major disaster or emergency designated by the President in 2011 due to damaging weather and other conditions relating to Hurricane Irene or Tropical Storm Lee under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 522. FACILITATION OF TRANSFER OF WATER LEASING AND WATER BY MUTUAL DITCH OR IRRIGATION COMPANIES IN DISASTER AREAS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (12) of section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(I) TREATMENT OF MUTUAL DITCH OR IRRIGATION COMPANIES IN CERTAIN DISASTER AREAS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a qualified mutual ditch or irrigation company or like organization, subparagraph (A) shall be applied without taking into account any income received or accrued during the applicable period—

''(I) from the sale, lease, or exchange of fee or other interests in real property, including interests in water,

''(II) from the sale or exchange of stock in a mutual ditch or irrigation company or like organization or contract rights for the delivery or use of water,

''(III) from the investment of proceeds from sales, leases, or exchanges under subclauses (I) and (II), or

''(IV) from the United States, or a State or local government, resulting from the federally declared disaster,

except that any income received under subclause (I), (II), (III), or (IV) which is distributed or expended for expenses (other than for operations, maintenance, and capital improvements) of the qualified mutual ditch or irrigation company or like organization shall be treated as nonmember income in the year in which it is distributed or expended.

''(ii) QUALIFIED MUTUAL DITCH OR IRRIGATION COMPANY OR LIKE ORGANIZATION.—For purposes of this paragraph—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—The term 'qualified mutual ditch or irrigation company or like organization' means any mutual ditch or irrigation company or like organization that diverted, delivered, transported, stored, or used its water for agricultural irrigation purposes on its own or through its shareholders in a qualified disaster area during any of calendar years 2012 through 2015.

''(II) QUALIFIED ASSET.—The term 'qualified asset' means any real property or tangible personal property used in the mutual ditch or irrigation company's (or like organization's) system.

''(III) MULTIPLE AREAS.—Under regulations, if the qualified assets of any mutual ditch or irrigation company or like organization are located in more than 1 qualified disaster area, all such areas shall be treated as 1 area and if more than 1 federally declared disaster is involved, the date on which the last of such disasters occurred shall be the date used for purposes of this paragraph.

''(iii) APPLICABLE PERIOD.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'applicable period' means the taxable year in which the federally declared disaster occurred and the 5 following taxable years.

''(iv) OTHER DEFINITIONS.—

''(I) QUALIFIED DISASTER AREA.—The term 'qualified disaster area' means any area determined to warrant individual or individual and public assistance from the Federal Government under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act by reason of a federally declared disaster occurring during the period beginning on January 1, 2012, and ending on December 31, 2015.

''(II) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER.—The term 'federally declared disaster' has the meaning given to such term under section 165(i)(5).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to taxable years ending after December 31, 2011.

SEC. 523. EXCLUSION FOR DISASTER MITIGATION PAYMENTS RECEIVED FROM STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 139(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting '', or any other amount which is paid by a State or local government or agency or instrumentality thereof,'' after ''(as in effect on such date)''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to payments received after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 524. NATURAL DISASTER FUNDS.

(a) NATURAL DISASTER FUND.—Subpart C of part II of subchapter E of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after section 468B the following new section:

''SEC. 468C. SPECIAL RULES FOR NATURAL DISASTER FUNDS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—If a qualified taxpayer elects the application of this section, there shall be allowed as a deduction for any taxable year the amount of payments made by the taxpayer to a natural disaster fund during such taxable year.

''(b) NATURAL DISASTER FUND.—The term 'natural disaster fund' means a fund meeting the following requirements:

''(1) DESIGNATION.—The taxpayer designates—

''(A) the fund as a natural disaster fund in the manner prescribed by the Secretary, and

''(B) the line or lines of business to which the fund applies.

''(2) SEGREGATION.—The assets of the fund are segregated from other assets of the taxpayer.

''(3) INVESTMENTS.—

''(A) The assets of the fund are maintained in one or more qualified accounts and are invested only in—

''(i) deposits with banks whose deposits are insured subject to applicable limits by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, or

''(ii) in stock or other securities in which the fund would be permitted to invest if it were a capital construction fund subject to the investment limitations of paragraphs (2) and (3) of section 7518(b)(2).

''(B) All investment earnings (including gains and losses) from investments of the fund become part of the fund.

''(4) CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FUND.—The fund does not accept any deposits (or other amounts) other than cash payments with respect to which a deduction is allowable under subsection (a) and earnings (including gains and losses) from fund investments.

''(5) PURPOSE.—The fund is established and maintained for the purposes of covering costs, expenses, and losses (including business interruption losses) resulting from a Federally declared natural disaster to the extent such costs are not covered by insurance.

''(6) MAXIMUM BALANCE.—The balance of the fund does not exceed the lesser of—

''(A) the sum of—

''(i) 150 percent of the maximum deductible, and

''(ii) 100 percent of the maximum co-insurance (to the extent not taken into account in clause (i)),

that, in the case of a Federally declared natural disaster resulting in losses, the taxpayer could be expected to pay with respect to property and business interruption insurance maintained by the taxpayer for the line of business to which the fund applies and that would cover losses resulting from a Federally declared natural disaster, and

''(B) the maximum loss under any insurance coverage that the taxpayer could reasonably expect to occur for the line of business in the case of a severe natural disaster.

''(7) FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.—The fund or the balance of the fund is recorded in the taxpayer's financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and not as a current asset and the footnotes to the taxpayer's financial statements include a short description of the fund and its purposes.

''(8) INSURANCE.—The taxpayer property insurance maintained by the qualified taxpayer applies to 75 percent or more of the property used—

''(A) in the qualified taxpayer's line of business to which the fund relates, and

''(B) in the United States.

''(c) QUALIFIED TAXPAYER.—For purposes of this section, the term 'qualified taxpayer' means any taxpayer that—

''(1) actively conducts a trade or business, and

''(2) maintains property insurance with respect to such trade or business that insures against losses in natural disasters.

''(d) FAILURE TO MEET REQUIREMENTS.—If a fund that was a natural disaster fund ceases to meet any of the requirements of subsection (b) or a taxpayer who has a natural disaster fund ceases to meet the requirement of subsection (c), the entire balance of the fund shall be deemed distributed in a nonqualified distribution at the time the fund ceases to meet such requirements.

''(e) TAXATION OF FUND.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The earnings (including gains and losses) from the investment and reinvestment of amounts held in the fund shall not be taken into account in determining the gross income of the taxpayer that owns the fund.

''(2) NOT A SEPARATE TAXPAYER.—A natural disaster fund shall not be considered a separate taxpayer for purposes of this subtitle.

''(f) TAXATION OF DISTRIBUTIONS FROM THE FUND.—

''(1) QUALIFIED DISTRIBUTIONS.—For purposes of this chapter, qualified distributions shall be treated in the same manner as proceeds from property or business interruption insurance.

''(2) NONQUALIFIED DISTRIBUTIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any taxable year for which there is a nonqualified distribution—

''(i) such nonqualified distributions shall be excluded from the gross income of the taxpayer, and

''(ii) the tax imposed by this chapter (determined without regard to this subsection) shall be increased by the product of the amount of such nonqualified distribution and the highest rate of tax specified in section 1 (section 11 in the case of a corporation).

''(B) TAX BENEFIT RULE; COORDINATION WITH DEDUCTION FOR NET OPERATING LOSSES.—Rules similar to the rules of subparagraphs (B) and (C) of section 7518(g)(6) shall apply for purposes of this paragraph.

''(3) ADDITIONAL TAX.—The tax imposed by this chapter for any taxable year on any taxpayer that a owns natural disaster fund shall be increased by the greater of—

''(A) 20 percent of the amount of any nonqualified distributions from the fund in the taxable year, and

''(B) an amount equal to interest, at the underpayment rate established under section 6621, on the nonqualified distribution from the time the amount is added to the fund to the time the amount is distributed.

''(4) INTEREST CALCULATION.—For purposes of calculating interest under paragraph (3)(B)—

''(A) all investment earnings (including gains or losses) in taxable year shall be treated as added to the fund on the last day of the taxable year, and

''(B) amounts distributed from the fund shall be treated as distributed on a first-in, first-out basis.

''(g) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) FEDERALLY DECLARED NATURAL DISASTER.—The term 'Federally declared natural disaster' means a natural disaster that is determined by Presidential declaration under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to warrant individual or individual and public assistance under such Act.

''(2) NONQUALIFIED DISTRIBUTION.—The term 'nonqualified distribution' means a distribution from a natural disaster fund other than a qualified distribution.

''(3) QUALIFIED ACCOUNT.—The term 'qualified account' means an account with a bank (as defined in section 581) or a brokerage account but only if the investments of such accounts are limited to those permitted by subsection (b)(3) and no investments are made in a related person (as defined in section 465(b)(3)(C)) to the taxpayer.

''(4) QUALIFIED DISTRIBUTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'qualified distribution' means with respect to natural disaster fund an amount equal to the excess of—

''(i) costs, expenses, and losses (including losses of a type reimbursable by proceeds of business interruption insurance) incurred by the taxpayer as a result of the Federally declared natural disaster with respect to the line or lines of business for which the fund was designated, over

''(ii) the proceeds of property and business interruption insurance paid for the benefit of the taxpayer with respect to costs, expenses, and losses described in clause (i).

''(B) LIMITATION.—A distribution from a natural disaster fund shall not be treated as a qualified distribution if such distribution is allocated to a Federally declared natural disaster occurring more than 3 years before the date of such distribution.

''(h) SPECIAL RULES.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) NO DOUBLE COUNTING.—Any portion of any deductible or coinsurance taken into account under subsection (b)(6) in determining the maximum balance for a natural disaster fund shall not be taken into account in determining the maximum balance for another natural disaster fund.

''(2) EXCESS BALANCE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If the balance of a natural disaster fund exceeds the maximum balance permitted by subsection (b)(6) by reason of investment earnings or a reduction in the maximum balance, the account shall not cease to be a natural disaster fund as the result of exceeding such limit if the excess is distributed within 120 days of the date that such excess first occurred.

''(B) TREATMENT OF DISTRIBUTIONS OF EXCESS BALANCE.—In the case of any distribution of the excess balance of a natural disaster fund within 120 days of the date that such excess first occurred—

''(i) paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (f) shall not apply to the distribution of such excess if distributed within such period, and

''(ii) the amount of such distribution shall be included in the gross income of the taxpayer in the year such distribution was made.

''(C) ANTI-ABUSE RULE.—Subparagraph (B) shall not apply in the case of any reduction in the maximum balance resulting from any action of the taxpayer the primary purpose of which was to reduce the maximum balance to enable a distribution that would not be subject to the maximum tax rate calculation or the additional tax.

''(3) CERTAIN ASSET ACQUISITIONS.—The transfer of a natural disaster fund (or the portion of a natural disaster fund) from one person to another person shall not constitute a nonqualified distribution if—

''(A) such transfer is part of a transaction—

''(i) to which section 381 applies,

''(ii) the transferee acquires substantially all of the assets of the transferor used in the line or lines of business for which the fund was designated,

''(iii) the transferee acquires substantially all of the assets of the transferor used in one, but not all, of the lines of business for which the fund was designated, or

''(iv) the transferee acquires substantially all of the transferor's assets located in a geographical area and used in a line of business for which the fund was designated, and

''(B) the transferee elects to treat the acquired natural disaster fund (or portion thereof) as a natural disaster fund for the line of business for which the transferor had previously designated the fund and as a continuation of the fund (or pro rata portion thereof) for purposes of determining the additional tax imposed by subsection (f)(4).

''(i) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe such regulations as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the provisions of this section.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for subpart C of part II of subchapter E of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 468B the following new item:

''Sec. 468C. Special rules for natural disaster funds.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2014.

SEC. 525. INCREASE PROPERTY REPLACEMENT PERIOD TO 5 YEARS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1033(a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(F) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of converted property that is located in the disaster area of a federally declared disaster occurring during a calendar year beginning after 2011 and that is damaged or destroyed by the federally declared disaster, subparagraph (B)(i) shall be applied by substituting '5 years' for '2 years'.

''(ii) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER AND DISASTER AREA.—For purposes of clause (i), the terms 'federally declared disaster' and 'disaster area' have the meanings given such terms under section 165(i)(5).''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1033(h)(1)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of

1986 is amended by striking ''4 years'' and inserting ''5 years''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to disasters declared after December 31, 2015.

SEC. 526. WAGE CREDIT FOR SPECIFIED DISASTER-DAMAGED BUSINESSES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart D of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 45S. WAGE CREDIT FOR SPECIFIED DISASTER-DAMAGED BUSINESSES.

''(a) GENERAL RULE.—For purposes of section 38, in the case of an eligible employer, the specified disaster-damaged business wage credit for any taxable year is an amount equal to 40 percent of the qualified wages for such year.

''(b) QUALIFIED WAGES DEFINED.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The term 'qualified wages' means, with respect to any covered employee, wages paid or incurred by the eligible employer to the employee who is not able to work at the disaster-damaged business of the employer during an inoperability period because of a federally declared disaster. Such term shall not include amounts paid or incurred for overtime compensation.

''(2) LIMITATIONS.—

''(A) LIMITATION ON WAGES TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.—The amount of the qualified wages with respect to any individual which may be taken into account with respect to a federally declared disaster shall not exceed $6,000.

''(B) INOPERABILITY PERIOD.—The inoperability period with respect to a federally declared disaster is the period beginning with the first day the trade or business is rendered inoperable due to damage from the federally declared disaster and ending on the earlier of—

''(i) the last day on which the trade or business is inoperable, or

''(ii) 16 weeks after the first day of such disaster.

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) ELIGIBLE EMPLOYER.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'eligible employer' means, with respect to any taxable year, any employer which—

''(i) employed an average of less than 200 employees on business days during such taxable year, and

''(ii) has a disaster-damaged business.

''(B) DISASTER-DAMAGED BUSINESS.—The term 'disaster-damaged business' means a place of business within a disaster area which is rendered inoperable due to damage from the federally declared disaster.

''(C) CONTROLLED GROUPS.—For purposes of this section, all persons treated as a single employer under subsection (b), (c), (m), or (o) of section 414 shall be treated as a single employer.

''(2) COVERED EMPLOYEE.—The term 'covered employee' means, with respect to an eligible employer, an individual—

''(A) whose principal place of employment is in a disaster area with respect to a federally declared disaster, and

''(B) who has been employed by the employer for more than 30 days before the first day of the federally declared disaster.

''(3) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER AND DISASTER AREA.—For purposes of clause (i), the terms 'federally declared disaster' and 'disaster area' have the meanings given such terms under section 165(i)(5).''.

(b) ALLOWANCE AS GENERAL BUSINESS CREDIT.—Section 38(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''plus'' at the end of paragraph (35), by striking the period at the end of paragraph (36) and inserting '', plus'', and by adding at the end the following:

''(37) the specified disaster-damaged business wage credit determined under section 45S(a).''.

(c) DENIAL OF DOUBLE BENEFIT.—Subsection (a) of section 280C of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting ''45S(a),'' after ''45P(a)''.

(d) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for subpart D of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''Sec. 45S. Wage credit for specified disaster-damaged businesses.''.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2015.

SEC. 527. DISASTER-RELATED MEDICAL EXPENSES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 213 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(g) DISASTER-RELATED MEDICAL EXPENSES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of expenses directly related to an injury caused by a federally declared disaster occurring during the taxable year or the preceding taxable year, there shall be allowed a separate deduction under this section, which shall be determined under this section (without regard to this subsection), except that—

''(A) subsection (a) shall be applied by substituting 'zero percent' for '10 percent', and

''(B) subsection (f) shall be applied by substituting 'zero percent' for '7.5 percent'.

''(2) COORDINATION.—Any expense taken into account under paragraph (1) shall not be treated as an expense taken into account under this section (without regard to this section).

''(3) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'federally declared disaster' shall have the meaning given such term under section 165(i)(5).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to disasters occurring after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 528. EXPENSING OF QUALIFIED DISASTER EXPENSES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 198A(b)(2)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as added by section 101 of this Act, is amended by striking ''and before January 1, 2016,''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to amounts paid or incurred after December 31, 2015.

SEC. 529. LOSSES ATTRIBUTABLE TO DISASTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 165(h)(3)(B)(i)(I) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended by section 103 of this Act, is amended by striking ''the period beginning after December 31, 2011, and before January 1, 2016,'' and inserting ''any period beginning after December 31, 2011,''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to disasters declared in taxable years beginning after December 31, 2015.

SEC. 530. NET OPERATING LOSSES ATTRIBUTABLE TO DISASTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 172(i)(1)(A)(i)(I) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''and before January 1, 2016,''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to disasters declared in taxable years beginning after December 31, 2015.

SEC. 531. SPECIAL RULES FOR USE OF RETIREMENT FUNDS IN CONNECTION WITH FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTERS.

(a) WITHDRAWALS.—Section 72(t)(11)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended by section 108 of this Act, is amended by striking ''2011 and before January 1, 2016,'' and inserting ''2011,''.

(b) LOANS.—Section 72(p)(6)(C)(ii) of such Code is amended by striking ''and ending on December 31, 2016''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to distributions with respect to disaster declared after December 31, 2015.

SEC. 532. ADDITIONAL EXEMPTION FOR HOUSING QUALIFIED DISASTER DISPLACED INDIVIDUALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 151(f)(3)(B)(i) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended by section 109 of this Act, is amended by striking ''and before 2016''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2015.

SEC. 533. EXCLUSIONS OF CERTAIN CANCELLATIONS OF INDEBTEDNESS BY REASON OF DISASTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 108(j)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended by section 110 of this Act, is amended by striking ''and before 2016''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to discharges made on or after December 31, 2015.

SEC. 534. SPECIAL RULE FOR DETERMINING EARNED INCOME OF INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 32(n)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended by section 111 of this Act, is amended by striking ''and before 2016''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2015.

SEC. 535. QUALIFIED DISASTER AREA RECOVERY BONDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 146A(b)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended by section 114 of this Act, is further amended by striking ''and before January 1, 2017''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to obligations issued after December 31, 2015.

SEC. 536. ADDITIONAL LOW-INCOME HOUSING CREDIT ALLOCATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 42(h)(3)(J) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended by section 115 of this Act, is amended—

(1) in clause (i) by striking ''In the case of calendar year 2016,'' and inserting ''In the case of a calendar year beginning after 2015,'',

(2) in clause (ii)(II) by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''the preceding calendar year'', and

(3) in clause (iii) by striking ''substituting 'January 1 of the calendar year in which the taxable year ends' for 'January 1, 2015' ''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

Mr. NADLER (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. The gentleman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I offer this motion to recommit on behalf of Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. This is the final amendment to the bill, which will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

It is unfortunate that we are here today debating inadequate policies while our fellow Americans in Puerto

Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are hurting.

While I do not doubt the underlying bill was made with good intentions, it is not just inadequate for all the victims of the hurricanes, and it is insulting to the people of Puerto Rico. They are hurting. They have no food, no water, no power. They need our help.

Estimates suggest the storm caused $40 billion to $85 billion in insurance claims throughout the Caribbean, with 85 percent of those losses in Puerto Rico. Nearly all of the island is without power, and 85 percent of cell towers were knocked out. The hurricane ravaged 80 percent of the crop value in Puerto Rico—a $780 million loss. This will result in higher food prices at a time when Puerto Rico faces shortages.

These are only the initial estimates. Each day we learn more about the scale of devastation, and likely won't know the measure of damage for some time.

FEMA has indicated that it has ''provided more than 1.5 million meals, 1.1 million liters of water, nearly 300 infant and toddler kits, and nearly 12,000 emergency roofing kits to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico since Hurricane Maria's landfall.'' That is a quote from FEMA.

Yet the total population of American citizens in Puerto Rico is 3.4 million. The total in the U.S. Virgin Islands is over 100,000. It has been 7 days since the storm. The math simply doesn't add up, and neither does the bill as it is written.

This motion to recommit would do more for the people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands than the underlying bill. Unlike the underlying bill, this motion will give them funds to help them rebuild. The dollars are directed for rebuilding and other economic support.

It considers specific provisions to ensure long-term growth is capable on the island, and it strives to treat disaster victims equally. By taking the politics out of natural disasters, all of our constituents, from New York, and Puerto Rico, to Florida, Louisiana, and Texas, will automatically have the necessary aid to rebuild. Giving them this peace of mind will give them the ability to focus on what matters: their families and communities.

Rather than putting forth a fig leaf to offer themselves cover, as the underlying bill does, this motion would provide immediate, greater benefits to the people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. They cannot wait for assistance.

By voting for this motion, you would be voting to help our fellow Americans. I urge all Members to vote ''yes.''

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

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I believe in bipartisanship, which means that oftentimes I am disappointed in this institution, but today I am not disappointed, I am shocked. I am shocked that some would politicize such a sensitive, desperate situation that so many Americans, from Texas to Puerto Rico, are facing at this hour.

My colleagues say they want to help the people of Puerto Rico, the people of the Florida Keys in my district, and others throughout the country. A lot of them have come here boasting about the fact that they have never opposed a disaster relief package, yet they are willing to do so today. Why? To try to attempt to score political points.

I think that is wrong, and I can't help but take it personally, because my constituents really need this help.

The people of Puerto Rico, by the way, the person they elected to this chamber, JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, supports this legislation; STACEY PLASKETT of the Virgin Islands, our colleague, put her name to this legislation as well; Chairman BRADY, whose constituents are trying to recover in the Houston area, is asking for passage of this legislation, yet people from other parts of the country are coming to this floor saying: No, that is not good enough for your constituents.

So if my constituents get nothing, I should tell them: That is right. Someone from elsewhere said that because this wasn't good enough, you get nothing.

That is just wrong. This is an important first step that we have to take to help people in all of these jurisdictions, especially the people of Puerto Rico, because we know that the situation there is in no way comparable to anything that has happened on the mainland.

It is personal for me in that sense as well, because guess what? When my wife's family was exiled from Cuba, they went to Puerto Rico and they were welcomed there. My wife's two elder brothers were born in Puerto Rico. My wife still has family in Puerto Rico, and I know that this legislation would improve their situation.

Can we do more? Should we do more? Should we work together to do more in the future? Yes, we should and we will, but that is no excuse to vote against this legislation, that is no excuse to leverage the suffering of these people to try to achieve a political objective or even to advance different legislation.

I respectfully ask all my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, and I thank the 26 Democrats who stood with us on Monday, and I ask them to do it again today and for more to join us, to send a strong message of national unity for the people of Florida, Texas, Louisiana, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and, yes, Puerto Rico.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by 5-minute votes on:

Passage of the bill, if ordered;

Passage of H.R. 2792; and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 188, nays 227, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 541]

YEAS—188

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

NAYS—227

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Black
Blackburn
Blum

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

NOT VOTING—18

Barletta
Bishop (UT)
Bridenstine
Granger
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Long
Pascrell
Richmond
Rooney, Francis
Ros-Lehtinen
Scalise
Smith (NJ)
Tiberi
Wagner
Walz
Wilson (FL)

□ 1051

Messrs. NORMAN, DUNCAN of Tennessee, PITTENGER, LUCAS, McCAUL, McCLINTOCK, PALAZZO, and BRADY of Texas changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Messrs. SERRANO and HUFFMAN changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair wishes to mark the return to the Chamber of our dear friend and colleague from Louisiana, Mr. STEVE SCALISE.

Our prayers have been answered. His bravery and his family's strength have been such an inspiration to this House and to the people it serves. America is grateful for this moment.

(By unanimous consent, Mr. SCALISE was allowed to speak out of order.)

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR SUPPORT DURING MY RECOVERY

Mr. SCALISE. Wow. Mr. Speaker, you have no idea how great this feels to be back here at work in the people's House.

As you can imagine, these last 3½ months have been pretty challenging times for me and my family. But if you look at the outpouring of love, of warmth, of prayer, my gosh, Jennifer and I have been overwhelmed with all of that outpouring. It has given us the strength to get through all of this and to get to this point today, and it starts with God.

When I was laying out on that ball field, the first thing I did once I was down and I couldn't move anymore is, I just started to pray. And I will tell you, it gave me an unbelievable sense of calm knowing that at that point it was in God's hands.

But I prayed for very specific things, and I will tell you, pretty much every one of those prayers was answered. There were some pretty challenging prayers I was putting in God's hands, but He really did deliver for me and my family. And it just gives you that renewed faith and understanding that the power of prayer is something that you just cannot underestimate. So I am definitely a living example that miracles really do happen.

The first place I want to go to thank true angels along the way starts with the United States Capitol Police. When I was elected majority whip, as you know, the elected leadership has a security detail, and if anybody ever wondered why we are assigned security detail, I surely found out that day.

Let me tell you, I want to specifically mention Crystal Griner and David Bailey. Crystal and David were assigned to my security detail that morning. Day in and day out, they are part of our family. Jennifer and I truly do treat them as part of our family because they are with us everywhere we go. On that day, it was no different.

On June 14, they came at 6:30 in the morning. We arrived at the baseball field just to play and practice for a game of charity baseball. Nobody would have suspected what ensued, and yet, as soon as those shots were fired—I will tell you, when I was laying on the ground, one of the things I prayed for was that David and Crystal would be successful in carrying out their duties.

Both David and Crystal are incredibly well-trained and incredibly professional. But when I was laying there, not long after the first couple of shots were fired, I could hear a different caliber of weapon. That told me that they had immediately engaged the shooter. Let me tell you, if they didn't act so quickly—even after being shot both themselves, they continued to engage the shooter and ultimately got him down, which not only saved my life, but saved the lives of a lot of other people that are here in this Chamber today.

Crystal couldn't be with us today, but David Bailey is with us. David, you are my hero. You saved my life. Thank you so much. Tiger blood.

I also owe thanks to a lot of the people who were on the field with me. Right after the shooter was down, a lot of my colleagues came and ran to come check on me. One I want to mention in particular is one of those things that Jennifer and I call the little miracles that happened that day and throughout the next few months of our recovery.

We happened to have BRAD WENSTRUP on the field that day, and he was one of the first to come to my side. As you know, BRAD is not only a doctor, but he is a decorated Army Ranger who served in combat. And one of his roles and missions was to take care of people that were wounded before they went off on the helicopter to go get prepared. Who would have thought that God would have put BRAD out there on that field with me because the tourniquet he applied, many will tell you, saved my life so that I could actually make it to the hospital in time with all of the blood loss. So, BRAD, where are you at? Right down in front.

Once I arrived at MedStar Washington Hospital Center, I was a little bit out of it at that point. But luckily, I ended up in the trusted hands of Dr. Jack Sava and his great team over at MedStar. They gave me a second chance at life. Through many, many surgeries, where my life was truly in the balance in a few of those, they did a wonderful job at making sure that I was well taken care of and, ultimately, made it through that point so I could get to Dr. Golden and his team who actually put me back together again, which was quite a task, to the point where I am actually able to relearn how to walk again. So, Dr. Sava, Dr. Golden, thank you for being here and thanks for your team's work.

Above all else, I want to thank my lovely wife, Jennifer. Those of you who know her know how strong Jennifer is. She is an incredibly warm and loving wife, and she is an incredible mother to our children. Somehow, through the late nights and the surgeries and all of the other things, she managed to hold our family together, to make sure that Harrison and Madison were cared for as well. Still, to this day, she is not only by my side, but she is also serving as a great mother. I am lucky to have you. Thanks for being here. I love you, Sweetheart.

While it has been a challenging time for my family, the thing that really

overwhelmed us from the start was the outpouring of love and warmth and prayers. From southeast Louisiana, the district that I represent, we saw blood drives at St. Catherine of Siena Parish. We saw prayer groups at First United Methodist Church in Slidell.

But what we also saw were prayer groups and well-wishes being given from people that we never met before throughout all of your districts. You shared it with me, and it was one of those things that was hard for us to completely comprehend that you had people from all walks of life that had never met me before, and yet, they saw what had happened and they just wanted to offer prayers.

Let me tell you, to each and every one of you—and please convey it to your constituents, and I sure convey it to my constituents back home—that warmth and love gave us just incredible strength that you can't imagine during some really, really difficult times. So that is one more example of the power of prayer.

Something else I saw firsthand wasn't a surprise to me, but it was the outpouring of love from you, my colleagues, both Republican and Democrat. I know right after the shooting—we were practicing on the Republican side and the Democrats were practicing too—my colleague and friend, and sometimes archrival in baseball from back home in New Orleans—unfortunately, the star of the game too many times—CEDRIC RICHMOND somehow figured out which hospital I was sent to, and he got there. He was probably the first person there on the scene, in his baseball uniform, to check on me.

So many others of you, again, both Republican and Democrat, reached out in ways that I can't express the gratitude and how much it means to me, Jennifer, and our whole family. It really does show the warm side of Congress that very few people get to see.

I want to thank each and every one of you for that. You don't know how much it meant to me. When I came back into this Chamber here today, just seeing the faces of all of you, it just means more to me than you can imagine. So thanks for all of that love and support.

A lot of people ask: Did the event change you? And I think those of you who know me know I am an optimistic person. I am just a fun-loving person. I am from south Louisiana, and we believe you work hard and you play hard and joie de vivre.

Is an event like this really going to change that? The first thing I can tell you is, yes, it changed me, but not in the ways you might think. It has only strengthened my faith in God, and it has really crystallized what shows up as the goodness in people. I got to see that goodness in people.

While some people might focus on a tragic event and an evil act, to me, all I remember are the thousands of acts of kindness and love and warmth that came out of this and kept me going through all of it and, again, just reemphasized just how wonderful most people are and how much compassion there is out there.

Finally, I want to talk about something that I guess hit me and probably struck me more than anything that I was not expecting, and that was the outpouring of love and support from world leaders, people I have met and have known. Benjamin Netanyahu and I have had some incredible conversations from the hospital. And Theresa May, King Abdullah of Jordan—leaders that so many of us have met—reached out. But other world leaders also reached out, people I had never met before.

That touched me in a different way because each and every one of us, we come here and we fight for the things that we believe in. I have passionate beliefs. For some reason, some of you don't agree with all of those. But it is so important that we come up here. We are the people's House. This is the place where these ideas are supposed to be debated, and we fight through those issues. But, ultimately, we come together on whatever the board shows is 218. If you can put the majority together, that is what rules the day. It is so important that, as we are having those political battles, we don't make them personal.

One of the things I saw—and I guess this is the thing that really kept coming back to me—is I tried to make sense of all of this. In comprehending the outpouring of love that I saw, it kept coming back to those world leaders. Why would leaders from around the world that I had never met before reach out and say: ''Steve, we hope you can get back to work. We hope you can come through this.''?

And what it says is, sure, they cared about my wellbeing, but more than that, they saw this as an attack on all of us. They saw this as an attack on the institution of the United States Congress and our government. And they really count on us to be successful.

Look, we all know the United States is the leader of the free world. It is something that we have, frankly, had the honor as a country to hold as a distinction for generations. And yet, when you look at that title, what it really means is, is that there are people all around the world that want freedom, maybe that have freedom, but they know the United States being strong is critical to the rest of the world having the opportunity for freedom.

That is why I am so excited to be back because, as we are fighting through the issues of the day, let's just keep in mind that we rise above the challenges of the day and understand that it is not just us and our constituents and the country, the United States, that is counting on our being successful. People all around the world who believe in freedom are counting on us as well, and we will deliver for them. That is why I am so honored to be back here in the House serving with you.

God bless each and every one of you, and God bless the United States of America.

(By unanimous consent, Ms. PELOSI was allowed to speak out of order.)

ANSWERED PRAYERS

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I join you in thanking God for the return of our colleague, STEVE SCALISE, and to have him do so in such a strong way.

You were brief, Mr. Speaker, I will be even briefer.

Thank God, our prayers are answered.

I take great pride in STEVE because we are both Italian Americans, and I think that is a source of some of his strength.

I, too, want to say how proud we are of Jennifer, Harrison, and Madison, of your staff, and of our first responders—our Capitol Police—who took such good care of you.

But if it is, as you said, an attack on you is an attack on all, then we all came through this magnificently because of your strength. So it is the power of STEVE SCALISE.

The day we came to the floor when you weren't here, we were all Team Scalise. Today we are Team Scalise.

Thank you for being so wonderful.

God bless you.

The SPEAKER. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 264, nays 155, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 542]

YEAS—264

Aderholt	Carbajal	Diaz-Balart
Allen	Carter (GA)	Donovan
Amodei	Carter (TX)	Duffy
Arrington	Castor (FL)	Duncan (SC)
Babin	Chabot	Duncan (TN)
Bacon	Cheney	Dunn
Banks (IN)	Coffman	Emmer
Barr	Cole	Estes (KS)
Barton	Collins (GA)	Farenthold
Bera	Collins (NY)	Faso
Bergman	Comer	Ferguson
Biggs	Comstock	Fitzpatrick
Bilirakis	Conaway	Fleischmann
Bishop (MI)	Connolly	Flores
Black	Cook	Fortenberry
Blackburn	Correa	Foxx
Blum	Costa	Franks (AZ)
Bost	Costello (PA)	Frelinghuysen
Brady (TX)	Cramer	Gabbard
Brat	Crawford	Gaetz
Brooks (AL)	Crist	Gallagher
Brooks (IN)	Cuellar	Garrett
Brownley (CA)	Culberson	Gianforte
Buchanan	Curbelo (FL)	Gibbs
Buck	Davidson	Gohmert
Bucshon	Davis, Rodney	Gonzalez (TX)
Budd	Delaney	Goodlatte
Burgess	Denham	Gosar
Bustos	Dent	Gowdy
Byrne	DeSantis	Graves (GA)
Calvert	DesJarlais	Graves (MO)

Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Keating
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kihuen
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lawson (FL)
Lewis (MN)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Quigley
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Thomas J.
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Rutherford
Scalise
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shea-Porter
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Soto
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vela
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—155

Abraham
Adams
Aguilar
Amash
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Butterfield
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gallego
Garamendi
Gomez
Gottheimer
Graves (LA)
Grijalva
Grothman
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Hoyer
Huffman
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Jones
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—14

Barletta
Bishop (UT)
Bridenstine
Granger
Hollingsworth
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Long
Pascrell
Rooney, Francis
Ros-Lehtinen
Tiberi
Wagner
Walz

□ 1124

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONTROL UNLAWFUL FUGITIVE FELONS ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FERGUSON). The unfinished business is the vote on passage of the bill (H.R. 2792) to amend the Social Security Act to make certain revisions to provisions limiting payment of benefits to fugitive felons under titles II, VIII, and XVI of the Social Security Act 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 passage of the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 244, nays 171, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 543]

YEAS—244

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

NAYS—171

Adams
Aguilar
Amash
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Takano
Thompson (CA)

Thompson (MS)	Veasey	Waters, Maxine
Titus	Vela	Watson Coleman
Tonko	Velázquez	Welch
Torres	Visclosky	Wilson (FL)
Tsongas	Wasserman Schultz	Yarmuth
Vargas		

NOT VOTING—18

Barletta	Granger	Rooney, Francis
Bishop (UT)	Johnson, E. B.	Ros-Lehtinen
Bridenstine	Johnson, Sam	Scott (VA)
Buchanan	Larson (CT)	Tiberi
Cramer	Long	Wagner
Garrett	Pascrell	Walz

□ 1132

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

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

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted ''Nay'' on rollcall No. 543.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 542 (passage of H.R. 3823), and 543 (passage of H.R. 2792) I did not cast my vote. Had I been present, I would have voted ''Yea'' on both these votes.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, September 28, 2017, I was unable to be present for recorded votes. On September 28, 2017, had I been present, I would have voted ''No'' on rollcall No. 541, the Democratic Motion to Recommit; I would have voted ''Yes'' on rollcall No. 542, H.R. 3823, the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017; I would have voted ''Yes'' on rollcall No. 543, H.R. 2792, the Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons Act of 2017.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

PRIVILEGED REPORT ON RESOLUTION OF INQUIRY TO THE PRESIDENT

Mr. GOODLATTE, from the Committee on the Judiciary, submitted an adverse privileged report (Rept. No. 115–335) on the resolution (H. Res. 488) of inquiry requesting the President and directing the Attorney General to transmit, respectively, certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the removal of former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

□ 1145

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the majority leader for the purpose of giving us the schedule for the week to come.

Mr. Speaker, before I yield, however, to the majority leader, I want to join all of our colleagues in saying how very grateful we are and pleased we are with the return of the majority whip, STEVE SCALISE. All of us who sat here and heard STEVE, our friend and colleague, give his reaction not only to the hateful, vicious action that took place as he was practicing for the charity baseball game where Republicans and Democrats come together to raise funds for young people and people who need help, and they do so together in a spirit of good will and common purpose, I think STEVE SCALISE, our majority whip, spoke movingly, and I am sure all Members were impressed with his courage and with his comments about that which is important.

He talked about his prayers having been answered and the prayers of literally millions of people around this country. And in talking about some of the world leaders who called him and expressed their concern, because they knew, as he said and as Leader PELOSI said: An attack on STEVE SCALISE was an attack on us all, and it was an attack on our democracy and an attack on peacefully resolving differences, no matter how strongly they may be held—a lesson for all of us.

I want to congratulate and thank Jennifer, his extraordinary wife, who shouldered a responsibility and a burden that she did not expect and, as STEVE said, did it with great courage and great grace. His children, Madison and Harrison, and their entire family, I know, were responsible for STEVE being able to be back here with us, and so we thank them.

He is back with us today, and we look forward to him being a vigorous, as he was and is, part of the deliberations of this House and of reaching decisions in a positive, constructive way.

STEVE and I have a difference of opinion on whose crabs are better. We had a crab dinner not too long ago, my staff and his staff, and he brought some crabs up from Louisiana, I brought some crabs from Maryland, and it was a split decision as to which were the best. It will not surprise you who was for which crab.

Today, we are filled with joy to see him back on the floor and on the road to full recovery.

We also continue to be grateful for the recovery of U.S. Capitol Police Officers Crystal Griner and David Bailey. I want to join STEVE, and I know all of our Members, as we rose and clapped to show our respect and our appreciation for those in the Capitol Police.

Some of us are privileged to, as STEVE pointed out, have a detail, and they become family. We are so impressed with their commitment, their talent, the extraordinary training that they have received and display every day; and, of course, Crystal Griner and David Bailey responded and, in responding, were injured themselves. They put their lives at risk for not only STEVE SCALISE but for all the Members who were on the field at that point in time.

I want to join STEVE, and I know all of our colleagues and the majority leader, in expressing appreciation and great respect for those who serve us in the Capitol Police.

I say to my friend, the majority whip—he has left the floor now—we are glad to have you back. I wrote him a note this morning saying whatever I could do to help him, I was available to do that. I am sure he took it that that did not mean I necessarily would vote the way he wants me to vote, nor did I think he would vote necessarily the way I wanted him to vote, but we will continue in this great institution we call the House of Representatives, but, as STEVE called it and I call it and so many of us call it, the people's House.

Every 2 years, they send us back here to try to make policy to make their lives better and our country stronger, and, more than the public knows, we work together to accomplish that objective. They see the confrontations, but they don't always see the cooperation.

Now, at this time, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the majority leader, my friend—we cooperate more than people will see from time to time, I want to thank him for that—for the purpose of inquiring of the schedule for the week to come.

(Mr. MCCARTHY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, before I give the schedule, I do want to say today was a day that was very good to see our dear friend, STEVE SCALISE, make it back.

As the gentleman said, an attack on him was an attack on the entire institution. I was there that day in the hospital, my wife and I, and waiting for Jennifer to arrive, and STEVE, going through those surgeries. The number of times we would go back to visit, he is the strongest man I have ever known. I thought his speech today was fantastic.

It is from the heart that he first would seek God's guidance. The strength of Jennifer—I watched Madison and Harrison spend their entire summer in that hospital for their father, and for him to be able to walk back here as soon as he did and the excitement in his face when he was able to cast that vote, I know STEVE is going to continue to get stronger as he goes, and he thanks everybody for the help they provided.

We should not forget the spirit that this floor had today. We should take that spirit into the days forward and continue it. We can disagree, but it takes an unbelievable terrible situation, at times, to remind us of the human spirit we have for one another, and I want to make sure, even for myself, that I remember those moments in times of the most heated debates.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the House will meet at noon for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for morning hour and noon for legislative business.

On Thursday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business.

Last votes of the week are expected no later than 3 p.m.

And on Friday, no votes are expected in the House.

Mr. Speaker, the House will consider a number of suspensions next week, a complete list of which will be announced by close of business tomorrow.

Now, in addition, the House will consider H.R. 36, the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, also, as I like to call it, ''Micah's Law.''

Mr. Speaker, I spent some time on Tuesday with a young boy named Micah. Micah gave me this bracelet, ''Miracles for Micah,'' and I wear it because Micah was born premature at 20 weeks. If you look at a picture of Micah, he was the size of a bag of M&Ms. Today, he is happy, he is healthy, he is 5 years old, and no one would know the difference.

Mr. Speaker, all life is a miracle, and we have an obligation here to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

I look forward to the House passing this compassionate bill next week that will protect the lives of countless others just like Micah.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the House will take up the FY18 budget resolution. Our Republican budget balances within 10 years, provides for a strong national defense, eliminates burdensome regulations, and cracks down on waste, fraud, and abuse. Passing this budget will also enable tax reform, which is the key to economic growth and seeing that Americans take home more of their hard-earned dollars.

I thank Chairman BLACK and the entire Budget Committee—and especially you, Mr. Speaker—for their hard work on this bill.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for the information on the schedule to come.

I want to speak to two things that are not on the schedule, Mr. Leader, but I know that both of us are focused on this and realize that we need to move and we need to move quickly.

First of all, I want to speak of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The leader and I, Mr. Speaker, were scheduled to try to go to Key West and to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands this weekend. I am not sure that that is going to be able to happen, given some of the logistics on the ground, but whether that happens or not, Mr. Speaker, I know the leader and I are going to work very hard on this.

There is a humanitarian crisis that has confronted Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Key West, at least you can drive to Key West still, and we can get relief to Key West and to Florida and to victims of Harvey. Obviously, our fellow Americans who are residents of two islands, or actually more than two islands, but that comprise Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, are in life-threatening distress.

I talked today to Dr. Price, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, about the availability of dialysis on the island. There are people who have already died because they were not able to get to dialysis centers, and those centers don't have all the electricity they need, so there is a humanitarian crisis, as I pointed out, Mr. Speaker, and I know the leader appreciates this.

Mr. Leader, I know we don't have anything on the floor with reference to additional resources that might be and are necessary to meet this humanitarian crisis in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, but I would urge the majority leader, as I have done and I think he has done, to be in contact with the administration, be in contact with FEMA.

In particular, I was pleased to see that General Kim has now been appointed, as General Honore was for New Orleans and Katrina, to coordinate activities. We have extraordinary resources in the Armed Forces of the United States, and I would urge the President, as Commander in Chief, and the Department of Defense to allocate every resource necessary to get the American people who live in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to a point where communications, the availability of food, the availability of water, the availability of medical services are up and running, hopefully, full bore by the end of this weekend. This is a crisis.

And I know the majority leader shares that view, and if he wants to make a comment on that, I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank him for his interest, and it is true, the gentleman and I were hopefully trying to go down to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands and Key West to look at some of the damage, and, right now, the Coast Guard tells us, with the rescue attempts that are ongoing, that we probably would be taking some equipment away from doing that work, and we do not want to do any of that. We will be able to go a little later when the time is right.

We will continue to work with the administration. When you think what this country has gone through with Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria, I do want to give thanks to the work of the administration. I have seen some coordination like I have not seen in the past.

We know these are islands. The damage of the two hurricanes they have to go through, I have been keeping in constant contact, and just speaking with FEMA just recently, they are currently coordinating and establishing seven temporary hospitals. That was one of my concerns with dialysis and others, but there is so much more to do to be able to move through, and I will work with the gentleman, as we have in the past, to make sure whatever they need will be able to get there.

□ 1200

And I do want to thank Congressman CARLOS CURBELO for his amendment to the bill that we just voted on, adding a little more resources there to make sure, knowing the tax code of Puerto Rico is a little different than the one we had voted on as we go through, to give them greater assistance, and the Virgin Islands.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Clearly, this is not a partisan issue when an American or a group of Americans or a large number—in this case, over 3.5 million people, all of them at dire risk. We want to act together, we want to act quickly, and we do not want to fail to deploy any resource that is necessary to help our fellow Americans.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring up an act, which although not the crisis that Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, in particular, confront us with, as did Harvey and Irma in Texas and in Florida, but, Mr. Speaker, I notice that the Dream Act is not a part of next week's schedule.

The leader and I have discussed the Dream Act, along with Speaker RYAN. I know that the President has said, if we pass the Dream Act, he has said publicly that he would sign the Dream Act. He is obviously concerned with security at the borders. We share that concern about security at the borders. But this is an item that, now, one-sixth of the time that was available has run, and we have 5 months left to go.

I will tell the majority leader that I am very hopeful. I know the majority leader and the Speaker have formed some task forces to look at this issue, but I am very hopeful, Mr. Speaker—and I ask the majority leader to perhaps comment on this—that before the end of this work period—there are another 14 days left after this week in this work period—that we might be able to bring the Dream Act to the floor.

A discharge petition has been filed. I would hope that the discharge petition not be necessary for either the rule or for the Dream Act itself. The discharge petition on the Dream Act itself will be mature as of October 5, and I expect a discharge petition to be filed on that, as well. But I am hopeful, Mr. Speaker, that that will not be necessary.

Given the fact that the President has said that he thinks DACA was issued beyond the authority of President Obama, we disagree with that conclusion. But whether that conclusion is correct or not, the President observed that we need to fix this legislatively.

So my question to the majority leader is: How soon does he believe that we could address this issue in regular order?

We continue to pursue a discharge petition, as we did, frankly, for the Ex-Im Bank, which, when it was called to the floor, had over 300 votes in favor of it, including the majority of the majority party voted for that bill.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, strongly, that if the Dream Act is brought to the floor, which over 8 in 10 Americans agree with, frankly, we believe large numbers on both sides of the aisle agree that these young people are not to be sent home.

Lastly, let me just quote Senator ORRIN HATCH, who is a senior Member in the United States Senate and the chairman of the Finance Committee. He said: ''I've urged the President not to rescind DACA. . . .''

He did, and gave us 6 months to solve this, legislatively.

Senator HATCH observed that if DACA were rescinded, it would be ''an action that would further complicate a system in serious need of a permanent, legislative solution.''

He was referring then, Mr. Speaker, to a comprehensive immigration reform.

''Like the President, I've long advocated for tougher enforcement of our existing immigration laws. But we also need a workable, permanent solution for individuals who entered our country unlawfully as children through no fault of their own and who have built their lives here. That solution must come from Congress.''

And I agree that that decision must come from Congress.

Rush Limbaugh said—and I don't usually agree with statements that Mr. Limbaugh makes: ''Nobody's gonna win anything by deporting a bunch of kids that we let in, whoever did, Obama, whatever. If we can get the strict enforcement of existing immigration law . . . then the DREAMer thing may be an acceptable payoff,'' he went on to say.

I don't think this is a payoff. This is responding. And that is why the overwhelming majority of the American people support the Dream Act. As I say, over 8 out of 10 Americans.

So I ask the majority—and I know that was a relatively long statement. This is a critical issue, however, as I have expressed in private to the majority leader, because we have but 5 months left to go.

Hopefully, we could do this in this work period to allay the fears that these young people have, who are making such a positive contribution to America, to their communities, and to their families. So I am hopeful that we could resolve this issue as soon as possible.

I yield to my friend, the majority leader.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

I first want to applaud Speaker RYAN for forming a working group on this important issue. The gentleman and I have met numerous times on this, and I have talked to the President about it, as well. He has been very clear, and I agree with the President's position, courts have shown that the past was unconstitutional, and that just means the House has to do their job and the Senate. The one thing I would hate to happen here is that we only do the job halfway, and then we have this problem come back to us.

The President has asked us about border security, as well. I believe we can find a solution here, together. I look forward to working with Mr. HOYER.

The President has challenged this Congress to find a solution, and I believe we can. We are going to work to make sure we get it done. I would like to do it sooner than the timeframe the President has given us.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I welcome the majority leader's thought that he wants to do it sooner rather than later. I will support him, of course, in that effort.

I would say on his comment, Mr. Speaker, with reference to a comprehensive solution, we are for a comprehensive solution. We would like to see that because that is the only way we will stop this from coming back.

The Senate passed a comprehensive immigration bill 3 years ago. We have not seen that on the floor as of yet. Again, we think that that would have a substantial vote and, perhaps, I think, a majority vote. I am not as confident of that as I am with the Dream Act, which I think clearly would enjoy the majority of the House's support.

But I am glad that he wants to move this quickly. We will work with him to get that, I would hope, as I said, by the end of the work period, to allay the great fears and anxiety.

Very frankly, we have had some young people thinking of going back to a land they do not know, a language they do not necessarily speak, and a culture they have, as adults, never been exposed to and don't know.

This, for all intents and purposes, in anything other than having the paper that says so, is their country. They have gone to school here, they work here, and they have been positive citizens here. And, hopefully—as the President said, he loved these children—we could relieve their fears and, in effect, redeem the American Dream for them.

There are other issues, obviously, with which we have to deal, and I would urge the majority leader, as well, at some point in time, to make a path forward for comprehensive immigration reform, because it is a system we all agree is broken and needs to be fixed and is part of the problem.

Two more issues, Mr. Speaker. The majority leader mentioned the budget would be coming to the floor. This is the 2018 budget. This is obviously late, but, nevertheless, it is being brought to the floor, and we will be able to consider it.

Can the gentleman tell me: Will this include reconciliation instructions and, if so, what those reconciliation instructions will deal with?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I expect reconciliation in this budget. I leave it up to the Rules Committee and the Budget Committee when they produce it, but on this floor, I believe there will be reconciliation.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Leader, will it assume the repeal of the ACA in fiscal year '17 or fiscal year '18, either one of those years, which clearly has not seemed possible at this point in time?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

If the question is have I given up on repealing ObamaCare, the answer is no.

So, yes, this is the budget for the rest of the year. We know the harm that ObamaCare has brought to many Americans. The lack of insurance, when you look at the number of counties, 40 percent of all of the counties in America only have one provider, some have none. We watched premiums go up.

We want a healthcare system where people have choice, that, actually, the price is lower and the quality is better. That is something I will never give up on, so, yes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader for that observation.

Obviously, we disagree, as he knows, on the success or failure of the ACA. As a matter of fact, every health organization in America, every major health organization in America opposed the repeal, a bill that came to the floor.

Senator MCCAIN, I thought, gave a very powerful exhortation to all of us when he said, on July 25, we ought to do this in a bipartisan way.

We found, now, three efforts to repeal by the majority party, who control all three—the Senate, the House, and the Presidency—an inability to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I believe—and I would hope the majority leader would pursue efforts, and we would do the same on our side. We believe the ACA has been working.

We believe that 20-plus million more people are insured under the ACA than were insured before the ACA.

We believe people with preexisting conditions were able to get insurance. We believe seniors saved substantial money in purchasing prescription drugs as a result of that.

We believe that people did not have—we know they did not have the specter of being canceled because their expenses in any one year were above a limit and that their lifetime limits

would not be imposed when they get a serious critical illness.

So we think it worked.

The majority has tried to repeal it. They have not succeeded at this point in time, but they have created, Mr. Speaker, great anxiety and uncertainty in the marketplace.

And to the extent, for instance, that premiums have risen in our State, the head of Blue Cross/Blue Shield, the largest insurer in our State, said the reason for at least 50 percent was the uncertainty that had been created by the administration and by the debates that have occurred in this House and the proposals that have occurred in this House, which have undermined the market.

I talked to him the other day, and he said, in fact, if there were stability, he believes rates would come down significantly because insurance companies, providers, would have an opportunity to have a stable environment in which they could assess the cost of health insurance.

Did the majority leader want to say anything?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the only thing I want to say, and I know we have debated this many times—we can always put an endorsement somewhere and we can always go back and forth, but I will just tell you for my own district—I don't know why anybody would ever say they are making a decision based on something when our bill carries it out another 2 years even, so I don't believe that to be true.

But I know what is true. Currently, 30 percent of the people who are on the exchange in my district just had somebody pull out; and they had that health insurance, Anthem, so now they don't. They have to go find something else. They had doctors who they loved, and they were promised that they were going to be able to keep them. Well, they couldn't.

I just look at numbers; and I take Republican, Democrat, I take whatever name is across from it. Almost twice as many people pay the penalty or take a waiver as actually make a payment for ObamaCare.

□ 1215

So, yes, this will continue not because you and I have a disagreement, but because people are hurting, premiums are going up, deductibles are going up, and people are losing their providers. And the providers are not leaving because it is staying the same way for another 2 years, they are leaving because it is staying there.

So, yes, I look forward to continuing this conversation because we cannot allow this harm to continue to go through this country.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, we could go on, I presume, all day, and our friends who want to do a 1-minute or a Special Order would not be happy with us, and they are maybe not happy now, but the fact of the matter is that this is a critically important issue to our country. When he talks about providers, the providers said they didn't like any of these bills.

We have had three opportunities: one that was offered but not put on the floor; then one that came to the floor and passed this House and then went to the Senate, and the majority of the Senate has not agreed with any of the three alternatives; plus the alternative that Senator GRAHAM brought forward along with the Senator from Louisiana.

The majority in the Senate has not agreed, and, Mr. Speaker, what that has done is provided the insurance industry, providers, doctors, medical authorities with total lack of confidence on what is going to happen tomorrow. Nobody in business believes that you can have proper pricing if you do not know the context in which you are pricing your product. So, yes, there has been a disruption.

What we ought to do, as Senator MCCAIN said, is come together and make sure a system works. We believe the ACA is working—not working as well as it should right now, it is not working as much for the small market or people on the exchanges as it should. It can.

Almost every medical provider and the majority of the American people over these last 8 months has changed from not liking the ACA and not thinking it is good for them, to where the majority of the American people now support it, and 7 out of 10-plus want the ACA fixed, not repealed.

So in that context, it seems to me it is both good politics and good policy for us to come together and to create a system that works for the American people. We believe that is by fixing the ACA, and to that extent, we reflect the majority of the American people.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the last issue I want to bring up are two items that were not included in the FAA bill, but which are important programs. One is the Perkins Loan Program for students. We know that the cost of education has skyrocketed and that we need to extend that act. That bill, by the way, Mr. Speaker, has 226 cosponsors, so it is not as if there is not a majority of the House that already supports that extension.

The second thing that needs to be done: we need to deal with a comprehensive health system in our communities, the Community Health Centers. We need to deal with the teaching hospitals. We need to deal with the disproportionate share of hospitals.

So there are many things that we did not include in the bill that we passed today that need to be addressed and need to be addressed immediately. They are not on the schedule for next week.

Can my friend give me some idea when we might consider those, which, of course, expire on September 30?

So September 30 will come and go before we start next week's schedule.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

You raised a couple issues there. When it comes to teaching hospitals, that was in the bill you just voted against twice this week on the floor. So that has been taken care of.

When you are talking about SCHIP and the extension of that, Chairman WALDEN actually postponed a markup not because he wanted to, but because it was requested by the Democrats. So he postponed the markup this week in continuing bipartisan negotiations.

This is something I would like to get done. I know Chairman WALDEN has now scheduled a markup for next week, so I am very hopeful that we will get this done very soon. I am a big supporter of SCHIP and a lot of the work that they do and what it moves forward for our healthcare in the future, especially for the health clinics out there. So I look forward to working with you.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate that.

You mentioned SCHIP. Can you refer to the Perkins Loan Program? Does the gentleman know whether that is also moving forward?

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I apologize. You did mention the Perkins Act. I do not have that scheduled at the current time, but I will keep you abreast when I do.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that SCHIP is on the committee's agenda for next week. Hopefully, that can be brought to the floor before we leave in this work period, perhaps just before or just after the Dream Act is brought to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend, the majority leader.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, it is our understanding that today could be the very last time that Margarida Curtis provides a message to us on this floor.

We would like to thank Margarida Curtis. From a very grateful nation, thank you for your service. Many times the American people see your voice, but also the power of what you bring back and forth to make this democracy work. We want to thank you for your service, and we wish you all the happiness in retirement.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Margarida Curtis has been a longtime employee of the United States Senate and, as a result, an employee of the people of the United States.

Margarida, you have always done your work with great ability and clarity. We very much appreciate your service to the Senate, but also to this House, to the Congress itself, and to the American people. They are grateful for all you have done. God speed.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2266. An act to amend title 28 of the United States Code to authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges; and for other purposes.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW, AND ADJOURNMENT FROM FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2017, TO MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2017

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 11:30 a.m. tomorrow; and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet on Monday, October 2, 2017, when it shall convene at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

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

There was no objection.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during National Suicide Prevention Month to call attention to this tragedy that is so prevalent and important throughout our Nation.

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States, and, on average, there are 121 suicides per day. Far too many Americans, about one in five, are suffering from some form of mental illness, a problem that has disrupted too many families, caused too much violence, pain, and cost too many lives.

In Congress, we are working together on a bipartisan basis to bring needed reform to our mental healthcare system through the passage of the 21st Century Cures Act and the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act.

The Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, led by Dr. Margie Scott, is one of nine systems nationwide currently involved in the Clay Hunt pilot program.

This program gives our VA employees the necessary tools to reach out to high-risk veterans and offer guidance while providing essential suicide prevention services. Dr. Scott and Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System have made over 200 community connections throughout Arkansas to assist our veterans.

We all must work together and continue to move forward in addressing the issue of mental health and mental health access, and do what we can to save the lives of all American citizens and reverse this deadly trend of suicides.

AUTHORIZATION FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM WILL EXPIRE ON SEPTEMBER 30

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

Mr. GOMEZ. Mr. Speaker, I can't believe Congress has closed legislative business for the week without addressing a critical deadline that will impact the health of our country. On September 30, authorization for the Community Health Centers and the Children's Health Insurance Program—CHIP—will expire.

Well, it is September 28, and we just closed legislative business. That means funding for this critical program will lapse and the health of millions of Americans will be in jeopardy.

Our Nation's Community Health Centers have served low-income, rural, and underserved communities for more than 50 years. In that time, they have increased the number of patients they serve and the services they offer so that they are now the primary healthcare option for millions of people.

CHIP is another program that Congress will allow to lapse.

No matter how big the differences between Republicans and Democrats, when it comes to healthcare, we have always come together to ensure our Nation's children do not go without the care they need, yet here we are leaving D.C. and abandoning the 9 million children on CHIP and the millions more at the Community Health Centers.

I ask that we come back into session and that we extend these critical programs.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MAJOR GENERAL TIM LOWENBERG

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and memory of Major General Timothy Lowenberg, former Adjutant General of the Washington State National Guard.

After attending law school, Tim served on Active Duty at McChord Air Force Base before joining the Washington National Guard as a Judge Advocate Staff Officer.

He was promoted to Adjutant General, honorably serving Washington State and our Nation. He stood up for our citizen soldiers, worked to ensure that the National Guard had the resources it needed, and oversaw multiple deployments to the Middle East.

In addition, Tim established the Washington Youth Academy, providing an education and opportunity for at-risk youth across the State.

As a member of the Washington legislature, I was pleased to work with him on this, a cause that he was very passionate about, and was able to see his vision become a success.

Upon retirement, he continued to serve his country and community. He will be missed by many, but his legacy of determination, kindness, and dutiful service to Washington and these United States lives on.

Please join me in remembering Major General Timothy Lowenberg, my friend.

HONORING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOOD STAMP ACT OF 1977

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

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the anniversary of the Food Stamp Act of 1977.

Tomorrow, the program we know as SNAP—the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—turns 40. We also know that before the implementation of SNAP, families couldn't afford healthy meals and kids were going to school on empty stomachs.

Today, thanks to this program, over 18,000 families in my district on the central coast of California count on SNAP benefits to put food on their tables at home and help their children feed their minds at their schools.

In my district, the number one industry is agriculture. We ship our many fresh fruits and vegetables all over the country and to even other parts of the world. As a representative of this area, it is my goal and it is my responsibility to make sure that the families in my district have access to the same nutritious produce that is grown in our backyard.

As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, under the leadership of Chairman CONAWAY, I look forward to working on the 2018 farm bill with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle so that we can support strong investments in SNAP. By doing that, we will support stronger families and a stronger future.

□ 1230

THE 2018 FISCAL YEAR

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, this coming Sunday is new year's day, the start of the Federal Government's 2018 fiscal year.

Several weeks ago, Congress passed and the President signed a temporary spending bill to carry the government through December 8. This temporary bill was necessary because, although the House passed its spending bills, the Senate did not.

One of the more glaring problems with the CR is that it continues the years' long practice of shortchanging

our defenses and the men and women in our military. Defense spending and defense policy are frozen, and the changes this House has insisted on in both the Defense Authorization Act and the Defense Appropriations bill are stalled, to the detriment of our defenses and our men and women in uniform.

Secretary Mattis has written, ''Long-term CRs impact the readiness of our forces and their equipment at a time when security threats are extraordinarily high. The longer the CR, the greater the consequences for our force.''

The risks are real, Mr. Speaker. We see threats growing daily from North Korea and Iran. The fight continues against ISIS and against terror in Afghanistan, and now we need to deploy urgently needed resources to Puerto Rico. There is no need to wait until December 8 to get a full-year Defense Appropriations bill. I call on the Senate to act promptly next week even and get our troops funded.

ASSETS NEEDED IN PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

(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, I am glad President Trump listened to Secretary Clinton and deployed the U.S. Naval Ship Comfort to Puerto Rico, even though it was 7 days after Hurricane Maria destroyed the island. But President Trump must do more and do it now.

Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States has a moral and legal duty to protect the well-being of our citizens. That is why today, right now, the President must order the Department of Defense to deploy all available assets to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to prevent this catastrophe from getting worse.

The thousands of Puerto Ricans and all of the Virgin Islanders I represent deserve to know that our Nation's priority is their well-being, their families', their friends', and their fellow citizens' as well—American citizens.

LETTER CARRIER DONTE COTTON IS A HERO

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

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I first want to welcome STEVE SCALISE back to this House floor. The strength of his message shows why he is such a hero to us all.

I also want to tell the story of another hero, one from my congressional district in Dayton, Ohio.

On April 5, 2016, letter carrier Donte Cotton saw an overturned car that had collided with a pole. The driver told Donte her child was inside the car. Acting on immediate instinct, Donte crawled through broken glass to rescue the baby from the car. Both the mother and the child were taken to the hospital and treated for minor injuries.

In August of last year, Donte again found himself in the right place at the right time; again, on his letter carrying route.

While on his normal mail delivery route, an elderly woman, whose home had just been invaded, ran up to Donte seeking help. Donte drove the woman to a nearby police cruiser, ensuring her safety.

His courage is being rewarded this week by the National Association of Letter Carriers, which has given Donte its 2017 Central Area Hero Award.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Donte for his acts of true heroism in our community.

PASS THE DREAM ACT

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

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, Josue Fuentes was brought to Hawaii from El Salvador when he was 13 years old, where he was escaping rampant gang violence and domestic abuse at home.

He went to high school in Honolulu, made friends, got a job. But no matter what he did, he couldn't escape the dark shadow cast on his future because of his immigration status.

Josue describes DACA as a weight lifted from his back. He was empowered to apply for college. He bought a home and pursued opportunities that any of us would want for our children.

Today, he is a small business owner. He owns a landscaping company, he volunteers at his local church, and continues to give back to the Kaneohe community that he calls home.

I urge my colleagues to sign a discharge petition to bring the Dream Act to the floor for a vote so we can pass a permanent solution for Josue and millions of DREAMers across the country. Our Nation made a promise to these young men and women. We must uphold that promise.

CERTIFY THAT IRAN IS IN FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THE JCPOA

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call upon President Trump to certify that Iran is in full compliance with the JCPOA, otherwise known as the Iran nuclear agreement. To decertify at this time will destabilize the ability of the United States to engage in international agreements, especially those we initiated ourselves.

Our credibility is on the line, especially given the fact that the IAEA and the United Nations and the United States Government have certified that Iran is in compliance. It is in compliance on its centrifuges, enriched uranium, the production of the plutonium reactor itself.

We want to make sure that we don't have a second nuclear front by decertifying Iran. It is important to the United States' interests, to the security of the world, and the security of Israel that this agreement be certified as in compliance.

HONORING CHINESE GENERAL SUN LI-JEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Chinese General Sun Li-jen. He was known as the ever-victorious general, and fought with valor against Axis forces in Burma during World War II.

General Sun's strategies on the battlefield were a combination of traditional Chinese military theory and American military training. He was an important ally for the United States and a popular figure among his people.

He was born in Anhui, China, and was the son of a Confucian scholar. He moved to the United States to attend Purdue University on a Boxer Indemnity Scholarship, and graduated with a degree in civil engineering.

As China fell deeper into political upheaval and war, General Sun believed he could be more useful as a soldier than as an engineer. He went on to attend the Virginia Military Institute, where he faced prejudice from other cadets.

When he returned to China, he advanced to the rank of colonel. In one of his earliest battles in World War II, he led troops to the defense of Shanghai and was wounded while leading his own men to safety.

After recovering from his injuries, he established a military training camp in southern China. The men at the camp were trained in both Eastern and Western military strategy.

General Sun is internationally renowned for his extraordinary service during the Battle of Yenangyaung in 1942. He saved the British First Burma Division by leading a regiment in a flanking maneuver. His bravery protected Allied forces from encirclement by the Imperial Japanese Army.

During this battle, General Sun was also given command of a small group from the British Second Royal Tanks, making him the first Chinese officer to command British troops.

In recognition of his victory in Burma, he was knighted by the United Kingdom and awarded the Legion of Merit by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He was a friend of American Generals MacArthur and Eisenhower.

In the report that recommended General Sun for the Legion of Merit, the U.S. War Department wrote the following: ''For exceptionally meritorious

conduct in the performance of outstanding service during the Burma operations in 1942. Under most trying conditions, General Sun displayed high qualities of leadership. The First Burma Division of the British Force at Yenangyaung was extricated by the attack of the 38th Division and saved from annihilation. General Sun held his unit together at all times during the retreat and brought it ready for combat to India. His example of courage and leadership reflect great credit on Allied Arms.''

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the FDR Library and the Congressional Research Service for finding this document. I include this document in the RECORD, along with a letter from the Virginia Military Institute.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, DC, 20 September 1943.

Memorandum for General Edwin M. Watson: Subject: Awards of the Legion of Merit.

Submitted herewith for the approval of the President are five awards of the Legion of Merit in degree of Officer to members of the Chinese Army.

Also enclosed are Certificates of Award for the signature of the President.

The State Department has been consulted and has no objection to the awards.

I recommend that the President give approval to these awards.

HENRY L. STIMSON,
Secretary of War.

W. D.,
Washington, DC, 11 September 1943.

REPORT OF DECORATIONS BOARD

Convened pursuant to Paragraph 47, S. O. 167–0, War Department, 1921, and paragraph 1, S. O. 64, War Department, 1942.

1. The board having been properly convened and organized, has considered the record in the case of Sun Li Jen.

2. By decision of a majority of the board, the above-named individual is recommended for the award of the LEGION OF MERIT, is degree of Officer, with citation substantially as follows:

Major General Sun Li Jen, Commander of the New 38th Division of the Chinese Army. For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service during the Burma operations in 1942. Under most trying conditions General Sun displayed high qualities of leadership. The 1st Burma Division of the British Force at Yananyanng was extricated by the attack of the 38th Division and saved from annihilation. General Sun held his unit together at all times during the retreat and brought it ready for combat to India. His example of courage and leadership reflect great credit on Allied Arms.

Copy for: The White House.

Recommendation of the Board APPROVED By order of the Secretary of War: E.S. Adams, Major General, U.S.A., President.

Assistant Chief of Staff, G–1: * * *, Colonel, A.G.D., Recorder.

SUPERINTENDENT, VIRGINIA
MILITARY INSTITUTE,
September 22, 2017.

Congressman RO KHANNA,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KHANNA: Virginia Military Institute is pleased to join you in remembering and honoring General Sun Li-Jen, VMI Class of 1927. The Institute takes great pride in the formative role it played in the leadership development of the ''Ever Victorious General.''

When General Sun returned to his native country, he implemented training practices that would assist in modernizing and preparing China for the challenges of the 1930s and 1940s. During those eventful decades, General Sun received international attention as a leader of the Chinese Nationalist Army during the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Chinese Civil War, and World War II. In the latter conflict, he has been credited with reclaiming Burma from the Japanese. For his leadership in the China-Burma-India Theater, Sun was knighted Commander of the Order of the British Empire by King George VI and awarded the Legion of Merit by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

One of the general's uniforms and his official portrait are exhibited in the VMI Museum where they are seen by 40,000 visitors annually. Over the years, generations of Chinese students have been inspired by the story of General Sun; many have followed his example and attended VMI.

Thank you for gathering to honor this illustrious member of the Class of 1927.

Sincerely,

J.H. BINFORD PEAY III '62,
General, U.S. Army (Retired).

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to read very briefly from that letter from the Virginia Military Institute, which recognized General Sun for his leadership in the China-Burma-India theater, and recognize that his story has inspired many other Virginia Military Institute graduates since then.

General Sun's legacy lives on through his family, including California Assemblyman Kansen Chu. I am pleased to recognize Assemblyman Kansen Chu and his wife, Daisy Chu, who have joined us here today with his family and our honored guests in the House gallery.

The district that Assemblyman Chu and I represent are some of the most ethnically diverse areas in our country. General Sun valued diversity. He found greater strength as a leader by combining Eastern and Western ideas. He led soldiers with different ethnicities and religions. His accomplishments demonstrate that we are better when we embrace diversity.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage Congress to remember the contributions and legacy of General Sun and their importance to the people of the United States, of China, and those of Chinese-American ancestry.

I want to end on this note. Several of us went a few days ago to the Library of Congress where Graham Allison was speaking. Graham Allison has this theory of the Thucydides Trap, which argues that two powers—when one power is rising and another power is established—often are likely to face conflict and war. He said that Xi Jinping in China is familiar with Thucydides Trap.

I would submit that General Sun's story is a reminder for why the United States and China can be allies and not adversaries. We often forget that China was critical in the United States' efforts in winning World War II, and General Sun's story is a reminder of that and an inspiration for us in this new century in finding common ground between the United States and China to help create a more peaceful world.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to avoid references to occupants of the gallery.

TRAVELING BY PRIVATE JET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, is Donald Trump running a Cabinet or a country club?

Because every day it is getting harder to tell. Not only is the President spending vast sums to ferry himself to and from his various golf courses, but now it turns out that top leaders in his administration have developed a special fondness for traveling by private jet.

The Treasury Secretary used a taxpayer-funded plane to hop down to Fort Knox to see the eclipse, for example, and he has also asked to use one for his honeymoon in Europe.

Trump's EPA Administrator, Scott Pruitt, spent another $58,000 on private jets. But the worst offender is HHS Secretary Price, who, in his brief time in office, has already chalked up an astonishing 400 grand in flights on private aircraft. He flew down to Tennessee for all of 6 hours, much of which was spent having lunch with his son. That is nice. He also jetted off to an island off the coast of Georgia for a trip that apparently featured far more recreation than government business. Clearly, when it comes to travel on the taxpayers' dime, the price does not matter to Tom Price. Ethics and personal responsibility doesn't matter to Tom Price. Doing what is right doesn't matter to Tom Price, and that is why he needs to resign immediately.

□ 1245

Now, don't take my word for it. Here is what President George W. Bush's top ethics official, Richard Painter, said about Price's travel habits: ''To use a charter flight on something that combines personal and government business, I think, is highly unprofessional and really inappropriate.'' Those are strong words.

But, Mr. Speaker, you know who summed up best how terrible it is for someone to use private jets? Tom Price, himself. Let's see what Tom Price said. In 2009, he described government officials taking private planes as ''just another example of fiscal irresponsibility run amok.'' I couldn't agree more, Mr. Speaker.

Price spent nearly $25,000 to fly from D.C. to Philadelphia and back for one single day. He could have spent, at last minute, $725 to get there on United Airlines, or $133 to get there on Amtrak.

Mr. Speaker, I just checked, on my phone, that an Uber to Philly right now, back and forth, would have cost Mr. Price about $450 round trip. That means that, for the price of his private jet, he could have ordered individual cars for himself and his 54 staff members. Every American who works and pays taxes should find this totally appalling.

Amtrak was good enough for the Vice President of the United States, Joe Biden, but, somehow, it is beneath the Treasury Secretary and HHS Secretary to ride the train. Riding the train is apparently even beneath the EPA Administrator.

Here is a good rule of thumb, Mr. Speaker: If you are spending more on private jets than most American families make in 1 year, you are spending too much on private jets.

Tom Price has plenty of time to go jetting around the country, but not enough time, for example, to ensure that millions of kids won't lose their coverage when CHIP expires soon.

There is apparently plenty of money at HHS for private jets, but very little to help people sign up for health insurance. That is completely unacceptable.

Secretary Price says he needs to fly around on his jet to connect with ordinary citizens. I am not kidding. His press secretary told reporters that these outrageous junkets were about ''getting outside of D.C., making sure he is connected with the real American people.''

Mr. Speaker, here is how you really connect with your fellow Americans: don't take a private plane; fly a middle seat in coach.

Of course, we should have seen this coming. News reports earlier this year revealed that, when he was a Member of Congress, Price was guilty of introducing legislation to benefit his own personal investments. Even more egregious, he traded more than $300,000 in healthcare industry stocks based on insider information.

There is no question Secretary Price needs to resign right now, and, if he doesn't, President Trump needs to fire him.

Donald Trump claims that he loves firing people. He once said: I love doing it if someone really, really, really deserves it.

Mr. Speaker, Secretary Price really, really, really deserves it.

Then again, we all know Trump won't actually do anything. We are all familiar with the Trump way of doing business with its bad deals and bankruptcies.

Here's the Trump way of doing government.

Number one, hire people proven to be corrupt.

Number two, create an environment in which corruption and bad behavior are encouraged.

Number three, do absolutely nothing when the corruption and bad behavior is exposed.

This administration talks about putting America first. This administration talks about draining the swamp, but its Cabinet officials are more interested in traveling first class.

This administration talks about making America great again, but they are really only concerned about never ever having to wait at another airport gate again.

This administration talks about fighting for working families, but its top leaders are only concerned about lining their own pockets with taxpayers' hard-earned money.

I am fed up, and so are the American people. Let's bring back government to the people, for the people, instead of government for the powerful friends of Donald Trump.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend from California (Mr. TED LIEU).

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman GALLEGO for that terrific presentation. We are also joined today by Congressman RASKIN, who will be part of our dialogue as well.

Today is Thursday. That means we all need to ask: Why does Jared Kushner still have a security clearance? He already submitted two false ones. But I digress. We are actually going to talk about three other problems in the White House, one of which is Secretary Price.

To my left is a picture of the private jet that Secretary Price flew on at taxpayers' expense. But in addition to Secretary Price, we also have Secretary Mnuchin, who flew on a government jet with his wife to Kentucky in order to watch the eclipse. Now, I get that was a pretty cool thing to do, but you shouldn't be using taxpayer funds to do that.

And then we have got EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, which, according to media reports, spent $58,000 on noncommercial flights to go to different places. With $58,000, you can do a lot with that. VoteVets put out a release today saying that with $58,000 you could hire a VA spinal cord specialist at the Syracuse VA, a nurse for 1 year. Then Secretary Price spent over $400,000 of your money, and that is a lot of spinal cord specialists.

So we are talking about raiding the public funds and raiding the public trust. That is why I have introduced the SWAMP FLYERS Act, and what this act will do is stop this from happening in the future. It will prohibit senior Cabinet officials from using noncommercial flights, unless they certify, under penalty of perjury, that no commercial flights were available.

So in this case, you had Secretary Price, for example, flying from here to Nashville. I guarantee you there were lots of commercial flights. There was no reason he had to take a noncommercial flight.

In addition to what we are seeing with these three Cabinet officials, we do have sort of this culture of corruption that really needs to stop because this flows from the top. With the President, what we have now is the President staying at all these properties, private properties that are his or owned by his family, and then he comes with this massive entourage of Secret Service and other folks, and they are paying money to these properties to stay there, to eat there, and all of that money flows back to the Trump organization. So the President is enriching himself and his family at taxpayers' expense. It is no wonder that we have got these three Cabinet officials doing these insane things with taxpayers' funds.

Now we have got a Republican Congress unwilling to do oversight on this. You have got Speaker RYAN recently going on TV saying that he thinks that the present administration is doing great. Well, you can't have this kind of taxpayer waste when you have got the public trust at issue.

We also have responses from these departments that are deeply troubling. So the Treasury Department, in response to what Secretary Mnuchin was doing, in addition to his noncommercial travel to Kentucky to watch the eclipse, he also asked if the Air Force could fly him and his wife on their honeymoon. The answer is no, you can't do that.

Now the response from the Department was, well, he needed to have secure communications. Well, that was the wrong response. I can guarantee you there are other ways of getting secure communications other than to have the Air Force fly you around on your honeymoon.

With Secretary Price, again, the Department gave the wrong response. They said, well, Secretary Price needs to go around meeting Americans, and he shouldn't be waiting 4 hours at the airport. Wrong response. Yes, he should be waiting 4 hours at the airport because that is what other Americans do. And I can guarantee you no American flies for $25,000 to meet other Americans. Again, the wrong response from that Department.

What we need is to have these three Cabinet officials apologize. I joined with RUBEN GALLEGO, as well as JAMIE RASKIN and other Members yesterday in a letter to ask for Price to resign, and all of us are also coauthors of the SWAMP FLYERS Act.

What we need now is really for the public to get engaged because what we are seeing is fraud, waste, and abuse with multiple members of the Trump Cabinet.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the good gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN).

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this essential question of public integrity. I also want to salute my colleague from California (Mr. TED LIEU), who has been a leading voice in demanding real financial accountability in the administration.

I want to underscore some of the things that my colleagues have said, Mr. Speaker. If there are any Americans out there who love to fly wherever

they want, whenever they want, at taxpayer expense, then we have got the perfect job for you in President Trump's Cabinet. Now, of course, only billionaires and millionaires need apply for these jobs, but if you have a taste for fancy chartered air travel, paid for by hardworking Americans across the country, this is undoubtedly the job for you.

My friends, while millions of desperate Americans are suffering in the sweltering posthurricane conditions of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Florida, Texas, and Louisiana, we have got Cabinet Secretaries who should be doing everything in their power to save our people but are, instead, looking out for something far more important, apparently, than other Americans' mere survival. They are focused on their own first class, private charter, airplane flights to cushy destinations, paid for by hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayer money. We kid you not.

This comes out this week. It comes out that Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price is less interested in health and human services than he is in wealth and valet services. Despite the fact that he blasted the use of government-paid jet travel on CNBC just a few short years ago, he seems to have come down with a severe and chronic case of swamp fever, billing you and me and millions of other Americans for 26 customized, deluxe, premier, first class, private charter, plane flights at taxpayer expense, at an extraordinary estimated cost of more than $400,000. That is just one Cabinet Secretary.

Now, I can't blame him for one of the trips that he took in August to the beautiful and secluded St. Simons Island in southern Georgia, and another trip that enabled him to get to his condo in Nashville and to have lunch with his son. You can hardly blame him for wanting to get out of town and to see the family. After all, it was hot here in Washington, D.C., as climate change sets in across America and the world. But as we say on Capitol Hill: ''It's not the heat, it's the stupidity.''

And look at what our Secretary of Health and Human Services did, and here I will read from Politico, September 26, an article entitled ''Price's private-jet travels included visits with colleagues, lunch with son.''

''The HHS Secretary sometimes combined official travel and meetings with friends and family. Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price took a government-funded private jet in August to get to St. Simons Island, an exclusive Georgia resort where he and his wife own land, a day and a half before he addressed a group of local doctors at a medical conference that he and his wife have long attended.

''The St. Simons Island trip was one of two taxpayer-funded flights on private jets in which Price traveled to places where he owns property, and paired official visits with meetings with longtime colleagues and family members. On June 6, HHS chartered a jet to fly Price to Nashville, Tennessee, where he owns a condominium and where his son resides. Price toured a medicine dispensary and spoke to a local health summit organized by a longtime friend. He also had lunch with his son. . . .

''An HHS official said both the Georgia and Tennessee trips were for official government business and were paid for by the Department.''

It is no problem getting out of town and going to see your family but, really, do the taxpayers have to pay for it?

If the taxpayers have to pay for trips like this, couldn't Secretary Price at least fly on first class commercial airplanes, rather than jacking up the taxpayers for tens of thousands of dollars to book a private airplane to do it?

Politico asked the same question. Here they said:

''Like some of the other 26 flights that Price took on corporate jets since May identified by a Politico review, the trip to Tennessee appears to have occurred despite the existence of multiple commercial flight options. The trip to Georgia, while less direct, also could have been accomplished with a routine connecting flight through Atlanta's busy international airport.

''On August 4, Price flew a Dassault Falcon 2000 twin jet from Raleigh, North Carolina, where he had given a speech to a flu vaccine manufacturer, to Brunswick Golden Isles Airport, which is about a half-hour drive from St. Simons Island. It was the same plane that had shuttled him between five States in four days, one that HHS had chartered through Classic Air Charter for more than $86,000, according to Federal contracts.

''The plane arrived in Brunswick at 4:02 p.m. the afternoon before the start of the two-day Medical Association of Georgia retreat and roughly 40 hours before Price addressed the group, according to airport records. . . .''

□ 1300

''At about the same time, there were connecting commercial flights from Raleigh to Brunswick via Atlanta that would have gotten Price to St. Simons Island that evening.''

My friends, you can go back and you can look. In all of these cases, for example, Secretary Price chartered a plane for $25,000 of government money from Dulles Airport to Philadelphia, a distance of a mere 135 miles. That charter flight left 5 minutes after a regular flight flew, commercial flight flew, from Dulles for a few hundred dollars. So he paid $25,000 and left several minutes later than he would have left had he just taken the commercial flight.

He also could have taken, of course, the Amtrak, which is what most people do when they are going to Philadelphia from the Washington area, for a mere $72. Even the first class Acela would have been around $200. He could have taken the British Airways—they go there—whose slogan is: ''To Fly. To Serve.'' I guess that is not quite right. Or he could have taken Southwest Airlines. Their slogan is: ''Low fares. Nothing to hide.'' I see that wouldn't have fit. Maybe JetBlue, ''You Above All.'' That could have worked.

But no, instead, he had to book the private jet and fly for $25,000 from here to Philadelphia.

Mr. Speaker, this is an old Washington story. The people who say they are coming to drain the swamp have become the swamp. And this is not something that affects just one Cabinet Secretary. Several Cabinet Secretaries are doing this, as my colleagues have pointed out.

With Secretary Price, who seems to be the captain of the swamp flyers; Secretary Pruitt, who is a frequent swamp flyer himself; and Secretary Mnuchin, another swamp flyer, we have a serious staph infection spreading throughout the Trump administration.

And why not, the President seems to have evolved a whole new model of government in the 21st century. Government is a money-making operation for specific families and specific tiny groups in the society. And that is the message that pervades the Trump administration today.

Mr. Speaker, we need to pass the SWAMP FLYERS Act, which is very simple. It says that those of us who have the honor and the privilege of coming to serve the American people here in Washington, D.C., should use regular commercial air flights unless it is a matter of national security, or unless there is not a commercial flight that will get them to where they need to go.

But the idea that you have Cabinet Secretaries who have already taken dozens of flights, paid for with hundreds of thousands, or millions of dollars, of taxpayer money when a commercial flight would have done is an absolute scandal. Now, it hasn't gotten much attention yet because on the scale of the scandals we have seen in this administration, I agree, it is a relatively small one. But it is a dramatic and vivid illustration of what is going on here.

The people who said they were going to drain the swamp became the swamp. And now, the swamp pervades everything. Every Cabinet member, all of the Secretaries, the entire government is engulfed in this kind of corruption.

It begins right at the top, where President Trump has continued to collect hundreds of thousands, or millions, of dollars in foreign payments at the Trump Hotels, at the Trump office tower, and the Trump golf courses around the world from foreign governments, and has not once come to the U.S. Congress to ask for our permission and consent as is required by Article I, section 9, clause 8 of the Constitution, which forbids the collection of presents, emoluments, offices, and titles from foreign governments by anybody who serves under the United States, who holds an office under the United States.

This President is not only collecting rampant, extreme amounts of money through his businesses from foreign governments, he is not even asking us for our permission or our consent. We have got to pass the SWAMP FLYERS Act.

I commend Mr. LIEU for writing this immediately when the news broke about this rampant abuse of current regulations. We need to take a stand as a Congress on a bipartisan level. Unanimously, we can pass this to say that government officials should not be flying at taxpayer expense for dubious reasons. We should be using coach like everybody else, flying commercial like everybody else.

If you have got to fly first class, fine, fly first class, but fly commercial unless it is a matter of national security, or unless there is not a commercial flight that will get you there. Is that something that we can agree on, on a bipartisan basis?

I just want to say, earlier today we saw a magnificent example of real public service and public dedication by our distinguished colleague, Mr. SCALISE, who has returned, thankfully, to this body. He demonstrates and embodies what is best in terms of public service. Unfortunately, we have also seen in Washington this week the personification of what is the worst in public service. We have got to stop taking the American taxpayers for a ride.

Let's pass the SWAMP FLYERS Act immediately.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 32 minutes remaining.

Mr. GALLEGO. Representative LIEU, how often do you fly back, and where do you fly back to?

Mr. TED LIEU of California. I fly about three times a month, and I generally fly from Dulles back to LAX in my district, and I fly commercial.

Mr. GALLEGO. How long is your flight?

Mr. TED LIEU of California. It is about 5 hours to 5½ hours, depending on the wind.

Mr. GALLEGO. You and I have been Members of Congress since 2015. At any point in any of your flights to and from your work—I am sorry—from here to your home, have you ever used a charter plane?

Mr. TED LIEU of California. No.

Mr. GALLEGO. Would you even be able to, by law, use a charter plane according to the funds we are allowed to expense?

Mr. TED LIEU of California. No. If I did that, I would be the subject of an immediate congressional ethics investigation.

Mr. GALLEGO. So what makes Mr. PRICE think that he is somehow above the law, that he is allowed to do this, considering that he knew, as a Member of Congress, that was not allowed and that somehow he can just take advantage of the situation now that he has suddenly moved up after only just a few months of being in Congress, to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services?

Mr. TED LIEU of California. That is a great point because what Secretary Price, and Mnuchin, and EPA Administrator Pruitt did was not only disrespectful to taxpayers, there were violations of the Federal regulations. So I am just going to read to you what the Federal regulation says. It says, ''Your agency must select the method most advantageous to the government,'' when considering travel.

Advantageous to the government, not to Secretary Price, or Mnuchin, or EPA Administrator Pruitt. They violated that Federal regulation straight up. That is why Tom Price is under Federal investigation. That is why the IG is investigating Treasury Secretary Mnuchin, and now we call on an investigation of EPA Administrator Pruitt as well for violating the Federal regulations.

Mr. GALLEGO. While you were talking about that actual regulation, and to see how well and easy it is not to violate the regulation, I literally just typed into Google, ''flights to Philadelphia.'' And there is a flight leaving in 46 minutes. And the cheapest I found right now—well, no, I found one for $441. I found another one for $447. If you want to connect to Philadelphia—which I don't know why you would—but if you want to do that, JetBlue will take you there for $264.

So in Secretary Price's effort to live an extravagant lifestyle and basically void himself of all commonsense, he also violated ethics violations. And this is something that we consistently see within this Trump administration.

On the other flip of that, we consistently see a Republican-led Congress that is not doing their duty by the Constitution of oversight on the executive. Not one, not one movement has been done by any Republican, especially Republican leadership, to push back on this egregious waste of taxpayer money.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to Representative LIEU.

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Let me again conclude by thanking Congressman GALLEGO and Congressman RASKIN for highlighting this issue with me today. This really is an issue about the public trust. Taxpayer funds should not be used for luxury private jet travel. It is a very simple issue.

Please join us in supporting the SWAMP FLYERS Act. Please join Congressman GALLEGO and us in calling for the resignation of Secretary Price.

As Abraham Lincoln said: ''Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed.''

Help us change public sentiment and help us tell the Trump administration: Please stop using taxpayer funds for luxury jet travel.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GALLAGHER). The Chair would remind Members to direct all remarks to the Chair and to formally yield and reclaim time when under recognition.

DYNAMIC SCORING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, my hope is that you find this as entertaining as I did putting some of this together. Actually, let's put these boards up. We are going to actually do something that, with the rollout of the tax reform mechanics—and I apologize to everyone. Some of this is going to be a little geeky. But I wanted to try to put some things in perspective because I have heard some and read some crazy stuff the last couple of days.

So we are going to actually do some dynamic scoring 101. And, actually, at that moment, I think I just heard thousands, if not tens of thousands, of C–SPAN watchers just turn their televisions off. But this is actually important, because every time we are heading towards working on major tax reform or other types of programs that actually have big, bold policy built within them, we get into this sort of debate.

What are the effects? What are the effects on society? What are the effects on tax revenue? What are the effects on labor participation? What are the effects on our entitlement programs? And there is sort of this intellectual duplicity around this body. I know that is a little harsh, but we have got to be honest about it. If it were the stimulus package from President Obama several years ago, we had lots of Members on this side who actually talked about, supported, and thought the dynamic scoring models were great.

But when we actually talk about something within the Tax Code, rewriting the Tax Code, well, then dynamic scoring is just unacceptable. So I am going to ask everyone to open up your minds and first understand, when we talk about scoring, what we really mean. And we are going to touch on a handful of things, and this is going to be very elementary, sort of basics. So we are going to walk through a number of these.

And then I have a number of slides that we will get to in a moment that are more about examples of what math means when looking at it. And the fact of the matter is, there are such things as tax cuts that do not pay for themselves, but there are also such things, actually, as tax policy that do pay for themselves.

You have to just choose and be willing to work through the math, and the history of math, and stop being afraid of data around this place.

I get behind this microphone quite often and run this joke that this is sort of a math-free zone. And I am working

really hard to drag my brothers and sisters on both sides to understand that sometimes the folklore we believe in is correct, but a lot of times it just isn't.

First off, before we do some of the slides, I want to walk through some of the terms. How often do you hear us talk about the baseline? Okay, we talk about it all the time. The baseline is this—you do realize, the baseline actually does have a series of dynamic aspects when we build it. Why do you think, when we come out here every March, or like we did this last March and then again in June, all of a sudden the numbers have changed? That is a case where the world did not stay static. We didn't create a number a year ago, and that is what the world stayed.

Remember, we went through this really ugly, uncomfortable thing this year, where, in just a few months, the deficit actually grew dramatically to the point where we are almost borrowing $700 billion this year. And if we went back a year and a half, we thought this year we might be as low as $500 billion, $550 billion. So if we had stayed static, we would still be just pretending that we were at that number.

We recalculate constantly. But it is not just calculating, hey, here are the tax revenues. It is also, hey, we see this trend in number of people taking jobs; hey, we see this trend in number of people signing up for entitlement benefits. So understand, we already, for years, and years, and years, have lived in a dynamic scoring sort of model right now, and we call it our baseline.

I also want us to try a couple other things. I want us to think about dynamic scoring as not that number that is given to us but as a way of ranking decisions. So if I came to you right now and said, ''Hey, we have these things in the tax policy, and here are the effects we believe we see as we have the information today,'' think of it as a tool for making decisions, not that that number is the same number that it is going to actually produce 10 years from now.

□ 1315

With the best data and information we have today, if you as a policymaker—if you are blessed to be one of us who gets to be in this body saying, well, it turns out if I spend the money on this type of tax change compared to the same money on this type of tax change, I get this different effect in the size of our economy, in the number of our brothers and sisters who have jobs and employment opportunities, but also in what it effects in tax revenues.

So I know that is culturally hard for a lot of us because we all like to beat up CBO and the Joint Committee on Taxation. But in all fairness, a dynamic scoring model is a ranking model.

What is the real difference? If I asked you just to say in a single sentence we all had to agree upon a common definition of here is static, here is dynamic, the real difference is a dynamic score has calculations that reflect changes to the size of our economy, which is really important.

Now I am going to digress to one side. About once a month I get behind this microphone, and we do a series of slide presentations on how much trouble we are in. The fact of the matter is that in not that distant of a future, we will barely have the revenues to cover our entitlement costs. We are living in a society right now where about three-quarters of our spending is what we call mandatory spending—both earned and unearned entitlements—your Medicare is an earned entitlement. Your Social Security is an earned entitlement. But we also have other types that you get because you fell below a certain income or you may be part of a certain group.

But the vast majority of what we do in this body is not managing the three-quarters of our budget that is on autopilot. These are by formula. If you look at that sort of remaining 25, 27 percent of our budget, well, about a little more than half of that is defense, and everything else is what people think of as government—that is the FBI, that is the National Park Service, that is the FDA, and that is education and research. That will continue to shrink, and it is going to start shrinking fairly dramatically because baby boomers are retiring.

Remember, the peak of the baby boomer is only 60 years old right now. We have our brothers and sisters whom we have made promises to, and this body never sat down and did the hard math to be prepared for what happens when 76 million of our brothers and sisters move into their retirement benefit years.

So one of the critical reasons you do tax reform is economic growth, because without economic growth, it gets really ugly in about a decade.

I continue to be sort of shocked that my brothers and sisters, particularly on the left, who claim to be sort of evangelical advocates for a lot of this entitlement spending, aren't standing alongside of us and saying: We need to do a major rewrite of our Tax Code.

That does just a couple of things. It makes it fairer, and it makes it more simple, but it dramatically—over the next 10, 15, 20, 30 years—expands the size of this economy, because without that expansion, the math is just ugly.

A great example of this is when we talk about dynamic scoring. If you do actual dynamic scoring on what is about to happen over the next, functionally, 20 years of where we are demographically, the models don't work. The actual computer comes back to you and says: Doesn't work, doesn't work, doesn't work, because the math is impossible.

Functionally, the amount of debt to the size of our economy gets so big that the models basically say that society has collapsed. You can't float another bond, and you can't borrow money from anyone else. It comes to an end. When the computer tells you that, when the computer starts giving you a red flashing—maybe if you don't believe those of us who get behind the microphone, maybe they will believe the data.

Let's go ahead and start to walk through some of the slides. We are going to walk through a series of these ideas. I am probably going to say parts of this two or three times to have it sink in.

We have already had a number of our folks quoted in the press and others showing their cynicism towards dynamic scoring. But those are some of the very same people who actually stood in this same well and promoted the immigration reform and the dynamic scoring that was built into the immigration reform. They are the same folks who actually promoted the dynamic scoring that was built in the stimulus bill several years ago. But they are also the same folks who actually believe things like global warming mechanisms, which are built on a dynamic scoring model, are the absolute facts of math.

You can't have the intellectual duplicity of saying: I believe in this sort of modeling math for things I am ideologically comfortable with, but things I am ideologically not comfortable with is not true.

It is math. Let's try one more time because if we are going to come to policy decisions, we have got to stop living in sort of a math-free zone.

I am doing this as more of an example. None of this is actually policy in the tax reform that those of us on the Ways and Means Committee are so incredibly blessed to be working on. It has been the most interesting year of my life grinding out this math. I can't tell you the number of times that I thought I had a brilliant idea, you work it out, and you find out that the really smart people around you had all figured out all sorts of ways to get around your Tax Code changes.

So sometimes you have got to be humble and just understand that what we are doing is tough. It is complicated. If you make one change over here in the Tax Code, then it turns out it affects over here and creates leakage over here. So that is why you have to do this unified theory.

Just so we see this conceptually, if I came to you right now and said, Hey, we have this much money—I think in this model it was $70 billion or $60 billion. The actual dollar amount isn't that important.

If I came to you right now and said, ''You have this much money, you have got to make a Tax Code change with that money,'' if we did a static score, then the model says it costs you that much money. If you spent $60 billion on this over the 10 years, then it costs $60 billion. Then when we do the dynamic scoring, it turns out that not all tax changes produce the same amount of economic growth, even though it may

promote fairness, it may promote simplicity, and there may be some things we haven't calculated.

So on this one, if we take a look over here, this was actually something we took from the Tax Foundation's website. I encourage you to go there. It is a nonpartisan group, and it has some really interesting modeling.

If we functionally doubled the child care tax credit to a couple thousand dollars, it turns out the model over 10 years functionally adds almost nothing to GDP growth. Now you will want to try to model it saying: Does it change birthrates? As you know, we are in a societal crisis right now where our birthrates are falling so low that mathematically, in about 20 years, we are going to have some real difficulties having enough taxpayers moving into society's workforce to actually pay for our pay-as-you-go entitlements.

Social Security and Medicare are pay-as-you-go entitlements. Today's workers are paying for today's retirees. If that population mix of workers moving in gets too out of whack, then the math gets really uncomfortable.

For the same costs, if I came down and in this particular model reduced marginal tax rates, or we have another one where you are going to see we are expensing, which is a type of sort of depreciation that you can take all at once, then all of a sudden this one gets me almost no GDP growth. But the same dollars at that get me well over a point of additional GDP growth.

If I am standing in an event back in Arizona and say, ''We are going to spend $60 billion, and we are going to double the child care tax credit,'' that helps me get re-elected. But if I come and say, ''We are going to spend $60 billion changing the marginal tax rates for corporations, or the exact same money for expensing so businesses, particularly smaller businesses, buy new plants and equipment so we get more efficient so we have more growth so more people have jobs,'' then intellectually we know this is really important for everyone in our society. But this one down here is easier to talk about and easier to get reelected.

That is the tough thing here when we live in a world of these pithy, little sound bites, where we say these quick, little simple things then march off and the intellectual discourse of, hey, it is harder than that, we need to find a way to be simpler and fairer, but we also have to be rational on what creates the next generation of economic growth so our brothers and sisters actually have jobs, they have chances to save, chances to have money to put their kids through college, and even their own retirements.

We are going to walk through a few more of these examples, and then I have some actual data examples of where this is actually happening in our lives.

Now, this slide is a little bit on the geeky side, so forgive me, but this is dynamic scoring 101. All this slide I really want you to look at is, when modeling, it is not only where the money goes, but did it increase the capital stock, and, therefore, there is more capital in these businesses and in these organizations to expand and buy equipment and provide employment, or did it not?

But there is also: Did the tax change that creates that new capital stock stay in our Tax Code long enough that the next generation of new, more efficient equipment, new productivity moves in?

We actually have some really interesting examples that have been produced datawise on what happens if a Tax Code change phases out. We see this a lot where we have done these, hey, this marginal tax rate for business is for 5 years, and then it goes back to the old higher rate. Or what we are struggling through right now is how to get as much economic growth as possible if we create a type of expensing or accelerated type of depreciation, and what happens in the future of that? Does it phase out? And if it does phase out, what are the economic effects?

If you take a look at the green line, you can see what it actually meant both for GDP growth and also for attached within those numbers are revenues. Do you see the red line? So we both have a sympathetic curve here, and then the value of that actually fades away and actually falls, in some occasions, below what would have been a static score because you get the spike of people saying: We have to invest, we have to do this right now, and now we have to back off because of next year.

A good example is if I came to you right now and said: Today you have this tax rate, but 2 years from now we double it, what are you going to do with your life? We are going to work like crazy this year, and that 2 years from now, you are planning on taking a vacation year. It is human nature, and I think we have to stop pretending that the Tax Code somehow operates just outside human nature.

We will grind through some of these a little faster. At the end, we are going to talk about where you can see all these different charts.

Why this is important is when you actually look at the effects of the deficit—and where this was interesting is this was just revenues taken out of society in the ACA, sort of the economic effects of what would happen when we actually did the microeconomic movement calculations, and you actually see if we did repeal those additional dollars—because, remember, this is costing, there is an additional special tax on capital gains and what it is actually doing in economic growth.

We have a lot of slides, so I am going to try to go through some that are a little more entertaining.

What we are trying to show here is what happens when you take, actually, the exact same functional cost with dynamic effects and static effects. This one is from the Tax Foundation.

The real difference is, remember that first slide we walked through where we talked about if we doubled the child care tax credit? Hey, here is our cost, and here is what it actually does. If we dynamically score it or if we actually static score it, oddly enough, it comes out almost identical because there is none of that macroeconomic change.

But if you actually dynamically score it, you will see they actually have tremendously that same spending if it were in corporate tax cuts. It has very different economic scores.

□ 1330

We have another slide. We will show on the one down at the end that, at the end of 10 years, we actually make revenue. The revenue line goes beyond its costs. In the 10 years, the first option does not expand. At the end of 10 years, it is actually scored as a loss. That static score is actually accurate.

There are a number of these sort of examples out there.

I am going to actually go back. This is not being mean. Remember, we are operating under a principle that the dynamic scoring is as much about the money as, hey, we think we are going to have this much tax revenue or this much tax loss at the end of 10 years or the end of the year, but it is also helping us rank.

These are important. From 2003 to 2008, we had a tax change, often referred to as the Bush tax cuts, that was going to be $317 billion over 10 years. If you looked at the models that were generated back there, it was supposed to actually cost society, cost the government money. But when we actually got to the end of that time, the end of the phaseout, it actually produced $77 billion more than that tax cut actually cost.

That is just in our recent memory, but I have a number of charts here that actually show over and over and over that, if the tax cut is actually put in the right place, we get economic growth and, therefore, additional revenue from it.

There are certain things out there that do not pay for themselves. That is why we have this whole discussion of how you find balance if you are working for fairness, if you are working for simplicity, but knowing we must have that economic growth if we are going to keep our promises here. This is just one more example.

When you actually see something like this, this first one is as if we were actually to change depreciation tables, that function. It ends up taking about $308 billion out of GDP if we dynamically score it.

Each one of these tax policies costs $32 billion. That is actually the idea. This costs $32 billion to the taxpayers.

So, if I came right now and said we need to raise $32 billion and we intend to do it in a change in the Tax Code, and then we go out there and say, all right, let's change depreciation tables to business and we take in $32 billion of

additional money, what did we just do to the economy?

In a static score, it says, hey, you just got $32 billion. If you do a dynamic revenue estimate, which actually does have some macro effects in there, we actually just lost $38 billion, because business slowed down.

But if you do the dynamic scoring of what it does over 10 years to the economy, that $32 billion of hopeful tax revenue actually shrunk the U.S. economy by over $300 billion. When they build this model, they are using data going back to the 1950s.

But we have an example on the other side. If you go to the far side, what if you were to disallow half of State and local taxes as a deduction? It turns out you would say that we are getting $32 billion because that is what it is written at. You end up bringing in about $29 billion, but you only shrink the economy by $19 billion.

Policywise, staticwise, they both say $32 billion in new taxes, but they both have dramatically different effects on the economy. When we actually talk about the dynamic scoring, it is both actually on the tax-raising side as much as the tax-cutting side.

The same sort of concept here, but what if we did it going the other direction? Actually, the same slide we just did, what does that mean in the percentage of GDP, if anyone is sort of thinking in that fashion.

The first one, where we actually changed the depreciation tables, we took away of the ability of businesses—particularly, smaller business—to depreciate. It ends up shrinking the U.S. economy almost two points over those 10 years. State and local taxes are actually less than, I think, 0.16 of a percent of GDP over those 10 years.

So when you actually hear the phrase ''tax cuts don't pay for themselves,'' or, ''you don't get the revenues expected,'' that is actually true, except for properly designed and properly targeted.

This is actually the flip side of what we just did. Remember, we just did two boards that showed both the revenues and the actual percent of GDP we raise taxes. How about now if we do sort of the exact same thing but we do it as a tax cut?

Once again, you are going to actually see—and I am sorry, I put additional notes to make it understandable—that not all tax cuts are the same. In this case, I am going from one end to the other side.

So let's say we go to the full end and we did full expensing. So instead of a depreciation table where, over the 7 years, it is this piece of equipment, or 10 years, whatever it may be, what if you could take the value of that almost immediately? In a dynamic model, it is adding a couple hundred billion dollars to the size of the economy.

But if those same dollars, the same amount was spent on, let's say, over here, we cut the bottom tax rate, that might be the appropriate thing to do for societal fairness. But we have to be cognizant, when we are calculating, what that means in GDP growth. You can see the blue here in the end, and the blue here is positive, but barely. That is over 10 years.

This makes it hard because, so often, the very tax policies that are good for us in our reelections may not actually be best for what is good for society and its opportunity for jobs and economic growth.

This is now sort of the exact same slide, but in the percentages and sort of understanding, when we doubled the child care tax credit or we lowered the individual brackets, maybe doubling the child care tax credit actually has an effect on birthrates. That would be terrific for society, and particularly for the future of our ability to pay into our entitlements, but if you are looking for GDP expansion and economic growth, it is marginal.

The expensing or the corporate tax cuts, when you see those on there, you actually see we have substantially more of what they call capital stock. That is the money that is used to buy new equipment to get more productive, to hire more people, to raise their salaries, and for all of us to have more opportunity.

I think we are going to make this our last one. This is the easiest one to sort of get our heads around, and it is the crispest of all.

Say you are a fellow Member of Congress and I come to you and say we have $70 billion, over 10 years, that we can plug into on the Tax Code, we have that much capacity. Where do we put it that is best for our society?

The initial instinct is to have that discussion of, well, what if we were to cut the bottom Federal tax rate? It is wonderful for our hardworking brothers and sisters who are at the lowest tier of income. It would be wonderfully fair. How about if we put that into expanding the child care tax credit, expanding that? How about if you put that money into expensing?

If you get in front of an audience and we did an audience vote, what do you think we would get?

The fact of the matter is, when you look at the models, what we have learned from the dynamic scoring, some may get almost no economic expansion. We may get economic fairness, which is a laudable goal. But, ultimately, over the next decade, I need my brothers and sisters in this country to have more job opportunities, more ability to be employed, putting that money into expensing so we get more productive as a society in buying new plants and equipment and machinery to make us more productive so we can pay people more, so we have the ability to save for education, for their retirements. That actually has over 5 percent additional expansion of the size of our economy.

These are the types of issues that those of us on the Ways and Means Committee have been struggling with over the last year and are going to struggle over the next month as we try to find that balance of what is simplicity, what is fairness, but also what maximizes economic growth.

Just as a couple of little last pieces here to sort of understand this.

I am begging for those of us who are going to be in this sort of battle, debate, that we do our best to sort of be intellectually honest about what we are talking about.

A good example is the number of dollars we are talking about right now in rewriting the Tax Code is, I think, 1 percent or so of GDP, maybe less than that. The stimulus from several years ago was 7 percent of GDP.

We have had some folks who are criticizing this over here and saying you intend to dynamically score that, but were almost giddy about spending and scoring actual spending over here that we learned later did not allocate well.

There is a concept, if I had a dollar, where would it be spent best to grow society, if I gave it to you as an individual, as a businessperson or an entrepreneur, saying: Where would you put that? Would you try and take that dollar and do something with it that grows the economy?

Or we have the other side over here. When government spends it, we have this bad habit of spending money on things that are often politically driven and that don't necessarily have the same type of economic expansionary effects. It is this thing called price theory, where money gets allocated into society. Who is better at allocating that dollar?

I will make you an argument that individuals in the market actually have a long history of doing it much healthier, much better.

As we finish what we will call Dynamic Scoring 101, what did we learn?

The scores are incredibly important in making decisions about how you allocate resources, both on raising taxes, lowering taxes. Where does it have the most impact? Where does it do the most damage? Where does it do the most good?

Dynamic scoring is actually a ranking mechanism, because the ultimate number, we are never going to have enough information to be perfect, but all we can do is take the information we have today and try to find a way to say, with today's information, this use of these resources creates this much more opportunity in our society than spending the same dollars over here.

So when we are going to get into this debate about what the dynamic scoring is providing those of us who are making the policy, understand, it is sometimes more of choosing A over C, because A produces more expansion in our society, more opportunity, even though they cost the same, than sometimes looking at the dollar amounts.

Often, as we saw on some of these boards here, the dollar amounts, if we

statically score it, are the same. They just have different effects.

This is really, really important. So think of dynamic scoring as just that: it is the scorekeeping of how we all do this.

For everyone that is actually interested in this, I will strongly encourage you to go to the Joint Committee on Taxation's website. I believe they actually have a tab there that actually geeks out a little bit on what dynamic score is, particularly if you are an accounting or quant major. You will love this stuff.

Also, the Tax Foundation, which is nonpartisan. We have actually borrowed lots of information from them. They actually have some really great examples of, when we, over the years, have made certain types of policy decisions, what has been good for society and where we have actually missed and not gotten near the numbers that we have promised.

Do understand that, when we take a look at what we did in 2003, the U.S. economy ended up being 4.6 percent larger by 2006. So, from 2003 to 2006, we actually were 4.6 percent larger—I know these are a little bit geeky—than the models back then provided for.

□ 1345

It is not that the models were bad and evil. They just didn't have all the data. But they still provided an opportunity for the policymakers, back in 2003, to actually make their decisions.

So I hope—actually, if anyone actually found this interesting, please write and tell us. If you are now bored out of your mind and we helped you sleep, please let us know. But the reality of it is, what is about to happen in the debate over tax reform is going to have a lot of really technical, really complicated debating points in it.

As I learned yesterday, when we were rolling out some of the math, some of our brothers and sisters who desperately do not want us to have a win decided that zero was a tax hike. I just beg of everyone for at least on this issue, if we can sort of pull our partisan rage away and just sort of focus on the working population of our society and how we help and also how do we help for the future so my 2-year-old daughter, so your children, so my family that may be heading towards retirement, everyone has a fair chance. And that fair chance can only happen if we really start to grow this economy and start to grow it fairly dramatically.

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

RETURN OF STEVE SCALISE AND REPEALING OBAMACARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, this has been a day that answered a lot of our prayers seeing our good friend STEVE SCALISE here, and it brings to mind part of the story of that tragic morning that I haven't heard told anywhere else.

One of our Members, Georgia Congressman BARRY LOUDERMILK, was there, and he was—the shooter started from behind the third base dugout and hit STEVE SCALISE right away. It was so deeply touching to hear STEVE's words today. It is just rather emotional seeing so many of our prayers answered, seeing STEVE return to the House.

That morning, BARRY was saying that he was behind a little closet area, and as the shooter was moving toward the first base side continuing to shoot, Matt Mika had already been shot and was down, and BARRY realized that he had no place to go. He looked for places to run, and there was no place to run.

The shooting had been going on for a while, perhaps 9 or 10 minutes at that point. Capitol Police Officer Griner was there. She and David Bailey, the other Capitol Police officer, were using their suburban for cover and shooting at the shooter—the hate-filled leftist who felt like it was a good idea to kill as many Republicans in Congress as he could.

It was gratifying to hear that admission from our friend from Maryland, former majority leader HOYER, that it was hateful. He was full of hate. He was a leftist who had supported BERNIE SANDERS. It is not BERNIE's SANDERS' fault. You don't hear Republicans blaming a party or a candidate that a hate-filled person supported, but he was going to kill people. He was doing what he could.

BARRY had no place to go, and he was working his way to where he was about—BARRY was going to be in the open and could see there was no place to go, and he said a prayer. He saw that Officer Griner had been shot in the ankle, and she was trying to return fire but under tremendous amount of pain.

Just when it looked hopeless, David Bailey stepped out, completely uncovering himself. He had no cover at that point, and yelled twice: ''Drop your weapon. Drop your weapon.'' And as he said those words, the shooter fired twice at him. And as soon as he finished saying, ''Drop your weapon'' the second time, he fired twice and took the shooter down. Incredible courage.

When I saw David Bailey out at the hospital a few days after the shooting, I said: ''BARRY LOUDERMILK said that when it looked pretty hopeless for him, you stepped out from behind the suburban completely uncovered, that you made yourself a target taking all the attention toward yourself. Did you do that?''

And David Bailey, a hero in every sense of the word, with his normal casual way of speaking, just said: ''It hit me all of a sudden. I had to make it him or me. I had to make it him or me. That is when I stepped out. And, fortunately, it was him.''

That kind of courage—when a shooter is about to get to a position to take out a bunch of defenseless people, some lying on the ground in the dugout, if he had made it just a little further, there would have been a lot of people killed that day.

Crystal Griner shooting as she could and David Bailey stepping away from any cover, and he just instinctively knew, ''I have to make it him or me,'' thank God and thank David Bailey he is still here today and the hate-filled shooter is not.

So it was touch and go. The hate that filled this leftist shooter almost did in a couple of people who day. But by the grace of God, the great work of the doctors—but as the doctor said out there that night after the shooting, telling me, the President, Melania, and my staff member Andrew Keyes, it was—he said he would be on pins and needles that night because he just didn't know.

To see STEVE SCALISE, our dear friend, standing right here earlier today, is just an answer to prayer, and I can't wait to cook ribs again for my friend STEVE SCALISE very soon.

It is also a good day for America, despite the House passing a bill that would have helped Americans by at least repealing part of ObamaCare, as we had promised, and despite the immense suffering by millions around this country who actually became victims of the lie that if you like your insurance, you can keep it; if you like your doctor, you can keep him or her—well, it turns out those were lies when they were spoken, and the people who spoke them knew they were lies when they spoke them. It was discussed that that would not be the case, they wouldn't be able to keep their insurance, and people haven't.

It is a bit disingenuous when some of the alt-left media boasts that so many millions of people have gotten insurance that didn't have it, because there are an awful lot of people in my district that had insurance and, because of ObamaCare, they lost it, and then they were put on Medicaid—not even Medicare, but Medicaid. So they lost their doctor, they lost the hospital that was no longer in the network for Medicaid that they had before. ObamaCare took their insurance.

The people who have talked to me in east Texas and as I go around in other parts of the country, they were desperate. They have been desperate. They are still desperate. They say: Please, you got to give us some help.

It is tragic when you have some millionaires in the Senate who can get whatever healthcare they want, turning a cold shoulder to those suffering around the country because the countless promises they made to repeal ObamaCare are being broken every day we are in session and the Senate does not pass at least some kind of repeal of ObamaCare.

I mean, what kind of person promises over and over, ''You elect me, I will repeal ObamaCare, I will get it repealed,'' knowing that there will be a

smug and proud vote against any effort to repeal, even partially repeal ObamaCare?

You make promises like that knowing that, without those promises, you would not get elected. People count on your promises because they really are hurting, they need the medicine that they are not getting under the new Medicaid, they don't have the doctor that was providing so much help under their insurance before ObamaCare took it away. And an almost cheerful breaking of those promises, it really is tragic. It is simply tragic.

It is really unfortunate that they don't have the millions, like some Senators, to get whatever healthcare they want, that they make—they could suffer less, perhaps be cured if Republican Senators all kept their promises.

□ 1400

It is just tragic. But despite that, this has been a week where the House has done what we can under reconciliation. We sent a bill to the Senate. They didn't have to pass that bill, just something so that we could have a conference bill to give Americans the help they needed.

We have done what we can there, so we are taking up tax reform. And if we do the right thing by Americans, they will have more money in their pockets. If we pass the bill that has just been proposed—I don't have all the details—the framework certainly looks like something we can really work with that will put a lot more money in middle class pockets.

It is interesting. I hear some people, especially at the other end of the hall in the opposite party, opposing party, who make efforts to tax the poor in order to reward Republican rich friends. We saw back in 2008, there were apparently a whole lot more rich people on Wall Street that supported Barack Obama than supported the unfortunate losing candidate of the Republican Party that year.

Yeah, the rich people on Wall Street, more of them supported Barack Obama. That kind of goes against what is thought to be conventional wisdom that the Republicans are rich and the Democrats are poor when the reports we have to file annually indicate that some of us came here without anything and we sacrificed virtually everything we had to run, to try to make a difference in this country, and we haven't become rich by being here; whereas, there are an awful lot of millionaire Democrats here in the House and in the Senate.

But if you look at what has been proposed, the lowest tax rate in America right now is 10 percent. And it appears, we are told, it should be everybody paying 10 percent right now should end up paying no tax. Well, personally, I would rather see us have everybody pay something in the way of income tax, pay something, the lowest rate possible—whether it is 6, 7, or 8 percent, maybe 7 percent, something—so that every single American pays an income tax so they understand how important it is to have a frugal government and not just constantly be handing out welfare, especially in cases that involve fraud.

I had a lady that was telling me there in Tyler, Texas, that she used to, every spring, work for H&R Block in helping people prepare their tax returns. She said she finally had to give it up. People would come in and they wouldn't have Social Security numbers. They would have tax ID numbers.

Now, why would they have tax ID numbers? Well, even though the law says that you are not supposed to be filing tax returns because you are not supposed to be working if you don't have a Social Security number, the IRS assumed—and we know what that means, they assumed—that, gee, if we give people a tax ID number, then they will pay income tax, and that will bring in more money to the coffers.

But, according to this lady, the reason she couldn't do it anymore was she was becoming a nervous wreck because so many people were coming in with tax identification numbers, not Social Security numbers, and they would have a list of things that they would want her to put in their tax return. And they always had, she said, a number of children listed that they wanted to claim that would ensure that they got more money back from an earned income tax credit than they even paid in.

Since she was a senior citizen on a fixed income, the little extra help that she made helping people prepare tax returns, she gave it up. It was driving her a bit crazy to help people get back more money than they paid in over and over and over again when she understood the law. That is not supposed to be what happened.

So a lot of people say, hey, folks that are illegally in the country—and we are not talking about any particular place, just people illegally here from wherever they are—when they file a tax return and get more back than they paid in, then that is not quite as some represent, oh, gee, they pay so much money in income tax, they are good for the country.

Well, we know an awful lot of hard workers who we have seen—illegal aliens. I hear contractors say: I found out one of my best workers is not here legally.

But it brings us back to the point: Why are such hardworking people especially coming from south of the border into the United States? Well, obviously, for those type of folks—they came in and they are hardworking—they came to get jobs.

But that begs the question: Why are they having to come to the United States to get jobs? They are hardworking. Why wouldn't they find jobs in Mexico or El Salvador or Guatemala? Why wouldn't they find jobs in these other Central American countries or Mexico? The answer is obviously very clear: it is because of all of the corruption.

Even though I understand the President of Mexico recently claimed there were no drug cartel murders going on at the very time when there were an enormous number that happened within the few days of him saying that, we know there is murder, there is corruption, and it is from the drug cartels.

And the gangs and the coyotes that bring people into the United States illegally, they answer to the drug cartels. It is the Border Patrol that told me over and over, every inch of the U.S.-Mexico border is spoken for by some drug cartel; and if you cross into the United States without paying an appropriate price or dues to that drug cartel, then you are not going to last very long because they feel they have to make an example of you.

I saw one estimate of $70 billion or $80 billion, somewhere around there, estimated to have gone from the United States into Mexico, to the drug cartels, for illegal drugs. Well, if we build a wall where it is appropriate and we totally secure our border 100 percent, then that $70 billion, $80 billion that is used for the drug cartels in their corruption of the Mexican cities and federal government and state government, that dries up to nothing. And if we could help dry up the $70 billion to $80 billion to $70,000 or $80,000 for illegal drugs, then, finally, we would help Mexico—as the best neighbor Mexico could ever dream of having—to become one of the very top economies in the world.

They ought to be one of the top 10 economies now, maybe top 5. All the massive natural resources that Mexico has, they are actually in a better location for trade than the United States. They are between two continents, North and South America. They are between two oceans like we are, the Pacific and the Atlantic, with, of course, the Gulf of Mexico in between. They ought to be a top 10 economy, but they are not because of corruption from the drug money that illegally crosses the U.S. border into Mexico. We cut that off.

And then you have all these hardworking people who just want to help their families. They don't want to have to flee the country they love to find a job. The jobs would be abounding all over Mexico. Isn't that what a friendly, caring neighbor would do for a neighbor? Shouldn't we want to help Mexico stop the corruption? Of course.

And any Mexican-elected official who says that there is no corruption, that there is no drug cartel influence, or that there is nobody being killed by the drug cartels, well, a statement by a Mexican-elected official that those things are not going on is an indication that that elected official is either completely ignorant of what is going on in his or her country or they are, as one would suspect, under the finger of the drug cartels themselves.

So I am hopeful we are going to be able to get a wall where we need it. President Trump and Attorney General

Sessions are both doing everything they can to help secure the border. We need a Secretary of Homeland Security, and I am sure that will be coming quickly. The Democrats will probably try to block whoever it is for as long as they can, but we need a Secretary of Homeland Security; and we need our border secured not merely to help us, but as being the best possible thing we could do as a caring neighbor of Mexico.

Our Republican Conference we had in the House yesterday seemed very productive. We had a good discussion about the proposed tax reform, and, as I was mentioning earlier, you will have people who have been paying 10 percent will go to paying nothing. Some that are paying much higher taxes will be cut down to 12 percent, and brackets indicating that there is going to be an awful lot more money in the pockets of people who are working, that will be fantastic, because when we leave more money in the pockets of those who have actually earned it, it gets the economy going.

People, whom I have immense respect for, like Dr. Arthur Laffer, Stephen Moore, Larry Kudlow, it is very clear to them, when they run the numbers, we could never adequately tax our way out of bankruptcy the direction we are headed. We couldn't. We cannot tax enough. If you put on too much tax, then people quit working.

But the way to make Social Security solvent and to make Medicare solvent is if we get the economy growing not at the 1.8 percent—I believe that was the average for the Obama administration—but for the good of everybody. People keep the money in their pockets. That allows them to spend it, and it causes the economy to grow.

I know, during the Obama administration, they saw 3 percent growth in the economy as just being virtually impossible; and I can understand, because their idea was tax, tax, tax, and that kills an economy. Whereas, if you allow people to have more of their own money, they spend more of their money. That allows more jobs to be created, and there are more people paying taxes. They begin making more, so they are paying higher taxes, even though it is at a lower rate. That helps stimulate the economy.

□ 1415

I was really hoping that President Trump's number of 15 percent corporate tax would work out to be our number for corporate tax. I was hoping that would be for regular C corporations, as well as a pass-through subchapter S corporation, because President Trump and I and others know that if it is a 15 percent corporate tax, then we would get back most of the manufacturing jobs, which fled America because of our massive 35 percent tax. Actually, by the time you add in all the others, it is well over 40 to 50 percent tax on corporations.

The reason some of us say the corporate tax is one of the most insidious taxes there is is because the government defrauds Americans into thinking they are not paying the corporate tax. These evil, rich corporations are paying those taxes. They are saying: ''We are not paying them. Make the evil corporations.'' Whereas, anybody that is going to really be honest about it would have to say: ''Well, the truth is, yeah, it is actually a pass-through from the customer, because if the corporation doesn't pass on that massive tax they are paying, they go out of business.''

So it is actually an additional tax on the little guy. So the middle class, lower-income folks are paying the big corporate tax. It is not the wealthy. It is the customers that are paying all that extra corporate tax.

So if you got the tax rate for corporations down to 15 percent, those companies start coming back, the manufacturing jobs come back.

As I mentioned to the President one time: ''Mr. President, you understand it because of your great business acumen, and I understand it from studying history, but any major nation that cannot manufacture what they need in a time of war will not be a major nation after the next war.''

The President wants those jobs back. It is not 15 percent being proposed. It is 20 percent. But that will bring back jobs. Not as many as if we had a 15 percent corporate tax, but it will bring back jobs.

I know there are those who say: Oh, we have evolved in America. We are more of a service economy. We don't want to be a manufacturing economy with those dirty jobs.

Yes, we do. We need to have those manufacturing jobs. Those are good jobs. We have requirements that you have to be concerned about the health of Americans. And by doing that, we bring back the jobs, we help our economy, and we actually save Social Security and Medicare.

I see my friend, Dr. HARRIS, is here.

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

TAX REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HARRIS) for 30 minutes.

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas is absolutely right. An important thing happened this week. We announced that the American public is going to get a tax cut.

As I go around my district, as I am sure Members when they go around their districts, one thing they rarely hear is: You know, Washington spends their money very efficiently. They do everything just right. So why don't you tax me a little bit more?

We don't hear that.

What we hear is that hardworking Americans want to keep more of their paycheck. They look at what the Federal Government takes out of their paycheck. They don't think they are getting their money's worth. Honestly, Mr. Speaker, once you are around here a while, you realize they are probably not getting their money's worth.

So what we are going to do is we are going to follow the President's lead. The President has said that what he wants is a tax reform bill that cuts taxes in America so that businesses come back to America, that our job creators get tax relief, and that hardworking middle class American families can keep more of their paychecks. And that is exactly what the tax reform outline has laid out for the American public this week.

Now, from the naysayers, you will hear the same old lines: tax cuts for the rich, blah, blah, blah.

The bottom line is that we are going to relieve the tax burden on American businesses that will bring jobs back to this country.

Mr. Speaker, if you look over the past 35 years of what has happened, from 1980 to 2015, the corporate tax rates, back in 1980, the top line of this graph is the U.S. tax rate, marginal corporate tax rate, which was around 50 percent at the time. It was just about the same as what the worldwide average was.

In the 1980s, the last time we had major tax reform under the leadership of President Reagan, we dropped the corporate tax rate to under 40 percent, and at that time, it was right in the middle of where the corporate taxes were worldwide. So the companies had no advantage to take their businesses and move it overseas in order to save taxes.

But something very interested happened. If you look at the top line here, since then, our corporate tax rate has stayed at right about 40 percent. It is now 39.6 when you add in both the Federal taxes and the State corporate taxes, but the worldwide averages have fallen.

Mr. Speaker, other countries around the world have figured out that businesses will go to countries and they will create jobs in those areas where the taxes are lower.

So what has happened?

So if you look at what the corporate taxes look like now and what the corporate tax rates are around the world, these are the 35 leading nations, our competitors in the world. The United States now has the highest corporate tax rate at 38.9 percent combined. Again, the Federal plus the State tax rate. France and Belgium, 34 percent. Germany, 30 percent.

But if you look at where we are losing our business to, it turns out that very small countries like Ireland, way down at the bottom, years ago lowered their corporate tax rate to 12½ percent.

And what happened?

We moved businesses to Ireland.

When I worked in the operating room—and still do a few days a year—I would pick up what is called an endotracheal tube. It is a tube we use when

we breathe for a patient. It goes into their windpipe and they breathe through it. I would pick it up—and this happened 15 years ago—look at it and say: ''Wait a minute. This is made in Ireland. How in the world are medical items like this made in Ireland?'' And I would look at other items in the operating room, and they were made in Ireland.

I didn't know at the time that the reason was that Ireland lowered its corporate tax rate, and literally many things that used to be made in the United States, like those endotracheal tubes, like other medical devices, were now made in Ireland; not by Americans, but by people in Ireland. We lost those jobs over there, and it was as a result of our corporate tax rate.

So our other competitors, you know, we look at car manufacturers, Korea, 24 percent corporate tax rate. Again, ours is at 38.9 percent. We look at other places around the world. The United Kingdom, Britain, one of our largest trading partners and one that certainly competes with us for businesses, whether it is the pharmaceutical industry or whether it is other businesses, they are at 19 percent. We are at 38.9 percent.

So what does this tax plan do?

This tax plan says that for those corporations that are moving businesses around the world based on a tax rate, we can't have the highest tax rate in the world, because what we have seen is the emptying of American manufacturing to places around the world where the tax rate is lower.

Mr. Speaker, I would offer that if you or I invented something today and we looked to manufacture it somewhere, where would we go? Would we stay in the United States with a 38.9 percent combined corporate tax rate? Or would we go to Ireland, where it is 12½ percent, where, for every item we make, our company can make more money, invest that back in the company and take profits from it?

Of course we would go to Ireland.

So what do we have to do?

We have to address that. The President has said this is one of his top priorities, because this will bring back the jobs that have bled from the United States.

When we looked at what is called a corporate inversion, where a company looks to buy an American company, move its headquarters overseas, it is doing it for tax purposes.

Why should that happen? Why shouldn't we be attracting these companies to the United States? How do we do it?

We do it by lowering the corporate tax rate. The plan, the outline that we have put forward to the American people this week lowers the corporate tax rate to 20 percent. Again, from 35 percent, which is the Federal rate, to 20 percent. It lowers it to the lowest among our competitive countries. Now, not as low as I would like to see it go, not as low as the President would like to see it go. The President thinks we need to be way down at the bottom of that chart. That is how we need to attract businesses back.

Mr. Speaker, to be honest, if we lower the tax rate just to be competitive, we are not competitive anymore. Companies will bring their business back to the United States for the reasons that a lot of businesses originally were in the United States: we have a highly trained workforce, we have the rule of law, we have a lot of benefits for businesses to do business here.

Now, if Congress agrees, if we can come up with this reform plan, we are going to be seeing businesses fighting each other to come back into the United States because they realize this is the place they can do business best.

Mr. Speaker, only a minority of jobs are actually produced by those large corporations, what we call C corporations, the ones that paid the ''corporate income tax.''

So the President said he also wanted to emphasize that what we need to do is lower the tax rate on our small businesses because, as you know, almost two-thirds of the jobs created in this country are created by small businesses.

So the Unified Tax Reform Framework, our tax plan, limits the maximum tax rate for small and family-owned businesses to 25 percent. Mr. Speaker, today that tax rate is 39.6 percent. Again, this will allow these small businesses and our family-owned businesses to take the money, invest it; and then when their businesses make money, when they hire workers and they make money, they are allowed to keep more to put back in those businesses, to hire more workers. This is how we get our economy going again.

If you talk to, again, these small businesses and these family-owned businesses, or the larger businesses, there are two things that these businesses say they need in order to succeed. One is they need a regulatory environment that is reasonable.

Mr. Speaker, the last administration was strangling American businesses through overregulation. So the first thing the President did when he came into office, to his credit, is say: We have to have only reasonable regulations. We can't overregulate our businesses. We are stifling them.

Mr. Speaker, it is amazing that over the past 100 years, the average growth in what we call the GDP—the gross domestic product—in the United States, the average growth in GDP is 3.3 percent over 100 years.

Now, over the last administration, of course, you know it has the dubious honor of being the first administration where there was never a year of 3 percent growth. In fact, the average growth was under 2 percent. The mood was so bad in American business and the American business climate that the economists who would predict how the economy was going to operate have actually lowered their expectations of GDP growth to under 2 percent per year for the near future. That is not the America we know.

The America we know leads the world. When we see 6, 7, and 8 percent growth in China, why would we be satisfied with under 2 percent growth?

There is no need to be satisfied with that.

So we have to go to, again, our small businesses and our other businesses and ask them: What do you need to grow and produce jobs, to bring jobs back to this country, to put Americans back to work?

And the answer is: One, relieve us of the regulatory burden.

And from day one, that is what the President has done.

□ 1430

But there is another thing they say. We need relief from our tax rate. Again, the tax rate was the highest in the industrialized world. Our tax rate, the highest in the industrialized world. Our tax rate on small businesses was even higher. 39.6 percent was the highest marginal rate. That is not an environment where businesses thrive.

The President is taking care, to a large extent, of relieving the regulatory burden, the over-regulatory burden, that exists for American businesses.

Now Congress needs to turn its attention to the second leg on that stool, which is the tax problems. So the reform framework does that, and it does it exactly the right way. It says we agree with the President.

Americans are waiting for these jobs to come back. They don't want to see the back end of the moving van leaving American companies and bringing them overseas anymore. They don't like that. I can't blame them. There is no reason why more things can't be made here, more businesses can't thrive here.

So we need to take those steps, but that is only one part of this plan. The President said the other thing we need to do is return more dollars into the pockets of hardworking middle class taxpayers. That is exactly what this plan does. It does it by simplifying the Tax Code, by doubling the standard deduction and lowering all the rates.

The naysayers will say: Well, you know, if you lower the rates, you are going to increase our debt and our deficit. In fact, if you turn on the TV right now, that is what all the talking heads are complaining about. How could those Republicans suggest a plan that will increase our deficit?

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you ask some people over at the Congressional Budget Office what happens to revenues if you increase the tax rate to 200 percent of income, they will say: Oh, it goes up 200 percent.

Well, that is ridiculous. At some point, overtaxation suppresses economic activity, and revenues go down.

Conversely, both with the tax cuts under President Kennedy in the 1960s

and the tax cuts with President Reagan in the 1980s, what we saw when we lowered rates was, in fact, the rejuvenation of the American economy, a stimulation of our GDP, a stimulation of our economy, leading to, in fact, increased revenue in both of those instances.

But in both of those instances, the naysayers said: You can't do this. If you are going to cut your taxes, your deficits will go up. That just plain doesn't happen.

So, yes, if you assume, all else being equal, that if we lower tax rates that revenue will go down, that would be true. But we know what happens when the American people feel the economy is going well, when they are fully employed, when we bring good-paying jobs back to this country and we lower the tax burden directly on hardworking middle class Americans. We know what happens. The economy grows.

With more money in their pockets, people make the decision to buy a car, to buy a house, to buy the new washing machine, to spend money on things that they have been afraid to spend money on because of the stagnant economy over the past 8 years.

We will unleash growth like we haven't seen since the 1980s, when, in response to the Reagan tax cuts, we had GDP growth not of 3 percent, not of 4 percent, but of 5 and 6 percent after that tax cut. So, in fact, tax cuts stimulate the economy, which lifts all boats, and it increases revenues.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have to tackle this challenge.

Now, we know there are a lot of special interests there because, when you simplify the Tax Code, what happens? All the lobbyists come knocking on our doors, and they want to maintain their little piece of this Tax Code.

And the Tax Code runs to thousands and thousands of pages. Very knowledgeable people can't even fill out their tax returns anymore, they are so complicated. Or they are worried they filled it out wrong.

Or, Mr. Speaker, the best thing—or the worst thing—the funniest thing that I hear is that, if you have a tax question and you can't figure out exactly how to do it and you call the IRS, if you call two or three times, you are likely to get two or three different answers about how to fill out that form and how much tax you have to pay.

Well, when you get to that situation, you have gone way too far, and, Mr. Speaker, that is where we are. We are at that situation that a reasonable American can't even fill out their own taxes it has become so complicated.

So, as part of this framework, if we can simplify it the way this framework says, 90 percent of Americans will literally be able to fill out their taxes on something the size of a postcard. That is what we need to get back to, that kind of simplification.

But again, the road won't be easy because we will have all the special interests here in this town, and we know there are a lot of them. We will have all of those special interests knocking on our doors, saying: Please preserve our little carve-out.

But every little carve-out makes the Tax Code more complicated. Every complication means that hardworking Americans don't get to keep as much in their pockets, and that is what we have to solve. We have to solve this problem. It has been getting worse now.

Again, the last time we dealt with the Tax Code in a comprehensive way was 30 years ago. To its credit, at the time, we reduced rates, we stimulated the economy, but we really didn't simplify the Tax Code as much as we would like to at this point.

So it is going to be hard, it is going to take months, and it is going to take a lot of people looking past the naysayers, past the people who say this can't be done, past the people who say the sky is falling, because we have heard this all before.

I am old enough to have heard it in the 1980s. That is when I started working. That is when I started bringing home a paycheck. That is the time when I started realizing what Federal taxation was.

I always tell the story of my oldest daughter, who trained to become a nurse, and she went and got hired. The first time she brought her paycheck—a real paycheck, a full-time job paycheck from the hospital—home, she said: Dad, what is going on here? I thought I was making this amount of money, and this is the amount I bring home.

We all know what happened. You saw all those lines: The Federal tax taken out; the State tax taken out; the local tax taken out; the Social Security tax taken out; the Medicare. You saw all the taxes that were taken out.

So what we have to do is we have to simplify the Code, bring those tax rates down, put more of that money in the pockets of hardworking middle class Americans. We owe them that. Part of that is simplifying that Tax Code. Now, once we do this and we stimulate the economy, we get the economy going again, our deficits will come down.

Look, we have to control spending. There is no question about it. Spending in this town is out of control. There is no question about it. Our deficit will exceed $700 billion a year.

To put that in perspective, that is 20 times the size of my State's entire budget, and that is the amount that we are going to borrow this year.

When people say that we need money for this and we need money for that, every time we ask that question, you know, can we afford it, we have to ask: Can we afford passing this debt on to future generations?

I have five children, now, six grandchildren. My children will never pay off this debt. Those listening at home, if they don't believe me, go and look at the Federal Budget website and look at the projection of Federal debt. It never goes to zero. It never, ever goes to zero—ever—not in my children's lives, not in my grandchildren's lives, not in my great-grandchildren's lives. That is just not the way we ought to run a government.

So once we tackle this tax reform, once we get our economy booming again with businesses vying to come into this country—not to go to some other country, but to come into America to do business—then we have to turn our attention to securing the future for future generations, to making certain that our Social Security system, which our seniors depend on, will not only be here for the seniors now, but for when my children and grandchildren reach their old age; that the Medicare system, which is scheduled now to be bankrupt in 10 years, that the Medicare system that our seniors depend on will not be there just for my generation, not just for my children's generation, but for my grandchildren.

We have to make sure that this country remains the strongest, most powerful country on Earth, a force for good and freedom throughout the world. We have to restore our defense budget. This President, to his credit, has called for that.

But as we restore our defense budget, we do have to redefine our spending priorities, because we don't—or, I guess, maybe we do, print money here, but it is not the right thing to do. We shouldn't be borrowing from future generations to take care of these priorities.

We have to get our economy going, make sure our revenues increase, and then turn our attention to making sure those revenues are spent wisely and that we define the future for our children and grandchildren, a future that they can be proud of in a country that remains, as Majority Whip SCALISE said on this floor today, standing at this podium, a country that the world can look toward for leadership, the country that, for now over a century, the world has looked toward for leadership to be the beacon of freedom, to be what President Reagan called the ''shining city on the hill.'' Mr. Speaker, we do that by restoring the health of our economy.

We took a big step toward that this week with our tax reform framework. We are setting the country up for an economic rejuvenation, for a restoration, for those companies that have gone overseas to come back home. Let our great American workers make their products. Come back home to the greatest country this world has ever known.

Mr. Speaker, that was a big step, but it is only the first step. We have weeks and months of work to get that done, a big job, an important job, but the first step was taken this week.

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 42 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HARRIS) at 4 p.m.

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, September 28, 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 September 28, 2017, at 3:07 p.m.:

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 3823.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

DISASTER TAX RELIEF AND AIRPORT AND AIRWAY EXTENSION ACT OF 2017

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 3823) to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to provide disaster tax relief, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendment thereto, and concur in the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike title IV.

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

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ADJOURNMENT FROM THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2017, TO MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2017

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet on Monday, October 2, 2017, when it shall convene at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

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

There was no objection.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 3819. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

SENATE ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 327. An act to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to provide a safe harbor related to certain investment fund research reports, and for other purposes.

S. 1141. An act 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.

S. 1866. An act to provide the Secretary of Education with waiver authority for the reallocation rules and authority to extend the deadline by which funds have to be reallocated in the campus-based aid programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965 due to Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma, and Hurricane Maria, to provide equitable services to children and teachers in private schools, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, October 2, 2017, at noon 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:

2694. A letter from the Acting Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Specialty Crops Program, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's interim rule — Apricots Grown in Designated Counties in Washington; Decreased Assessment Rate [Doc. No.: AMS-SC-17-0033; SC17-922-1 IR] received September 22, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

2695. A letter from the Chairwoman, Nuclear Weapons Council, Department of Defense and Department of Energy, transmitting a certification that the amounts requested for the National Nuclear Security Administration in the President's budget for Fiscal Year 2018 meet nuclear stockpile and stockpile stewardship program requirements, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 179(f)(1); Public Law 99-661, Sec. 3137(a)(1) (as amended by Public Law 112-239, Sec. 1039); (126 Stat. 1927); to the Committee on Armed Services.

2696. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel, Regulatory Affairs Division, Office of the General Counsel, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Protection of Human Subjects received September 27, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2697. A letter from the Chief Counsel, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Repeal of Regulations Governing the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program [Docket No.: 170627596-7803-02] (RIN: 0660-AA34) received September 21, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2698. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Listing of Color Additives Exempt From Certification; Spirulina Extract; Confirmation of Effective Date [Docket No.: FDA-2016-C-2570] received September 27, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2699. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's NUREG — Final Safety Evaluation of Technical Specifications Task Force Traveler TSTF-546, Revision 0, ''Revise APRM Channel Adjustment Surveillance Requirement'' received September 25, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2700. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's Regulatory Issue Summary — 2017-06 NRC Policy on Use of Combination Dosimetry Devices During Industrial Radiographic Operations received September 25, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

2701. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Removal of Certain Entities from the Entity List; and Revisions of Entries on the Entity List [Docket No.: 170622586-7586-01] (RIN: 0694-AH41) received September 27, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

2702. A letter from the Executive Analyst (Political), Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a notification of a federal vacancy, designation of acting officer, nomination, action on nomination, and discontinuation of service in acting role, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

2703. A letter from the Executive Analyst (Political), Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting two (2) notifications of a federal vacancy, designation of acting officer, nomination, and discontinuation of service in acting role, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

2704. A letter from the Executive Analyst (Political), Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting two (2) notifications of a designation of acting officer, nomination, action on nomination, and discontinuation of service in acting role, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277,

151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

2705. A letter from the Executive Analyst (Political), Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a notification of designation of acting officer, nomination, action on nomination, and discontinuation of service in acting role, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

2706. A letter from the Acting Chief Privacy and Civil Liberties Officer, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule — Privacy Act of 1974; Implementation [CPCLO Order No.: 008-2017] received September 21, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

2707. A letter from the Acting General Council, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Annual Report on Disability-Related Air Travel Complaints received During Calendar Year 2016, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. Sec. 41705(c)(3); Public Law 103-272, Sec. 41705(c)(3) (as added by Public Law 106-181, Sec. 707(a)(3)); (114 Stat. 158); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2708. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; Marine Event held in the Captain of the Port Long Island Sound Zone [Docket No.: USCG-2017-0716] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received September 21, 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.

2709. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; Village of Sodus Point Fireworks; Lake Ontario, Sodus Point, NY [Docket No.: USCG-2017-0718] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received September 21, 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.

2710. 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-2014-0008; Product Identifier 2013-NM-076-AD; Amendment 39-18985; AD 2017-16-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received September 22, 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.

2711. A letter from the Chief, Trade and Commercial Regulations Branch, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Extension of Import Restrictions on Archaeological and Ecclesiastical Ethnological Materials from Guatemala [CBP Dec. 17-14] (RIN: 1515-AE33) received September 25, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

2712. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Pilot Program for Section 355 PLR Procedures (Rev. Proc. 2017-52) received September 27, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

2713. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Defense, transmitting additional legislative proposals that the Department of Defense requests be enacted during the first session of the 115th Congress; jointly to the Committees on Armed Services and Oversight and Government Reform.

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. GOODLATTE: Committee on the Judiciary. House Resolution 488. Resolution of inquiry requesting the President and directing the Attorney General to transmit, respectively, certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the removal of former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey; with an amendment (Rept. 115–335); adversely. Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 1107. A bill to promote conservation, improve public land management, and provide for sensible development in Pershing County, Nevada, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–336). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. MCHENRY (for himself and Mr. BLUMENAUER):

H.R. 3860. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require Internet-based, real-time responses to requests to verify taxpayer income for legitimate business purposes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DUFFY (for himself and Mr. HECK):

H.R. 3861. A bill to reform the Federal Insurance Office of the Department of the Treasury, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. BUTTERFIELD (for himself, Mr. STEWART, and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico):

H.R. 3862. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to extend funding for the National Health Service Corps program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. HARTZLER (for herself, Mr. CLEAVER, Mrs. NOEM, and Ms. BORDALLO):

H.R. 3863. A bill to amend the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 to include sex trafficking victims in the transitional housing assistance grant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on 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. PEARCE (for himself, Ms. MOORE, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. GABBARD, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. HECK, Mr. COLE, and Ms. MCCOLLUM):

H.R. 3864. A bill to reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. SPEIER (for herself, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CORREA, Mr. COSTA, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. LEE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PANETTA, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. TITUS, Mr. TONKO, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H.R. 3865. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to deem certain service in the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines and the Philippine Scouts to have been active service for purposes of benefits under programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas (for himself and Mr. COOK):

H.R. 3866. A bill to amend the Federal Credit Union Act to exclude extensions of credit made to veterans from the definition of a member business loan; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. MULLIN (for himself, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, and Ms. SÁNCHEZ):

H.R. 3867. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to create care management demonstration programs for chronic kidney disease under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BUDD:

H.R. 3868. A bill to establish a bug bounty pilot program within the Department of the Treasury, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BYRNE:

H.R. 3869. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to direct the Secretary of Education to establish a process for accrediting agencies or associations to seek a waiver of certain accreditation requirements; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. DELBENE (for herself and Mr. MARINO):

H.R. 3870. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to lower the cost of college education by establishing pilot programs to expand student access to digital course materials; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. FASO (for himself, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, and Mr. SOTO):

H.R. 3871. A bill to amend the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 to reauthorize and improve the national organic program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. GIANFORTE:

H.R. 3872. A bill to reinstate and extend the deadline for commencement of construction of a hydroelectric project involving the Gibson Dam; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GIANFORTE:

H.R. 3873. A bill to designate a mountain peak in the State of Montana as ''Alex

Diekmann Peak''; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. KILMER (for himself, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. AMODEI, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. PETERS, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. WELCH, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. VALADAO, and Mr. BARR):

H.R. 3874. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on physical security at Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities, to direct the Secretary to make certain improvements relating to inspections of Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities and improving care for women, to direct the Secretary to evaluate the organizational structure of the Veterans Health Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. LAWSON of Florida (for himself, Mr. EVANS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MOORE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. CORREA, Mr. HASTINGS, and Mr. NADLER):

H.R. 3875. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to expand the eligibility of students to participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California (for himself, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. RASKIN, and Ms. JAYAPAL):

H.R. 3876. A bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the official travel of any senior political appointee on private aircraft, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico:

H.R. 3877. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to protect health care consumers from surprise billing practices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico (for himself, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. NADLER, Mr. BEYER, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. NORTON, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO):

H.R. 3878. A bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to provide access to free credit freezes for all consumers; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. O'HALLERAN (for himself and Mr. SCHRADER):

H.R. 3879. A bill to limit the use of Federal funds for the use of the travel expenses of senior Federal officials in contravention of certain regulations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. PALLONE:

H.R. 3880. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize and support the creation and dissemination of cardiomyopathy education, awareness, and risk assessment materials and resources to identify more at-risk families, to authorize research and surveillance activities relating to cardiomyopathy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. PASCRELL (for himself, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. HOYER, Mr. REICHERT, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas):

H.R. 3881. A bill to reauthorize the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program, the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants program, and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. PASCRELL (for himself and Mr. SIRES):

H.R. 3882. A bill to require the Secretary of Transportation to publish a final rule to provide for the screening, testing, and treatment for sleep disorders of individuals operating commercial vehicles; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. CHABOT):

H.R. 3883. A bill to provide for enhanced penalties for certain offenses relating to controlled substances containing fentanyl, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida (for himself and Mr. CRIST):

H.R. 3884. A bill to amend the Missing Children's Assistance Act with respect to the National Child Identification Program; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. SCHNEIDER (for himself and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN):

H.R. 3885. A bill to direct the Attorney General to establish guidelines for a model elder abuse registry and to provide grants to States for establishing and operating such a registry, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia:

H.R. 3886. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the unified credit against the estate and gift tax and to simplify the estate and gift tax rates; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SMITH of Missouri (for himself, Ms. SINEMA, Mrs. HARTZLER, and Mr. KENNEDY):

H.R. 3887. A bill to require Federal agencies and Federal courts to comply with address confidentiality programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SMUCKER (for himself, Mr. EVANS, Mr. VALADAO, and Mr. DUFFY):

H.R. 3888. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants for additional residency slots in children's hospitals graduate medical education programs; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. TENNEY (for herself and Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana):

H.R. 3889. A bill to amend the FAST Act to modify eligibility requirements for participation in a commercial driver pilot program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. VALADAO (for himself, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. SMUCKER, and Mr. BLUM):

H.R. 3890. A bill to provide that determinations of eligibility and level of assistance for rural development programs shall be made without regard to incarcerated prisoner populations; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. WALBERG (for himself and Mr. WELCH):

H.R. 3891. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to clarify the authority of State Medicaid fraud and abuse control units to investigate and prosecute cases of Medicaid patient abuse and neglect in any setting, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. WALORSKI (for herself and Mr. CARSON of Indiana):

H.R. 3892. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an exception for certain spun-off voluntary employees' beneficiary associations to the limitation on the exemption from tax on unrelated business taxable income of amounts set aside for qualified benefits; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. YOHO (for himself, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. SOTO, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. POSEY, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. DEUTCH, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. DUNN, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. CRIST, Mr. ROSS, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. MAST, and Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida):

H.R. 3893. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 100 Mathe Avenue in Interlachen, Florida, as the ''Robert H. Jenkins Post Office''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. LEWIS of Georgia:

H. Con. Res. 82. Concurrent resolution recognizing the International Day of Peace; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. LYNCH (for himself, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. JONES, Mr. KEATING, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. LANCE, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. ROUZER, and Mrs. WALORSKI):

H. Con. Res. 83. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for the unveiling of the American Prisoners of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) Chair of Honor; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Mr. COHEN, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. BABIN, Mr. POCAN, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. NORTON, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. OLSON, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York):

H. Res. 544. A resolution amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to require a reading of the names of members of the Armed Forces who died in the previous month as a result of combat; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mr. ELLISON (for himself, Ms. LEE, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. POCAN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York):

H. Res. 545. A resolution recognizing the violence and other challenges faced by transgender women of color in America; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Education and the Workforce, Financial Services, and Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. MATSUI:

H. Res. 546. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Community Gardening Awareness Week; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. POE of Texas:

H. Res. 547. A resolution expressing support for designation of February 3, 2018, as ''United States Missing Persons Day''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

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. MCHENRY:

H.R. 3860.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to the Congress under Article I, Section 8, clauses 1 and 18 of the Constitution.

By Mr. DUFFY:

H.R. 3861.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clause 1 (relating to the general welfare of the United States); and Article I, section 8, clause 3 (relating to the power to regulate interstate commerce).

By Mr. BUTTERFIELD:

H.R. 3862.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution, Congress has the power to collect taxes and expend funds to provide for the general welfare of the United States. Congress may also make laws that are necessary and proper for carrying into execution their powers enumerated under Article I.

By Mrs. HARTZLER:

H.R. 3863.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clauses 1 and 3 of Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PEARCE:

H.R. 3864.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution: ''The Congress shall have power . . . To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Ms. SPEIER:

H.R. 3865.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas:

H.R. 3866.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1. Section 8.

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By Mr. MULLIN:

H.R. 3867.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BUDD:

H.R. 3868.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. BYRNE:

H.R. 3869.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Ms. DELBENE:

H.R. 3870.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. FASO:

H.R. 3871.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8.

By Mr. GIANFORTE:

H.R. 3872.

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. GIANFORTE:

H.R. 3873.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. KILMER:

H.R. 3874.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. LAWSON of Florida:

H.R. 3875.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution of 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. TED LIEU of California:

H.R. 3876.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section VIII, Clause XVIII

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico:

H.R. 3877.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico:

H.R. 3878.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. O'HALLERAN:

H.R. 3879.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. PALLONE:

H.R. 3880.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I of the Constitution: Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. PASCRELL:

H.R. 3881.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. PASCRELL:

H.R. 3882.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. REED:

H.R. 3883.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida:

H.R. 3884.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

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. SCHNEIDER:

H.R. 3885.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia:

H.R. 3886.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. SMITH of Missouri:

H.R. 3887.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clauses 3 and 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. SMUCKER:

H.R. 3888.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 3 Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution

By Ms. TENNEY:

H.R. 3889.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. VALADAO:

H.R. 3890.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 Clause 18: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or office thereof

By Mr. WALBERG:

H.R. 3891.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause I

By Mrs. WALORSKI:

H.R. 3892.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. YOHO:

H.R. 3893.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

United States Constitution, Article 1, Section 8, cl.7

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 36: Mr. COOK.

H.R. 113: Mr. GOTTHEIMER and Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 154: Mr. PALLONE.

H.R. 173: Mr. ROKITA and Mr. FLORES.

H.R. 246: Mr. SCHNEIDER.

H.R. 392: Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 564: Mrs. DEMINGS.

H.R. 620: Mr. LONG and Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.
H.R. 631: Mr. RENACCI.
H.R. 692: Mr. TURNER.
H.R. 747: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia and Mr. LANGEVIN.
H.R. 771: Ms. HANABUSA.
H.R. 778: Mr. WALBERG.
H.R. 785: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan and Mr. RUTHERFORD.
H.R. 799: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 801: Mr. THORNBERRY.
H.R. 807: Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 811: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 812: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.
H.R. 821: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.
H.R. 909: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 927: Mr. DEFAZIO and Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 959: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 997: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 1017: Mr. DENHAM and Mrs. BUSTOS.
H.R. 1057: Mr. MAST and Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H.R. 1078: Mr. SCHNEIDER, Ms. NORTON, Mr. EVANS, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. CARBAJAL, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. NADLER, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. COHEN, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 1116: Mr. PERLMUTTER.
H.R. 1150: Mr. WILLIAMS and Mr. STEWART.
H.R. 1159: Mr. DUNN, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
H.R. 1225: Mr. MEEHAN.
H.R. 1253: Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.
H.R. 1298: Mr. YODER.
H.R. 1311: Mr. FOSTER.
H.R. 1358: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. SUOZZI, and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.
H.R. 1438: Mr. TONKO, Mr. LYNCH, and Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 1456: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 1468: Mr. PAULSEN.
H.R. 1496: Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. BERA, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. GOMEZ, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. CORREA, and Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 1519: Ms. SINEMA.
H.R. 1563: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 1651: Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. FASO, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. WALBERG, and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 1660: Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
H.R. 1661: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 1676: Mr. TIPTON and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 1697: Mr. BUCHANAN and Mr. RENACCI.
H.R. 1818: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. MEEHAN, and Mr. TIPTON.
H.R. 1949: Mr. KHANNA.
H.R. 1953: Mr. KING of New York, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. TURNER, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. PANETTA, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
H.R. 1972: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 2029: Mr. MCCAUL.
H.R. 2044: Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. MENG, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Ms. KAPTUR.
H.R. 2077: Mr. MARSHALL.
H.R. 2098: Mr. BUDD.
H.R. 2105: Mr. BACON.
H.R. 2121: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 2193: Mr. COOPER, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. PINGREE, and Mr. FOSTER.
H.R. 2232: Mr. POE of Texas.
H.R. 2319: Mr. DAVIDSON.
H.R. 2332: Ms. DELAURO and Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 2345: Mr. JONES and Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 2469: Mrs. DEMINGS.
H.R. 2472: Mr. NADLER, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. GALLEGO, and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 2482: Ms. GABBARD and Mr. UPTON.
H.R. 2589: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 2591: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 2635: Ms. SPEIER.
H.R. 2651: Mrs. LOWEY.
H.R. 2658: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. DESANTIS, and Mrs. DEMINGS.
H.R. 2733: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 2765: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 2790: Ms. SHEA-PORTER and Mr. YARMUTH.
H.R. 2851: Mr. BOST.
H.R. 2899: Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota.
H.R. 2926: Mr. FLEISCHMANN and Mr. DENHAM.
H.R. 2936: Ms. CHENEY.
H.R. 2973: Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. HARPER, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. HURD, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. FASO.
H.R. 3042: Mr. JONES and Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 3053: Mr. GIBBS, Mr. EMMER, Mr. KIND, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. EVANS, and Mr. LUETKEMEYER.
H.R. 3101: Mr. POE of Texas.
H.R. 3138: Mr. O'HALLERAN.
H.R. 3161: Mr. POLIQUIN and Mr. MCKINLEY.
H.R. 3186: Mr. YARMUTH.
H.R. 3192: Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 3197: Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. EVANS, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.
H.R. 3222: Mr. CAPUANO and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.
H.R. 3223: Mr. WEBER of Texas.
H.R. 3282: Mr. GRIFFITH.
H.R. 3324: Mr. NUNES.
H.R. 3342: Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. DESANTIS, and Mrs. DEMINGS.
H.R. 3378: Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 3380: Ms. TSONGAS and Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 3477: Mr. EMMER.
H.R. 3530: Mr. GROTHMAN, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. SOTO, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. KIND, and Ms. HANABUSA.
H.R. 3632: Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas and Mr. CLEAVER.
H.R. 3684: Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. POLIS, Ms. MOORE, and Ms. MCCOLLUM.
H.R. 3711: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.
H.R. 3712: Mr. MULLIN, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. COLE, Mr. JONES, Mrs. LOVE, and Mr. KIND.
H.R. 3714: Ms. SPEIER.
H.R. 3717: Mr. MARSHALL.
H.R. 3720: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 3748: Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 3757: Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 3770: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. LEE, Mr. MARSHALL, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. POLIS, Mr. COMER, Mr. BACON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. DONOVAN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. HIMES, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. WOODALL, Mr. COHEN, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. OLSON, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. MEEKS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. LAHOOD, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. FOSTER, and Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 3773: Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. NOLAN, and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H.R. 3782: Ms. MCCOLLUM and Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 3784: Ms. LEE, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, and Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 3790: Mr. LAMBORN.
H.R. 3798: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. MESSER, and Mr. BUCSHON.
H.R. 3808: Mr. COLLINS of New York.
H.R. 3810: Mr. LANGEVIN.
H.R. 3814: Miss RICE of New York and Ms. SINEMA.
H.R. 3815: Ms. WILSON of Florida and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 3820: Mr. ROKITA and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 3824: Mr. BRADY of Texas and Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H.R. 3827: Mr. SOTO.
H.R. 3852: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. CLAY, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. HANABUSA, and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 3853: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H. Con. Res. 52: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI.
H. Con. Res. 63: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H. Con. Res. 72: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H. Res. 58: Ms. MENG.
H. Res. 142: Mr. KING of New York.
H. Res. 239: Mrs. DEMINGS.
H. Res. 279: Mrs. DEMINGS.
H. Res. 464: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.
H. Res. 486: Mr. SHERMAN.
H. Res. 495: Mr. KING of New York, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, and Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.
H. Res. 510: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.
H. Res. 518: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H. Res. 531: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, and Mrs. HARTZLER.
H. Res. 539: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.

DISCHARGE PETITIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XV, the following discharge petition was filed:

Petition 5, September 25, 2017, by Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico on House Resolution 508, was signed by the following Members: Ms. Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico, Mr. Capuano, Mr. Connolly, Mr. Michael F. Doyle of Pennsylvania, Ms. Sánchez, Mr. Cárdenas, Ms. Eshoo, Mr. Gomez, Mr. Polis, Mr. Takano, Mr. Sean Patrick Maloney of New York, Mrs. Dingell, Mr. Gallego, Ms. Sewell of Alabama, Mr. Welch, Mr. Hastings, Mr. Thompson of Mississippi, Ms. Slaughter, Ms. Jackson Lee, Mr. Carbajal, Mr. Schiff, Ms. Bass, Mr. Castro of Texas, Ms. Matsui, Mr. Courtney, Mr. Levin, Ms. DeGette, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Quigley, Ms. Pingree, Mr. McNerney, Mr. Cicilline, Mr. Gene Green of Texas, Mrs. Carolyn B. Maloney of New York, Mr. Clyburn, Mr. Walz, Mr. Danny K. Davis of Illinois, Ms. Kelly of Illinois, Mr. Raskin, Mr. Kilmer, Mr. Delaney, Mrs. Watson Coleman, Mr. Ruppersberger, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, Mr. Heck, Ms. Titus, Mr. Sires, Ms. Tsongas, Mrs. Torres, Mr. Schneider, Ms. Clark of Massachusetts, Mr. Crist, Mrs. Demings, Ms. DelBene, Ms. Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas, Mr. Aguilar, Mr. Soto, Mr. McEachin, Mr. Huffman, Mrs. Beatty, Mrs. Lawrence, Mr. Ted Lieu of California, Mr. Blumenauer, Mr. McGovern, Mrs. Lowey, Mr. Lewis of Georgia, Ms. Sinema, Mr. Johnson of Georgia, Ms. Castor of Florida, Ms. Roybal-Allard, Mr. Vargas, Mr. Tonko, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Yarmuth, Mr. Ruiz, Mr. Ellison, Mr. Espaillat, Mr. Brendan F. Boyle of Pennsylvania, Mr. Keating, Mrs. Davis of California, Mr. Larson of Connecticut, Ms. Lee, Mr. Evans, Mr. Brown of Maryland, Ms. Brownley of California, Mr. Beyer, Mr. O'Halleran, Mr. Suozzi, Ms. Rosen, Mr. Crowley, Mr. Correa, Mr. Serrano, Mr. Engel, Ms.

Barragán, Mr. Pascrell, Mr. Nadler, Mr. Foster, Ms. Adams, Mr. Bishop of Georgia, Mr. Jeffries, Ms. Meng, Mr. Rush, Ms. Lofgren, Ms. Schakowsky, Ms. Kaptur, Mr. Lowenthal, Mr. Khanna, Ms. Pelosi, Ms. Clarke of New York, Mr. DeSaulnier, Mr. Hoyer, Mr. Payne, Mr. Costa, Ms. Jayapal, Mr. Clay, Mr. Scott of Virginia, Mr. Kildee, Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Murphy of Florida, Mr. Higgins of New York, Mr. Swalwell of California, Mr. Kihuen, Ms. Judy Chu of California, Mr. Krishnamoorthi, Ms. Esty of Connecticut, Mr. Coffman, Mr. Peters, Mr. Lynch, Ms. Wilson of Florida, Mr. Sherman, Ms. Blunt Rochester, Mr. Grijalva, Mr. Smith of Washington, Mr. Pallone, Mr. Brady of Pennsylvania, Mr. Panetta, Mr. Thompson of California, Mr. Norcross, Mrs. Napolitano, Mr. Larsen of Washington, Ms. McCollum, Ms. Maxine Waters of California, Mr. Cummings, Mr. Bera, Mr. Butterfield, Mr. Himes, Mr. Meeks, Ms. Frankel of Florida, Ms. Shea-Porter, Ms. Bonamici, Mr. DeFazio, Mr. Deutch, Mr. Moulton, Mr. Gottheimer, Mr. Al Green of Texas, Mr. Cartwright, Mr. Sarbanes, Mr. Conyers, Mr. Schrader, Mr. Lipinski, Ms. Fudge, Mr. David Scott of Georgia, Mr. Gutiérrez, Mr. Pocan, Mrs. Bustos, Mr. Gonzalez of Texas, Mr. Cuellar, Mr. Ryan of Ohio, Mr. Langevin, Mr. O'Rourke, Mr. Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico, Mr. Doggett, Mr. Perlmutter, Mr. Lawson of Florida, Ms. DeLauro, Mr. Neal, Mr. Nolan, Miss Rice of New York, Ms. Gabbard, Ms. Moore, Mr. Cleaver, Mr. Carson of Indiana, Ms. Velázquez, Ms. Kuster of New Hampshire, Mr. Veasey, Mr. Garamendi, Mr. Price of North Carolina, Mr. Vela, Mr. Peterson, Mr. Richmond, Ms. Speier, Mr. Loebsack, Mr. Kind, Ms. Hanabusa, Mr. Visclosky.

DISCHARGE PETITIONS—ADDITIONS AND WITHDRAWALS

The following Member added his name to the following discharge petition:

Petition 3 by Mr. GARRETT on House Resolution 458: Mr. Palazzo.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2017 No. 156

Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God of grace and glory, lift us with Your might. You are our security, our hope for years to come.

Lord, give our Senators such confidence in Your power that they will celebrate the victories that are yet to be. May they never forget the inheritance that belongs to all who love and serve Your will on Earth. Provide them with the wisdom to know that You are the only sure foundation for all their strivings. Remind them that unless You protect the Nation, its leaders and citizens labor in vain.

Eternal Spirit, great and marvelous are Your works, just and true are Your ways.

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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). 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 for the consideration of the Erickson nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Ralph R. Erickson, of North Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10:30 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

If no one yields time, the time will be charged equally.

The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF AJIT PAI

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the President's nomination of Ajit Pai to head the Federal Communications Commission.

My view is that, Mr. Pai will do an enormous amount of damage to one of the foundational principles of the internet—net neutrality. I am going to outline why that would be a horrendous mistake for our country.

After we came to use the internet and see what an extraordinary asset it would be to our country, really beginning in the late 1990s, and early 2000s, we laid out what I still consider to be the legal foundation for the internet.

On a bipartisan basis, there was a big effort in the Senate and the House to really lay out what were the foundational principles of the net, and there were a variety of them. We wanted to make sure that folks were not hit with multiple and discriminatory taxes, and that they were not taxed on access to the internet. We wrote the digital signatures act, which is of enormous benefit to people, for example, in the Presiding Officer's home State of Nevada, where they are making business transactions. We made a judgment, which some have said has led to $1 trillion worth of private wealth for our economy, whereby we said that we were not going to expose the small entrepreneur—the person who is getting started in the garage—to needless litigation.

One of those core principles was net neutrality, which, in my view, for the reasons that I am going to describe this morning, I think Mr. Pai would work long and hard to try to undermine.

Because so much of the telecommunications debate sounds like a lot of complicated lingo, I want to try to describe in something resembling English what ''net neutrality'' is. Essentially, ''net neutrality'' means that after you have paid your internet access fee, you get to go where you want, when you want, and how you want. In a sentence, that is what net neutrality is all about, and it is a bedrock principle for internet users in the Presiding Officer's home State of Nevada and in Oregon and all across the country.

It locks in equal treatment to accessing the internet.

We are not going to have some kind of information aristocracy in our society whereby the affluent have access to some kind of technological treasure trove, and folks who do not have much are kind of stuck with what almost resembles dial-up. That is not what we want for communications policy in America. We want to give everybody a chance to get ahead so that the kids in rural Oregon and rural Nevada have the same kind of opportunities as youngsters in Beverly Hills or the Gold Coast of Chicago or Palm Beach. We want to make sure everybody has a chance to get ahead.

Mr. Pai says that he is for real net neutrality, and we have tried to pin him down on a whole host of policies that really get him to commit to the essence of it, but he mostly says a version of what the big cable companies say. The big cable companies have

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

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come to say: We like net neutrality. We are not going to block anything. We are for the consumer; we are for the little guy. We just do not want a whole lot of government.

They say that what they really would like is voluntary net neutrality.

Let me tell my colleagues something. There is about as much likelihood that the big cable companies will voluntarily subscribe to net neutrality as there is the prospect that William Peter Wyden—one of my 9-year-old twins, the boy—will voluntarily limit himself to one dessert. It is just not going to happen. It is just not going to work. Mr. Pai is on the side of the big cable companies. He has a long history of putting those companies before the consumers—the big corporate players over the small businesses—and pay to play over a free and open internet.

I introduced the first strong net neutrality bill here in the Senate in 2006. We all know that back then we were just starting the debate about technology policy. The Senate was getting ribbed pretty seriously by the late night talk show hosts who said that the internet was a series of tubes. So, as I have indicated, what we have tried to do is to make sure that if you pay your internet access fee, you get to go where you want, when you want, and how you want.

Net neutrality has been the law of the land, and our economy has grown around this leading principle with respect to equal access to information and customers. Mr. Pai has said that he wants to take a ''weed whacker'' to the strong, enforceable net neutrality rules. Right away, with his quotes that are on the record, he is talking about blowing up this notion of a level playing field, which is so crucial to innovation and free speech online and that allows the startups to get out of the garage to become the next YouTube and Google and EBay.

I want to emphasize that point.

People talk a lot about technology policy.

To my colleagues, this tech policy debate is about the little guy who wants to be able to get his business out of the garage so that he can become the next big guy. Net neutrality gives us the opportunity to create opportunities for that small entrepreneur, the person who is a small entrepreneur with big dreams.

Net neutrality prevents your internet service provider from favoring one type of content over another. As an example, suppose your internet provider has a financial stake in a third-party content site. It could ensure that content goes to your home faster and clearer than to the homes of its competitors if you did not have real net neutrality—enforceable, real net neutrality, not something like Mr. Pai wants, which is, oh, we will kind of pay lipservice to net neutrality but not make it enforceable.

For example, you could have AT&T deciding to provide free data for customers streaming HBO, which would cause more folks to subscribe to that service over its competitors and starve other creators of the subscribers necessary to create new and innovative content. That is the kind of thing that happens if we do not have real net neutrality.

It even holds true for telehealth providers. Telehealth depends on reliable, fast, and low-cost internet coverage to transmit critical health information, especially in rural and remote areas—for example, the remote monitoring of blood glucose levels in diabetes patients. Net neutrality prevents the internet service providers from viewing this lifesaving service as a cash cow, thus charging rural hospitals and community health centers a premium fee to deliver critical and timely healthcare services.

Not long ago, the Federal Communications Commission adopted a strong legal framework that would make sure that the Federal Communications Commission had the tools to protect the open internet, and the reality was that, then, the Federal Communications Commission and a gentleman named Mr. Tom Wheeler, who had a background in the industry, used their experience in how companies operated and how they treated consumers to make sure that we had constructive, real, and concrete consumer protections.

The reason I feel so strongly about Mr. Pai's nomination is that Mr. Pai made it clear with his comments about taking a weed whacker to anything enforceable. He is going to roll back the rules, and then he is going to claim to be fixing a problem that doesn't exist.

The reality is that we have strong net neutrality protections in place right now. If you vote for Mr. Pai, make no mistake about it, you are voting to roll back consumer protection. You are voting to take a big step backward for the internet. You are going to hurt the people—the small business people, the startups—who are dreaming in their garage of the chance to be big and who are going to have a lot more problems if there is a telecommunications policy that doesn't give them a fair shake.

As I indicated, this notion of a voluntary solution to net neutrality is absurd. I talked about it in the context of my own son. It would be hilarious if I even suggested to my son that I am going to let him, William, voluntarily limit himself to one dessert. He would smile and wait until I got out of the room, and he would dig in for some more. That is going to be the same thing if we embark on a net neutrality policy that says: Let's just trust the big cable companies; the cable companies, in their heart of hearts, are all about the little guy. They are just going to voluntarily go along with net neutrality because they are just that kind of good folks who want to make sure that the little guy gets ahead. The fact is, Chairman Pai's track record demonstrates that he is not in the consumers' corner.

Last year the Federal Communications Commission acted on the responsibility given to it by the Congress to protect browsing history, favored applications, and even the location of broadband users from the ISP. During that vote, Mr. Pai voted no. He was, again, with cable companies' profits over the American consumers' privacy.

During the August recess, Mr. Pai began an attempt to really backdoor a proposal that would lower the acceptable standard speed of internet access in rural areas. That is just wrong. Rural areas are already facing huge broadband challenges. Last Saturday night, I was in Oak Ridge, OR, which has a population of a little over 3,000. Earlier that day, I had been to La Pine, OR, in Central Oregon. Right on the top of their agenda is trying to find ways to expand opportunities for better communications in rural areas and more opportunities for broadband.

So in the August recess, when communities like Oak Ridge and La Pine want more opportunities in rural communities, we had the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission trying to sneak through a proposal that would lower the acceptable standard speed of internet access to rural America and hurt rural America. Make no mistake about it. That would hurt rural America—the Oak Ridges and La Pines. It is just wrong. The Congress mandated that the FCC expand access to high-speed internet to every American, and Mr. Pai basically said: No, slower internet speed is good enough.

As I indicated, just this last weekend, on Saturday night, we had a townhall in Oregon. I am telling you what these small communities are telling me about their current frustrations with slow and unsatisfactory internet speeds. Mr. Pai is giving a big gift to the powerful interests, and their internet speeds are going to get slower rather than what rural America wants, which is faster internet so that they have more opportunities to participate in the global economy and more opportunities to help their kids with their homework. Congress and the Federal Communications Commission ought to be working for all to have access to high-speed internet and not telling folks in rural America that what they have is just good enough.

Mr. Pai has repeatedly failed on another matter, and that is to act even in the face of clear danger to the security of America's mobile phones. Despite years of warnings about well-known weaknesses in mobile phone networks that allow hackers and spies to track Americans' phones, intercept calls and messages, and hack the phones themselves, Mr. Pai has taken a hands-off attitude. His Federal Communications Commission says it is not going to force wireless carriers to fix the weaknesses, and—what a surprise—his traditional answer is that ''voluntary measures are going to do enough.'' I disagree because they haven't worked.

We always talk about the role of government. I think this is an area that really lends itself to thoughtful discussion because, obviously, we don't want government if you can figure out a way to solve a problem without it. The voluntary measures have not worked here on these basic security issues I have described. The self-regulation approach has failed. The Federal Communications Commission has to force the carriers to secure their networks and protect America's critical communications infrastructure. The failure to act on this security issue means that the American people are going to be less safe.

I close by saying that my view is that net neutrality has sparked the flames of innovation and commerce on the internet. Net neutrality has been one of the foundational principles that we started working on in the late 1990s and in the early part of this century. It was up there in terms of importance, like trying to prevent multiple and discriminatory taxes on electronic commerce, particularly taxing internet access, and the digital signatures law, making sure that you couldn't hold somebody personally liable if they were to invest in a website or a blog. These were foundational principles that have been of enormous benefit to our country, and net neutrality was one of those. I guess it would be the fourth in the list of foundational principles that we talked about and have been talking about for well over a decade.

We should be building on net neutrality, not walking it back. I believe that what Mr. Pai is talking about is a significant retreat from the freedom and openness that the internet is all about.

I urge my colleagues to vote against the confirmation of Mr. Pai. Vote in favor of a truly open internet.

I yield the floor, as I note the Democratic leader is here to speak.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PORTMAN). The Democratic leader is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first I ask unanimous consent that I be able to speak in leader time, and, after my remarks, that the Senator from North Dakota be recognized to speak on the judge nomination and be given the time she wants, about 10 minutes, and that we move the vote to immediately thereafter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Hearing none, it is so ordered.

THANKING THE SENATOR FROM OREGON

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, let me thank my friend from Oregon for his outstanding remarks. He has been a leader in keeping the internet open and free and making sure that this new highway system, in effect, is as free as our old highway system, or the existing highway system, to let the big guy and the little guy compete on equal terms. That is all we want, and Mr. Pai doesn't seem to get that.

There is a whole round of appointees from this administration who simply side with big corporations no matter what, and this is an example of just that.

So I thank my friend from Oregon for his remarks.

Mr. President, I have three topics this morning—briefly, healthcare, then, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and, finally, taxes.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, on healthcare there is a bit of good news. I just spoke with Senator MURRAY this morning. I saw Senator ALEXANDER in the gym, as I do just about every morning. Both are two of about the best negotiators we have in this body. Both have come to agreements across the aisle on many other occasions. They both inform me that they are on the verge of a bipartisan healthcare agreement to stabilize markets and lower premiums.

Now, we have had some bipartisan sprouts on healthcare recently. It is time for those sprouts to flower, and I am hopeful they will. I told PATTY MURRAY that she has my faith and confidence. She has the freedom to cut the best deal she can, and I hope the leadership will tell the same to Senator ALEXANDER.

It was widely reported, before the Graham-Cassidy bill was withdrawn, that there was pressure on Senator ALEXANDER to pull back. Well, that is over. Let's all come together. Our healthcare system needs it, and our constituents need it. They don't want premiums to go up and coverage to go down, and it would be a great start for some bipartisanship in this place, which I hope we can continue on more issues.

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. President, on Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, we know about the crisis. Just looking at the pictures breaks your heart. We hear the stories of people desperately needing their medicine and diabetics needing insulin, which can't be refrigerated because there is no electricity to keep the refrigeration going. There are people dying right now because they can't get the medical attention they need, and, of course, there is a need for food, water, power, and transportation. It is awful.

Yesterday, Leader PELOSI and I met with Gen. Lori Robinson. It felt nice, amid this devastation, to see a woman have four stars on her shoulder. She is a four-star general in the Air Force, and she is head of the U.S. Northern Command. She is the military person in charge.

We met with her to get an update on the Department of Defense's work in assisting the islands. It was evident from our conversation that, while the military is increasing the amount of resources it is sending to the island, there is a lack of command and control about how those resources are distributed. In other words, they probably have enough food, they probably have enough gasoline—that is what the Governor of Puerto Rico said today—but they can't get it to the places it needs to go. Part of it is because they need transportation—trucks and things—but a lot of it is because there is no one there to make sure. Puerto Rico's command and control has been decimated by this storm as well. People can't get to the places they are supposed to go. They don't have their phones, et cetera.

I spoke with Senator RUBIO this morning in the gym as well. He had just recently visited Puerto Rico. He had seen the devastation firsthand, and he told me the same—that Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are struggling, and they need help fast. His visit to Puerto Rico confirmed this idea that we really need command and control.

Well, there is no better command and control organization than our military, and we need our military to start aiding Puerto Rico in the command and control sense, as well as in the shipping of supplies, food, and the other kinds of things they need.

Puerto Rico needs help fast. They need personnel to direct the supplies and resources on the ground. All the aid in the world will be ineffective if it doesn't go where it is needed to go. So I joined Senator CANTWELL, the ranking member on the Energy Committee, which has jurisdiction in many ways here, and Senator NELSON, who cares a great deal about Puerto Rico and is from Florida, nearby, and 30 other Senators in sending a letter to the Trump administration that contains a list of needed resources and personnel to coordinate our relief efforts.

It appears there will not be a request for emergency supplemental appropriations this week. We hope it comes very soon.

Mr. President, we cannot forget the utter devastation facing the 3.5 million American citizens in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. I have been on this Earth now for quite a few years, and I have never seen such devastation anywhere in the United States or its territories. So we need to act, and we need to act quickly. Command and control, which our military can help supply, should be at the top of the list.

TAX REFORM

Finally, Mr. President, on taxes, yesterday President Trump and Republican leaders laid out their tax plan, sharing the first sketchy set of details with the American people about what they want to change in our Tax Code. Any serious analysis of their proposal will leave you with one conclusion: President Trump and the Republicans have crafted a massive tax break for the very wealthy in our country.

Welfare is supposed to take care of the poor. This plan takes care of the rich. Plain and simple, the Republican plan is ''wealthfare,'' the opposite of

welfare. It is designed to take care of the rich. It repeals the estate tax, which goes to so few people in such large amounts of money, slashes the corporate rate, creates enormous tax loopholes for wealthy hedge fund managers in the form of a rate cut on passthroughs, and it lowers the rate, amazingly enough, on the top bracket of the wealthiest Americans while raising the tax rate on those at the bottom of the income scale. Who would have thought?

Secretary Mnuchin, Gary Cohn, and the President himself have said: We want to help the middle class. Then the first thing they come out with—again, we don't know all the details—lowers the top rate on the wealthiest and raises the bottom rate on the working families, which is the opposite of what they are saying.

On the estate tax, the bottom line is that only people whose estates are above $10 million pay a nickel of estate tax—only those. It is a handful. We are compiling how many people in each State have paid the estate tax for the last 5 years. Everyone in their State will see how few people are affected. You know, if someone has a big farm and maybe it is $12 or $15 million and they don't want to sell it—pass it onto their kids—I am willing to make an exception for that. I think most people will, but that doesn't justify repealing the entire estate tax.

Moving on to corporate taxes, there is a difference between the big corporations and small corporations. The big corporations right now are making record profits. Let's say the thousand biggest are making record profits. They have more money than they have ever had. According to a study—I believe it is by Goldman Sachs, which is hardly a leftwing think tank—they are paying the lowest percentage of their profits as taxes in a very long while. Big corporate America is flush with money. They are not using it to create jobs. Why in God's Name anyone thinks, after giving them more money through a tax break, all of a sudden they are going to start creating jobs when they are not doing it now is beyond me.

It is different for small businesses. We Democrats understand that small businesses need a break. We will work with our colleagues to do it. But even this passthrough—the biggest benefit is going to be wealthy lawyers and hedge fund managers, who will then pay an individual tax rate of 25 percent while so many others who have much less wealth are paying more in taxes.

So the President gets up and says this is a tax break for the middle class. I believe he said this morning that he will not benefit from it. Please, let's have some honesty here. If you really believe giving tax breaks to the wealthiest people and the biggest corporations is going to create jobs, then have the courage to say it. Don't fudge it.

President Trump said that his plan would create a middle-class miracle. I think it would be a miracle if it helped the middle class, given the numbers I have seen. While the tax plan doubles the standard deduction—that is one of the points where they say they help the middle class—it eliminates the personal exemption. The standard deduction is $12,500; personal exemption is $6,000. Figure it out, my friends. If you are a family of three or more, you lose, not gain. Three times $6,000 is $18,000; that is opposed to a $12,500 standard exemption. It doesn't make sense.

Oh, and how about this one: The personal exemption is not the only one gone. State and local deductibility—I predict that is going to be a downfall of this plan. I know the ideologues say: Let's go after the States that charge taxes. Let me tell you, there are 40 or 50 Republican Congressmen from well-to-do suburban districts in high-tax States—New York, California, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Maryland—whose constituents will be clobbered by removing State and local deductibility. They will be clobbered. The $12,500 they gain in the standard deduction, minus what they lose in the individual deduction, is far less than they pay in State and local taxes in those districts.

We are going to be watching them like a hawk. I will tell my New York Republican friends from those well-to-do suburban and upstate districts: You are going to be hurting your constituents if you vote for a plan that gets rid of State and local deductibility. The eyes of America will be on you, and certainly the eyes of each State.

How about this one: They eliminate the deduction for extraordinary medical expenses. If you have a child with cancer, it is hard to pay for it, and your insurance covers some, but you are not going to get a tax break for shelling out money for that extra medicine or that extra MRI scan—no.

So the Republican game plan gives a few crumbs to the middle class—and many in the middle class will pay more in taxes, a few hundred off taxes maybe—and at the same time gives a huge break to corporations and the superwealthy. The American people will not buy it. This is not 2000 or 1982, my Republican friends. We have huge problems where the wealthy are doing great, and the middle class and the poor are doing badly.

The American people will not buy tax breaks for the rich. They will not buy it. Seventy percent of Americans already think our system favors the wealthy, and the Republican tax plan drops an anvil on the scales of our tax system, tipping them even further in favor of the wealthy. The American people will not be for that.

What about the deficit? We hear about deficits every time there is a new program. This dwarfs any spending program in terms of the deficit that we have enacted over the last several years—$5 to $7 trillion of deficit. What has happened to all the Republicans who talk about wanting to be deficit neutral when it comes to spending? Is that out the window? We will see.

Let me tell you something that really got under my skin—sorry to my colleague from North Dakota. I am just agitated about this in a good way.

This morning, the chief economic adviser to President Trump, Gary Cohn, said the administration believes it ''can pay for the entire tax cut through growth'' by using a dynamic scoring model. Gary Cohn comes from Goldman Sachs. If he used that funny kind of math at Goldman Sachs the way he is using it here in Washington, he would have been kicked out of that firm a long time ago. Gary Cohn should know better; Gary Cohn does know better.

Let me repeat what I said yesterday: Dynamic scoring is fake math. Paying for tax cuts with growth is fake math. We know it is fake math; we have real-world examples. The 2001 and 2003 Bush tax cuts were promising they would pay for themselves through economic growth. It is the same thing you hear from the Club for Growth and some of my colleagues.

Some dynamic scoring models at the time predicted the 2001 and 2003 tax breaks would grow the economy so much it would nearly wipe out the national debt, but what happened? I heard the Club for Growth leader get on TV and say: Well, there may be a deficit in the short run, but after 10 years it will all be taken care of. Ten years after the Bush tax cut, CBO estimated the Bush tax cuts added $1.6 trillion to the deficit.

How about the example of the great State of Kansas? Governor Brownback slashed the top rate. He exempted passthrough businesses. It was a real-life experiment in a Republican State, similar to what President Trump announced. Brownback's backers used dynamic scoring models to estimate that his tax cuts would generate $323 million in new revenue by 2018. Guess what happened. It added so much money to their deficit over 4 years that they have had to figure out ways to raise taxes now, just as Ronald Reagan did in 1986. So this idea that the administration can pay for a $5 to $7 trillion tax cut through growth is simply selling a bill of goods using fake, fake math.

I yield the floor

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to give my strong support and ask my colleagues to support the confirmation of Judge Ralph Erickson to fill the North Dakota vacancy on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. This is a seat that the U.S. Judicial Conference has deemed a judicial emergency, as it has been empty for almost 900 days. Being nominated to a seat on the U.S. circuit court of appeals is an honor and a privilege, virtually unmatched in the legal profession.

After reviewing Judge Erickson's record and talking to his colleagues and the people who have worked with

him and appeared before him back in North Dakota, I am very proud to come to the floor this morning and offer my strong support for his nomination to the Eighth Circuit. When Judge Erickson was nominated and confirmed to his current seat on the U.S. District Court for North Dakota, it was with the support of our two great former Senators and my good friends, Byron Dorgan and Kent Conrad. Judge Erickson has certainly upheld their faith and trust in his abilities as a district court judge, and I am confident he will uphold my faith and my trust in his ability as he moves to the Eighth Circuit.

Judge Erickson has a long history of commitment to the legal profession and the State of North Dakota, first through his service on the State court and, since 2003, as a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of North Dakota. Very few lawyers can make such a long-term commitment to public service, and his record certainly reflects his belief that when a lawyer is called to serve for the greater good, they should answer that call. I hope Judge Erickson is able to instill this sense of commitment to public service in aspiring young lawyers whom he will come to meet and whom he will be able to influence through his example.

A nominee for the North Dakota seat on the Eighth Circuit must have experience in working with Indian Country, given the number of Tribes and the Indian land that are contained within the jurisdiction of the Eighth Circuit. During his career and at his hearing before the Judiciary Committee, Judge Erickson has shown an in-depth understanding of Tribal sovereignty issues and a recognition of the challenges and disparities in the treatment of Native Americans under the law when they are arrested and charged for crimes in Indian Country.

Judge Erickson has been an advocate for equal treatment of Native Americans under the law. He also serves as the chair of the U.S. Sentencing Commission's Tribal Issues Advisory Group. I have no doubt that Judge Erickson will bring this knowledge and understanding of Tribal issues, sovereignty, and treaties with him to the Eighth Circuit.

The best judges always have been people who can truly understand and bring to the bench a sense of empathy. Judge Erickson has used some of his own struggles and challenges during the course of his life to inform his own views and to give counsel to those who come before him as he uses his own personal struggles as an example. It takes a really big person to recognize and learn from their failings and to use them to help others. I admire him greatly for that.

During his confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Judge Erickson showed an openness and frankness in responding to questions and discussing his past struggles. That was refreshing, illuminating, and honestly all too rare here. I believe he impressed my colleagues on that committee greatly with his willingness to be so forthcoming and so honest. That is why they unanimously reported his nomination out of the committee.

It is a tremendous honor to be on the floor of the U.S. Senate before Judge Erickson's confirmation vote. I am here today to give my highest recommendation in support of his nomination to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. I, again, urge all of my colleagues' thoughtful consideration and evaluation and favorable endorsement of his confirmation.

Thank you so much.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Ralph R. Erickson, of North Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Orrin G. Hatch, James Lankford, Jerry Moran, Johnny Isakson, John Thune, Thom Tillis, Shelley Moore Capito, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch, Mike Rounds, John Barrasso, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, John Boozman, John Hoeven, Rob Portman.

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 Ralph R. Erickson, of North Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 95, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 206 Ex.]

YEAS—95

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

NAYS—1

Warren

NOT VOTING—4

Cochran	Menendez
Franken	Strange

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 95, the nays are 1.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1808

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, in 2 days, unless Congress acts, the Federal Perkins Loan Program—the Nation's oldest Federal student loan program—will expire, leaving thousands of students with one fewer option to help them afford a higher education.

Since 1958, the Perkins Loan Program has existed with broad bipartisan support and has provided millions of students a stronger path to the middle class.

In the 2016 to 2017 academic year, the program has served more than 770,000 students with financial need across more than 1,400 institutions of higher education. In my home State of Wisconsin alone, Perkins provided aid to more than 23,000 students who are working hard to achieve their dreams.

Colleges and universities are invested in Perkins. This program operates through campus-based revolving funds that combine prior Federal investments with significant institutional resources. While Congress stopped appropriating new funds for Perkins more than a decade ago, these schools continue to invest in this program because they know it works, and the campus-based nature of the program allows them to target aid to students they know are in the greatest financial need.

I am here to call on all of my colleagues to join me in supporting the extension of this critical program and investment in our students across America.

Two years ago, we allowed this important program to lapse, but thanks to the tireless efforts of students, institutions, advocates, and a bicameral, bipartisan majority in support of Perkins, we were able to advance a compromise that ensured that this source of support continued to be available to students in need.

Once again, we are facing a deadline. Once again, there is strong bipartisan

support for extending the Perkins Loan Program. Last week, Senators PORTMAN, CASEY, and COLLINS joined me in introducing the Perkins Loan Program Extension Act, which would provide for a 2-year extension. My fellow Wisconsinite, Representative MARK POCAN, together with New York Representative ELISE STEFANIK, have introduced a House companion bill that is supported by over 225 of their colleagues—a bipartisan majority in that Chamber.

I am here to call on my colleagues to act once again and support a 2-year extension of the Perkins Loan Program. And while I look forward to a broader conversation about improving Federal supports for students as we look to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, we cannot once again sit by and watch it expire as America's students are left with uncertainty.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 1808, a bill to extend the Federal Perkins Loan Program for 2 years; that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration and the bill be considered read a third time and passed, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to explain my reason for the objection.

First, I would like to say to the Senator from Wisconsin that I am grateful for her work on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, where she is a valuable, diligent, and constructive member. We work on a great many things together and have agreed to very many things. However, we disagree on this one, and here is why. Let me summarize it at the beginning of my remarks and then explain it with a little more detail.

No one who has a Perkins loan today loses that loan, period. So if you are a student anywhere in the country and you have a Perkins loan for this year, you don't lose that loan, period.

Second, no one who has a Perkins loan for next year loses that loan because no one has one. They were ended 2 years ago. Every student was told in his or her financial aid information that the Perkins Loan Program ends this year, so no one could expect to have one next year. No one has been granted one for next year, so no one who has a loan is losing a loan.

Why did we, in December of 2015—2 years ago—reach a bipartisan agreement to sunset, or end, the Perkins Loan Program in 2 years, which is the end of this week? In that agreement, we allowed graduate students to receive Perkins loans for 1 additional year and undergraduates to receive Perkins loans for 2 additional years. It was made clear at that time—2 years ago—that this was the last time the program would be extended, but we wanted to have a smooth transition, and we did not want students and colleges and universities to be surprised. That agreement, therefore, included many requirements for institutions of higher education to inform students over the last 2 years that the Perkins Loan Program would end on September 30 of this year, which is the end of this week. That agreement also set policies to make the sunsetting of Perkins loans as smooth as possible for students. The expiration of this loan program was not and should not have been a surprise. It has not received any appropriation since the year 2004, and the U.S. Department of Education reminded institutions that it was ending the program this year.

Now, why? Why are we ending the program? Why did we agree to do that 2 years ago, and why have the last three Presidents recommended that we end it—President Obama, President Trump, and President Bush?

The Department of Education estimated that in the 2016 to 2017 school year—that is the school year that just ended—the Perkins Loan Program provided less than $800 million in new Perkins loans to about 300,000 recipients. That may seem like a lot, but by comparison, the Department estimated that the Federal Government disbursed over $22 billion to almost 7 million undergraduate students in the Stafford Subsidized Loan Program, or the regular Direct Loan Program. The Perkins loan—a separate loan—provides an average loan of roughly $2,000, and it illustrates the complicated mess in which students find themselves because of our Federal student aid system today.

The Perkins loans have a higher interest rate than other loans that are available to students today. The interest rate is 5 percent, compared with 4.45 percent for undergraduate loans. And students who have a Perkins loan aren't eligible for certain programs that exist for students with other loans, such as the income-based repayment programs and the public service loan forgiveness programs, which help students manage repayment of their loans. Those aren't available to students with a Perkins loan. The default rate for Perkins loans is higher than for the Stafford loan.

The bill which the Senator from Wisconsin has offered would cost taxpayers, according to the Congressional Budget Office, $900 million for a 2-year extension. If we were to extend the program over 10 years, it would cost $6.5 billion, according to the Congressional Budget Office. The bill does not have an offset, so these billions of dollars would only serve to add to the $20 trillion Federal debt we already have.

I object because I think it is time for our country, through legislation by this Congress, to move on to a simplified Federal student aid program that has only one Federal loan for students, one Federal grant for students, and one work-study program for students.

As I have spoken often about on this floor, along with Senator BENNET from Colorado, we would like to reduce the application form for those Federal grants and loans called FAFSA—the dreaded FAFSA which 20 million students and their families fill out every year. We would like to reduce that from 108 questions to 2 or 5 or 10 questions.

We need a much simpler program for Federal student loans, and the end of the Perkins Loan Program is a small step toward that end.

As I mentioned, President Bush recommended that the program end, President Obama recommended that the program be changed and folded, in effect, into the regular Direct Student Loan Program, and President Trump has the same position.

I look forward to working with my colleagues, including the Senator from Wisconsin, on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act later this year, when we can work together to improve our Federal student loan programs and our grant programs, find ways to simplify them, make it easier and cheaper for students to attend college, and to help students pay those loans off, after they get them, in a fair and simpler way.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I am certainly disappointed that my effort to extend the Perkins Loan Program today was just blocked by my Republican colleague, but I want to say that it is an honor to serve on the HELP Committee, where we do some very impressive bipartisan work.

I understand the Senator's concern about the program and his belief that we must simplify. I share his desire to work on a broader reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, and I look forward to that broader conversation about our Federal financial aid programs. However, I do not think it is right or fair to end this program, with nothing to replace it, to the detriment of students in need.

Also, I cannot agree that the compromise we hammered out 2 years ago was an agreement to wind down the program. I guess it is the perspective that we each bring to this subject, because I believed we were acting to ensure that the Perkins Loan Program could continue until we could discuss changes, improvements, and reforms to it and all Federal financial aid programs as part of broader legislation to improve higher education. We have yet to get to that bigger conversation, and it would once again be unfair to let this program end now without the benefit of a holistic assessment of the many ways the Federal Government helps to make college affordable for students across this country.

I will continue to fight to extend this support for America's students, and I hope the chairman of the committee will once again work with me and the bipartisan supporters of this program to find a path forward for the Perkins Loan Program.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I will conclude my remarks because I see the Senator from Mississippi is here.

Of course I will be glad to work with the Senator from Wisconsin. The fact is, 2 years ago we agreed to end the program. The graduate loans ended last year, and the undergraduate loans end this year. Everybody was told about it.

Every student who wants a loan can get a direct student loan from the government at a lower rate, with better repayment programs and better payment provisions than the Perkins loan. So no one is losing a loan, and everyone can get a better loan if they apply for a direct loan.

We do need a simpler program, and we need to simplify the application process for applying for the loans and grants and for paying them off.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

NOMINATION OF AJIT PAI

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, later on today, the Senate will move to a vote to advance the nomination of Ajit Pai to become Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. I rise today in strong, enthusiastic support for confirming Chairman Pai as the permanent Chairman of the FCC.

In the 9 short months since Donald Trump chose Mr. Pai to serve as the FCC's Acting Chairman, he has restored confidence in the agency's ability to do its work on behalf of the American people and within the rule of law.

He is working to establish the light-touch regulatory framework that allowed the internet to become the marvel of the modern age, keeping it free and open for consumers, innovators, and providers. Internet technology will continue to thrive if we keep the heavy hand of government away from the controls.

Chairman Pai recognizes the need to close the digital divide between our Nation's rural and urban communities. I am working closely with him and with other members of the Commission to remove barriers to internet connectivity that exist in my home State of Mississippi and across the country. Without broadband access, these rural communities could lose out on critical jobs, economic development, and many other opportunities borne out of the thriving internet economy.

Mr. Pai has already proven he is capable of being an exemplary FCC Chairman who will fight for the unserved and underserved Americans.

As Acting Chairman, Mr. Pai has overseen the adoption of Mobility Fund Phase II rules supporting universal service. He has sought the advice of experts for the most effective broadband deployment, and he has encouraged the development of better networks, lower costs, and relief from regulatory burdens.

Americans are being well-served by a leader like Chairman Ajit Pai, who understands the strong connection between technology and innovation. Mr. Pai understands how high-speed internet can revolutionize small businesses and benefit local economies. He understands the importance of consumer protections and has already instituted proposals and rules that would benefit public safety.

I hope Mr. Pai will also continue to hold the FCC to the highest standards of transparency. His decision to make proposals and orders accessible to the public prior to the Commission's vote on them was a positive action.

The FCC will continue to be in good hands with Mr. Pai as Chairman and when the Senate votes later on today to move this nomination along. I urge my colleagues to vote yes and eventually to vote yes for his confirmation.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, at 12:15 p.m., all postcloture time be considered expired on the Erickson nomination and that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; further, that the Senate then resume consideration of the Pai nomination and the time until 1:45 p.m. be equally divided prior to a cloture vote on the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF AJIT PAI

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, today we begin debate on a position in our government that impacts the daily lives of every single American. If you use a telephone, connect to the internet, watch television, and pay a big cable company to do all of those things, then you need to know who Ajit Pai is.

President Trump nominated Ajit Pai to be the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. While Ajit Pai has devoted many years to public service, I cannot support his nomination. Under Mr. Pai's short tenure, he has made the FCC stand for ''forgetting consumers and competition.''

Let's take a look at who is getting a piece of the FCC pie under Chairman Pai. It is American consumers on the one hand versus big corporations on the other hand. Let's take a piece of this pie and determine who is getting that first slice of what is going on at the Federal Communications Commission.

Let's look at net neutrality. Net neutrality is the basic principle that says that all internet traffic is treated equal. Net neutrality ensures that internet service providers like AT&T, Charter, Verizon, and Comcast do not block, slow down, censor, or prioritize internet traffic.

If Ajit Pai gets his way, a handful of big broadband companies will serve as gatekeepers to the internet. Fewer voices, less choice, no competition, but more profits for the big broadband companies—that is Pai's formula. Yet it is today's net neutrality rules that ensure that those with the best ideas, not merely the best funded ideas, can thrive in the 21st-century economy. It is net neutrality that has been the internet's chief governing principle since its inception.

Consider that today essentially every company is an internet company. In 2016, almost half of the venture capital funds invested in this country went toward internet-specific and software companies. That is $25 billion of investment. Half of all venture capital in America went toward internet-specific and software companies—half of all venture capital.

To meet America's insatiable demand for broadband internet, the U.S. broadband and telecommunications industry invested more than $87 billion in capital expenditures in 2015. That is the highest rate of annual investment in the last 10 years.

So we have hit a sweet spot. Investment in broadband and wireless technologies is very high. Job creation is very high. Venture capital investment in online startups is very high. That is why more than 22 million Americans wrote to the Federal Communications Commission to make their voices heard about net neutrality. They do not want it repealed. Yet Chairman Pai's proposal would decimate the FCC's open internet order.

Chairman Pai has said: ''We need to fire up the weed whacker'' to net neutrality rules. Do we really want a leader at the Federal Communications Commission who, ultimately, is going to implement the agenda of the big broadband companies, which want to crush competition, reduce choice, and then make consumers pay more?

So the first slice of this pie of killing net neutrality goes to the big corporations, and the losers are the consumers.

Let's go to the next slice of the FCC pie. Let's see where that goes as these decisions are being made. The next issue is, in fact, broadband privacy.

Chairman Pai has actively supported efforts to allow broadband providers to use, share, and sell your sensitive information without consumer consent. In 2016, Chairman Pai voted against commonsense broadband privacy protections that gave consumers meaningful control over their sensitive information. When he assumed the FCC chairmanship, Ajit Pai stopped the implementation of data security protections, which would have ensured that broadband providers better protect the information they collect about their users. Can you imagine that? Chairman Pai stopped protections that would improve data security.

I have 143 million reasons as to why that was a bad idea. Just this month, Equifax was subjected to a cyber attack that compromised the personally identifiable information of 143 million consumers. The American public wants more protection, not less. Yet what does Chairman Pai do? He effectively eliminates the very data security protections that consumers need to protect their sensitive information. That is just plain wrong.

Just a few weeks later, Mr. Pai supported congressional Republicans' efforts to rescind the Federal Communications Commission's broadband privacy protections. Now your broadband provider can relentlessly collect and sell your sensitive web browsing history without your consent.

You may wonder why Chairman Pai would actively support efforts to undermine the privacy of American consumers. The answer is simple. He wants that slice of the pie to go to the biggest corporations. How do they use it? They take that data—your personal data, the information you put online—and just sell it without your permission in order to make money for the big corporations. Once again, rather than consumers, the big corporations get the benefit of that decision at the Federal Communications Commission.

Let's take a look at the next issue. The next issue goes to the question of mergers, the mergers of big telecommunications companies.

The Sinclair deal has led to a proposal to merge with Tribune Media, granting one company an unprecedented market power of over 200 broadcast stations around the country. In order to help Sinclair, Ajit Pai reinstated what most consider to be an antiquated rule, the UHF discount, to pave the way for the merger. The UHF discount makes the FCC count only half of the stations on certain frequencies toward companies' ownership percentages. This merger would allow Sinclair to reach into 72 percent of American households, but with the discount, the FCC counts it as only 45 percent. Putting this discount back on the books is Chairman Pai's first step to helping Sinclair stay within the national ownership cap of 39 percent.

What will be the impact of this massive telecommunications mega-merger? Less local news, sports, and weather that millions of Americans count on today. It will lead to the continued squeezing out of independent programmers, and it will mean higher prices for consumers. What signal does approving this merger reveal? It reveals that the FCC and Ajit Pai have put out the welcome mat for the consolidation of other communications companies.

So this third slice, once again, goes to corporations and not to consumers. They are left out in the cold.

Let's look at the fourth slice and see what happens with that at the Federal Communications Commission under the approval of Ajit Pai's nomination on the floor of the Senate. The next slice is one that deals with the education rate, or the E-rate.

The E-rate has proven to be exceptional in linking up schools and libraries to the internet. We went from a country in 1996 in which only 14 percent of K–12 classrooms had internet access to a near ubiquitous deployment today. The E-rate has ensured that students from working-class neighborhoods can connect just like students from more affluent communities. The E-rate democratizes access to the opportunities and technologies that lead to bright futures. Over $44 billion to date has been committed nationwide.

Again, Ajit Pai does not take that perspective. At his confirmation hearing in July, I explicitly asked him whether he would commit to preserving the success of this bipartisan program and protecting the funding level or whether he would make programmatic changes that could undermine or weaken the E-rate. He would not make this commitment to maintain current funding for E-rate.

Students and library users around the country will not be able to afford this slice of the pie. Once again, consumers will lose and corporations will win.

Now we go to the final slice of that communications pie at the FCC.

Telecommunication is the great equalizer, but a household with no access to basic telecommunications services could lose educational and employment opportunities as well as emergency services. That is why the FCC's Lifeline Program is truly a lifeline for millions of Americans who are able to connect to the world. In Massachusetts alone, more than 180,000 low-income Bay Staters rely on the Lifeline Program to access voice and internet service.

The value of this universal service has always been a bedrock of our telecommunications policy. Yet one of Ajit Pai's first actions as FCC Chairman was to undermine Lifeline and make it more difficult for low-income people to access affordable broadband. I was dismayed by his decision to abruptly revoke the recognition of nine additional companies as Lifeline broadband providers just weeks after they were approved. Mr. Pai's action did nothing but unfairly punish low-income consumers by limiting choice.

So the final slice, again, goes to the Federal Communications Commission's supporting corporations and not supporting consumers.

That is the pie—the FCC pie—as it is put together on net neutrality, on privacy, on mergers, on E-rate, and on Lifeline. It is all the same. The FCC winds up standing for forgetting consumers and competition. That is the era that we are now in, and it will only intensify as each day, week, and month goes by. That is why I am recommending a ''no'' vote on Ajit Pai as the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission.

Which side are we going to be on—that of the consumers or corporations? Are we going to side with innovators? Are we going to side with those who are trying to continue to take these platforms of dynamic change in our society for consumers, for entrepreneurs or are we going to allow for a closing of this revolution?

This is the era in which we live in the 21st century. This is the choice that people must make. In which direction are we going?

I urge a ''no'' vote by my colleagues on Ajit Pai's nomination. Of all of the things that we are going to do this year, this is very near the top of the list. In many ways, this telecommunications revolution is the organizing principle of our lives here in the United States and around the planet, and we have to make sure that we are heading in the right direction—more openness, more competition, more consumer protection, more privacy protection, and more access in libraries and schools to these technologies, not fewer and fewer and fewer and fewer. It is just the wrong direction to head in. I urge a ''no'' vote.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS RECOVERY EFFORT AND FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, the people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have been hit especially hard by powerful hurricanes. As I said earlier this week, the Senate will continue to work with FEMA, the Department of Defense, and the rest of the administration to help in the recovery, just as we have in Texas, Florida, and across the Southeast. We are eager to hear more soon about what additional resources will be necessary.

The American people are stepping up, too, just as they always do, and so are the brave men and women of our military.

This week, 70 soldiers and 8 aircraft from Kentucky's own 101st Airborne Combat Aviation Brigade deployed from Fort Campbell to Puerto Rico to support hurricane relief operations. These soldiers will join the larger joint force effort, which includes elements of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, medical support teams, medevac aircraft, and elements from the Army Corps of Engineers.

Kentucky is similarly proud of the men and women of its Air and Army National Guard who have worked to provide relief in the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, as well as in Texas where, according to recent reports, their efforts helped save more than 300 lives in the wake of Hurricane Harvey.

We are all proud of their efforts, but we should not forget that disasters of these proportions typically require a response from nearly every arm of the Federal Government. The FAA plays a critical role as well.

As we all know, the FAA's authority to collect and spend money from the aviation trust fund is set to expire on September 30, this week. These are the resources that fund repairs and replacement parts for our air traffic control system. Even absent a crisis, it would be irresponsible to let this lapse.

We have read in recent days that air traffic in and out of Puerto Rico has already been limited because of damage done to radar, navigational aids, and other equipment. The Governor of Puerto Rico reports that air traffic control capacity is only at about 20 percent of normal.

This critical air safety equipment needs repair. The FAA reports that failure to act on the reauthorization would leave them without sufficient funding in the accounts necessary for replacement parts, equipment, and supplies. They would have only enough funding to cover salary costs for these workers for about 1 week.

These American territories are suffering. What they need right now is aid and assistance from the air, not a manufactured crisis from Washington on top of everything else. The House of Representatives will soon pass legislation that reauthorizes the FAA. It will help open up the air space to that aid so that it can get to where it is needed most.

The House bill goes further by authorizing tax relief for individuals and businesses affected by the recent hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and Texas and Florida, as well, because these disaster victims should not suffer a tax bill on top of their losses. We need to pass that legislation here in the Senate without further delay.

NOMINATION OF AJIT PAI

Madam President, on another matter, the Senate is considering two qualified nominees today. One is the sitting Chairman of the FCC, Ajit Pai.

Chairman Pai has led a fascinating life, one punctuated by hard work and success. It had its beginnings in Buffalo. It traced a line through Canada. It unfolded in the small town of Parsons, KS, where Chairman Pai grew up with his parents, first-generation immigrants from Southern India. It was on to Harvard after that and then the University of Chicago for his law degree.

Pai's résumé prior to his appointment as a member of the FCC is as varied as it is impressive. He clerked for a Federal judge. He worked in the Justice Department's Antitrust and Legal Policy Divisions. He gained practical experience in the private sector. He served here in the Senate as committee staff. He even won a Marshall fellowship. He also worked in several positions within the FCC itself.

When President Obama nominated Pai to serve as an FCC Commissioner back in 2011, the Senate confirmed him by a voice vote.

When the Senate considers his nomination again today, I hope Senators will come together to give him strong support one more time. After all, it is no wonder why President Trump chose to elevate him to FCC Chairman earlier this year. He understands the communications industry from nearly every angle, considering his impressive resume. He understands the needs of rural communities in States like Kentucky, thanks to his own rural background. His dedication to bringing more openness and accountability to an agency that is too often known for secrecy is commendable. The same can be said of his advocacy for Americans' First Amendment rights.

I look forward to advancing and then confirming his nomination to a new term.

Madam President, one other nominee we are considering today is district judge Ralph Erickson of North Dakota, who is the nominee before us to fill a vacant seat on the Eighth Circuit. He is clearly qualified. He deeply respects the rule of law. He was confirmed by the Senate to his district judgeship by a voice vote. He enjoys the support of both of his home State Senators, Republican Senator HOEVEN and Democratic Senator HEITKAMP.

When his nomination came before the Judiciary Committee recently, every single member of the committee voted to approve him—every single Republican, every single Democrat. This includes the top Democrat, Senator FEINSTEIN, and the Democratic leadership's second-ranking officer, Senator DURBIN. So you would think his nomination would be as noncontroversial as it gets. You would be right.

Yet Democrats still chose to erect another pointless procedural hurdle before we can actually confirm him. We will probably do so overwhelmingly, given that the Senate just voted 95 to 1 on this pointless cloture motion—a pointless cloture motion on a nominee who nobody opposes.

Until now, our friends across the aisle have thrown up one unnecessary procedural hurdle after the next on even the most uncontroversial of nominees. As I have noted before, the opposition they have shown to these nominees most of the time seems to have little to do with the nominees themselves nor whether Democrats even support them. Our Democratic colleagues actually do support the nominees, just as they do now.

This really has to stop. It is time to end these silly games. It is time to confirm Judge Erickson, a dedicated jurist who is going to make a great addition to the Eighth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

TRIBUTE TO MARY JO BROWN

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I rise today to honor a proud educator, a dedicated public servant, a beloved native of my home State of West Virginia, and my very dear friend, Mary Jo Brown. Words cannot express my gratitude for Mary Jo's service and friendship.

Since my days as Governor, Mary Jo has gone above and beyond to uphold the standards not only of professionalism, loyalty, and dedication but also of what it means to be born in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia.

Mary Jo has always had a noble passion for education. She worked for Berkeley County Schools as a teacher, a library media specialist, director of public affairs, and finally as principal of Burke Street Elementary School, where we first became acquainted.

Upon her retirement from Berkeley County Schools, I invited Mary Jo to work with me as a regional coordinator, a role she kept through my entire time as Governor and now as U.S. Senator. Her warm personality and sense of humor truly have a way of making you feel at ease—laughing quite frequently at not only her but yourself.

I have heard many times from members of the Eastern Panhandle community that when she is out meeting with elected officials, business owners, and fellow West Virginians, she provides every confidence that their voices are being heard, and I can assure you, they are. She gets in contact with me immediately.

When Mary Jo is given a task, she doesn't take no for an answer. She is the most tenacious person I have ever met. She gives each project or challenge her all because it is for the good of her community, our State, and her hometown.

It would be difficult to find anyone as knowledgeable and dedicated to our home State as Mary Jo. Among her many contributions to the Eastern Panhandle, together with her loving husband Walter, was founding the Walter and Mary Jo Ziler Brown Fund in 2006 to help Eastern Panhandle students study animal husbandry, agriculture, and veterinary medicine.

We bonded over our passion for public service, inspiring the next generation of leaders, and we share the common goal of helping the rest of the country discover all that our great State of West Virginia has to offer.

Now that she is retiring after a long career of teaching, public service, and more than a decade of Federal service, I know that Mary Jo will carry the same passion for the Eastern Panhandle and for West Virginia that she always has, and she will continue to make a difference wherever she may be and wherever she goes—always for the State of West Virginia and her community.

It is my greatest honor to extend to her and to Walter my very best wishes in the days and years ahead.

Thank you, Mary Jo, and God bless you for everything you have done for me, for our office, and, most importantly, for our State of West Virginia and the Eastern Panhandle. God bless you.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks.

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

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I am honored to come to the floor today to express my support for the President's nominee to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, Judge Ralph Erickson.

Judge Erickson is a longtime North Dakotan and has been a tremendous public servant in his current capacity as Federal district court judge in Fargo, ND. He has made our State proud, and I am confident he will be an excellent addition to the Eighth Circuit Court.

Judge Erickson has a distinguished legal career which spans over two decades. After working in private practice for 10 years, he served as a magistrate judge for Cass County and then as a State district judge for the East Central Judicial District Court. In 2003, Judge Erickson was nominated by President George W. Bush to the U.S. District Court for the District of North Dakota and was quickly confirmed by the Senate unanimously.

Throughout his tenure, Judge Erickson has demonstrated deep respect for the Constitution and the rule of law. His judicial experience ranges from overseeing routine civil cases to cases involving extreme criminal violence. Throughout all of these cases, Judge Erickson practiced a measured and prudential legal approach that is necessary for a position on the second highest court in the United States.

Judge Erickson has also proved to be a champion for Indian Country. He serves as the Chair of the Tribal Issues Advisory Group on the United States Sentencing Commission, where he works to preserve Tribal sovereignty. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, I believe Judge Erickson's expertise on this issue will be a valuable asset to the Eighth Circuit Court.

Madam President, part of our duty as Senators is to evaluate the qualifications of the President's appointees and to vote on their nominations accordingly. This is a responsibility that I take very seriously, and I have no doubt that if confirmed, Judge Erickson will be an excellent circuit judge. I am honored to be here to support his nomination and to urge my colleagues to vote yes.

I would also like to note that in the Gallery today we have his daughter Elizabeth joining us. I think it is wonderful that she could be here to see her father's confirmation vote. She is a sophomore at Catholic University and just an outstanding young person, and there is no doubt that she is extremely proud of her father today. So it is wonderful to welcome her here for this momentous occasion.

With that, Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

Under the previous order, all time having expired, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Erickson nomination?

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 95, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 207 Ex.]

YEAS—95

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

NAYS—1

Warren

NOT VOTING—4

Cochran	Strange
Menendez	Tillis

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the Pai nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Ajit Varadaraj Pai, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of five years from July 1, 2016.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 1:45 p.m. will be equally divided.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I want to speak on the renomination of Ajit Pai to serve as Chairman of the FCC, the Federal Communications Commission, to serve for a term of 5 years.

Under the previous administration, the FCC always had the consumers' back. Back then, that administration's FCC strengthened consumer protections. It furthered competition, it protected public safety, and it pushed forward to ensure universal service for all Americans.

Ultimately, the success or failure of the FCC rises and rests not on the fulfillment of special interest wish lists but on the treatment of those who are least able to protect themselves and whether their First Amendment rights, including those of journalists, are vigorously protected.

Chairman Pai has been a vocal and excessively partisan and often hostile opponent of pro-consumer steps taken by his colleagues on the FCC. We have seen that time after time in the previous administration.

Since becoming Chairman of the FCC this year, he has systematically undercut much of the work done over the past 8 years. I want to give you several examples.

He has acted to prevent millions of broadband subscribers from receiving key information about rates, terms, and conditions of their service. This is called disclosure. He has threatened the expansion of broadband into the homes of low-income Americans by limiting the effectiveness of the new Lifeline Program reforms. If that is not enough, he has proposed sweeping limits on the ability of States and localities to review and improve the installation of certain types of wireless equipment. Furthermore, he has supported the moves by the GOP Congress to eliminate commonsense privacy rules for broadband services.

If all of that is not enough, he has eliminated several media ownership

rules, paving the way for a massive consolidation among TV and radio broadcast stations. Continuing, he has acted as if the way to improve broadband in rural America is to lower standards and saddle our most remote communities with slower speed and worse service. He has also opposed widely supported updates to the E-Rate Program, which brings broadband to schools and libraries in every State in the Nation and leaves that critical program's budget—and the American schoolchildren—in the dial-up era. That is not what we want for our students. Furthermore, he has curtailed rules designed to help small businesses, schools, libraries, and hospitals to find competitive options for high-capacity telecommunications services. What that is going to do is likely raise the cost of these services and potentially harm their quality.

The list I just gave does not include the elephant in the room—Chairman Pai's planned elimination of the FCC's net neutrality protections. This Senator has been very clear that I oppose the effort to revoke these essential consumer protections on the internet. I think Chairman Pai's proposed course is shortsighted, especially when his preferred approach seems to be the abandonment of the FCC's oversight on the action of broadband providers. These are actions that directly impact on the lives of millions of Americans.

In March, I sent to Chairman Pai my deeply held concerns about some of these actions, and I expressed my sincere hope that his early moves were not a sign of things to come, but unfortunately my concerns have only been heightened by his record over the months since that conversation.

At the end of the day, the FCC has a responsibility to put the public interests ahead of the powerful special interests. Just as it has been under the leadership of the past Chairmen and Chairwomen, Congress expects the current FCC to uphold the laws the Congress has passed and to enforce the regulations properly adopted by the agency.

The vast majority of the actions of Chairman Pai have served to eliminate competitive protections, to threaten dangerous industry consolidation, to make the internet less free and less open, and to weaken consumer protections for those most vulnerable.

Ultimately, we need an FCC Chairman who has the consumers' backs. We need an FCC Chairman who is not afraid to use the robust statutory authority Congress has given to the FCC to protect consumers. Based on his record, I have serious and longstanding concerns about whether Chairman Pai really does have the consumers' backs. As a result, I will oppose this nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, it is nice to see the ranking member of the Commerce Committee on the floor today. I appreciate that he and I share a particular view about the privatization of air traffic control.

Today, we are going to presumably pass a 6-month extension for the Federal Aviation Administration. It was passed by the House earlier today, and once again we are in a position which, in my view, we shouldn't be in. We ought to be passing a long-term authorization of the Federal Aviation Administration. Last year, we did so. The Senate, with 95 votes, passed a 4-year FAA bill. It was the kind of meaningful, bipartisan accomplishment that is too rare in Congress today.

I supported that bill, but unfortunately when it was sent to the House and it came time to meet that last year's deadline, we were ultimately forced to pass a short-term extension—which I opposed.

Our ongoing efforts to pass a long-term bill, Republicans and Democrats in both Chambers of Congress, have found common ground and consensus among the entire aviation community on a wide range of important issues.

I am talking about reforms to strengthen the Contract Power Program, one of the most and overwhelmingly popular and successful FAA programs. That matters a lot to the State of Kansas, and communities in the State of Nebraska as well, the home of the Presiding Officer in the Senate.

I am talking about streamlining the aircraft certification process that allows the FAA to focus its valuable resources elsewhere while generating a positive impact on our economy and job security in the aviation manufacturing sector. Because, once again, Congress refuses to set aside the perpetually controversial proposal to privatize our Nation's air traffic control, we are left, again, with a short-term extension. It is another one of those take-it-or-leave-it moments that is occurring here at the eleventh hour in advance of September 30.

We know in the Senate this proposal for privatization will never have the votes to pass. Yet we keep considering short-term extensions that are damaging to the aviation community, particularly the airports that need certainty in planning their infrastructure projects, and they will be, first and foremost, to improve the safety for our air travelers.

A 6-month extension, in my view, is too short to provide the certainty that is needed. The grant process, at the Department of Transportation, will be ongoing, but no airport can plan based upon whether the FAA is going to be authorized 6 months from now.

I have come to the floor numerous times before to talk about how Kansas is a special place when it comes to aviation. Kansas has built three out of every four general aviation aircraft since the Wright brothers first flew at Kitty Hawk. Today, over 40,000 Kansans earn a living in manufacturing, operating, and servicing our world's highest quality aircraft. These aviation businesses and their employees depend upon our ability to compete in a global marketplace, an ability which is significantly damaged when we are putting off passage of a long-term reauthorization bill not just once but year after year.

While general aviation manufacturing is our State's largest industry, it is not just those manufacturers and their employees who understand the problems and ramifications with privatization of air traffic control.

I have often said on the floor that I think at times I get categorized, as a Senator from Kansas, as a State that manufactures lots of airplanes and that my views are therefore solely related to the airplane manufacturing sector. I certainly bring that perspective to Congress, and I speak often and work often on behalf of the manufacturing of aircraft. But any of us who represent airports and communities that are not the largest in the country ought to oppose the privatization of air traffic control.

This is not the traditional rural-versus-urban argument that occurs sometimes around here. This is not about little towns versus everybody else. This is about everyone except for the largest cities with the largest airports and the most travelers. So this is not about just Garden City, KS; or Manhattan, my hometown; or Hays, my former hometown. This is about Wichita and Topeka. This is about Kansas City. All but the absolutely largest airports would be damaged by the privatization of air traffic control.

We have said this many times. It is important to the manufacturers, but it is also important to the survival of communities that I represent and that all of my colleagues represent across the country.

Everywhere I go in Kansas, I am reminded that ATC privatization is a bad idea. The idea that we would allow a 13-member private board to make decisions about the future of airports and air transportation across the country is troublesome. Moreover, even the major providers of aircraft and avionics equipment that reside in Kansas—those businesses that create thousands of jobs in my State—are perhaps even more outspoken against privatization than anyone. These businesses know that privatization of the Nation's most complex air system is a solution without a problem that will ultimately create lots of problems, lots of unintended consequences.

Americans expect leadership from their elected officials in Washington. At a time when partisan dysfunction puts up constant barriers in the legislative process, we should be doing everything we can to find common ground and pass legislation that will have immediate positive impacts on our economy. For so much of the FAA reauthorization last year and again this year, we found that common ground—except for this one divisive

issue that we know ultimately will not become law. It impedes the opportunity to do what, without almost any exception, Members of the House and Senate have agreed to.

True FAA reform will dramatically increase the ability of American aviation manufacturers and businesses to create jobs. This short-term extension represents yet another regrettably missed opportunity to do just that.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO ROZANN KIMPTON

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, every week, I have been coming to the floor to talk about my State and what I think makes it the greatest State in the country and in the world. We like to celebrate and recognize somebody in Alaska who is making a difference for their community, for the State, and for the country, and we like to call these extraordinary Alaskan individuals our Alaskan of the Week.

Like many of us here in the Senate, I spent a lot of time recently in August traveling throughout my home State, and wherever I went, I met strong, generous, versatile Alaskans, many of whom survive in some of the harshest conditions on the planet but still have time for their communities and their families and their neighbors. But, like in many places around the country, I also saw the scourge of addiction that is tearing apart communities and tearing apart families.

We have all heard how addiction is often passed down through generations. There are many in Alaska and many throughout the country who are determined to break this intergenerational cycle of addiction and many who are succeeding. We don't always hear about them, but there are many. So this afternoon I wish to introduce my colleagues to 81-year-old Rozann Kimpton, our Alaskan of the Week, who is doing that and a lot more.

Rozann and her husband moved to Alaska from Washington State in 1958, and they immediately settled in. They ran businesses together, including a small retail store, and then they got into construction and contracting. They raised two children. They were a team. About 10 years ago, they moved to a large plot of land in Wasilla, AK—over 50 acres—to spend time in retirement, and they made plans: gardening, traveling around the world. But it didn't take long for Rozann to recognize that something was wrong—very wrong—in her family, particularly with what was happening to two of her great-grandchildren, Luke and Amanda. They were living in a situation that was harmful to them and they needed help.

At this point, Rozann's husband was also suffering from his own illness—cancer—but the two of them took Luke and Amanda in and adopted them. ''It was the only way to make sure they were safe,'' Rozann said. ''And when a kid needs to be taken care of, and when a mommy and daddy can't, you do it,'' she said. ''I couldn't live with myself knowing that they were in danger and I did nothing.'' This is Rozann talking about her two great-grandkids.

That was 10 years ago. Rozann, now a widow, lives with Amanda and Luke on that big plot of land in Wasilla. Amanda is a senior in high school, and Luke is an eighth grader. They are great kids. As a matter of fact, I just had the opportunity to visit with them in my office yesterday.

Amanda loves geometry. She plays a violin with the Wasilla Youth Orchestra and drums and dances with the Intertribal Drum Group in Anchorage. Luke's big dream is to join the Navy, which I think is great.

The three of them volunteer in their community, helping foster kids. Amanda makes blankets for the foster kids. Every Sunday, they drive over 100 miles to attend Emanuel Presbyterian Church in Anchorage, which is like a second home to all of them.

In addition to all of this, Rozann is the area volunteer coordinator for Volunteers of America Grandfamilies, a grandparents support group. Once a month, she has a picnic for her fellow grandparents and other parents who have adopted kids. The kids play games, eat hamburgers and hot dogs, and adults sit around the campfire, share stories, and encourage one another in all the work they are doing. She is in constant contact with about 25 families, and whenever she spots someone she thinks might need help with their kids, their grandkids, or their great-grandkids, she gives them her card.

''I am not a shy person,'' she said. ''I will talk to anyone who looks like they are struggling, and I am particularly good at spotting grandparents who are raising kids''—grandparents who are raising kids throughout our great Nation.

As the opioid crisis is hitting Alaska, just like it is hitting so many other States, she is seeing more and more grandparents stepping in. ''It is a plague,'' she said, ''but the most important thing is to help the children as early as possible, and to do what we can to make sure they don't carry on that plague.''

Rozann Kimpton is here right now in Washington, DC. As I mentioned, I had a great meeting with her yesterday. She is here to attend a banquet where her efforts will be recognized. She is the 2017 recipient of the Alaska Angels in Adoption Award and will be recognized by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption.

Rozann, thank you for your warmth and for all your hard work for Alaska. Congratulations on your award, and congratulations on being our Alaskan of the Week.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. President, an issue I have been coming to the Senate floor to speak about for the past couple of years is an issue that I don't think we focus on enough here in the Congress, here in the Senate, and that is the key issue of America's economic growth.

With the exception of national security, strong, robust economic growth is probably the most important issue we can be focused on in this body. We certainly have many challenges in this country, but so many of them are made easier when the American economy is strong, when job opportunities are plentiful and optimism in the future because of that strong economic growth is high.

So how have we been doing over the past decade? I want everyone to take a look at this chart. The answer is, not very well; not very well at all. This chart shows the gross domestic product—GDP—decade after decade through different administrations, Democratic and Republican, over the last several decades. So if we take a look at the chart, we see Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Clinton, Bush 41 and 43, and President Obama. We see where levels have been. We see that over the years, over the decades, the average economic growth is about right here—about 4 percent.

There has been a lot of talk about what has made America great and what makes America great. This is what makes America great: strong, robust, economic growth decade after decade. That is the key.

So what happened over the past decade, right here? If we take a look right here at this red line, that is 3 percent. That is not the traditional level. Traditional levels over 200-plus years of American history are closer to 4 percent. But 3 percent GDP growth is considered OK—not bad, not great, but pretty good, and something we should all aspire to, something we should hit.

When we look at this chart, we see that in the last decade we never hit it, not even 3 percent GDP growth—more like 1.5, 2 percent. As a matter of fact, President Obama is the first President in American history where we never hit 3 percent GDP growth for a year.

I know what some may be thinking. This seems to be a pretty important issue, right? Economic growth last decade not even hitting 3 percent. Why wasn't the press writing about that? We didn't hear many stories in the press about this very important issue—a decade of lost economic growth. Many of us come to the floor to talk about this critical issue, and there is a yawn in the Press Gallery. There is no interest. It is hard to understand why.

One theory I have is that if you look at our country more broadly, these are the numbers—very, very weak growth—but certain places in the country over the last 10 years have actually done very well, especially this city, Washington, DC. It has been growing very strong, with probably 5, 6 percent growth. Some other places, some of the coastal big cities, including New York, San Francisco, and Boston, are all doing well—way higher than 3 percent. They are growing stronger. So the

press, in my view, is probably not that interested in this number because in places like Washington, everything seemed to be going great. But it wasn't going great.

Think about this: If Washington or L.A. or New York or San Francisco are growing at 3 or 4 percent growth and yet the country is at about 1.5 or 2 percent, then there are probably huge parts of America that are actually shrinking, not growing at all.

These charts talk about economic growth, GDP. It can sound a little bit wonky. Really, GDP is a marker for the health of our economy. It is an indicator of American progress. It is a proxy for the American dream and optimism in the future.

As this chart shows, we have had a sick economy over the last 10 years, a lost decade of economic growth. The press hasn't written much about it, and when they have, they have typically bought the line of the previous administration saying: Hey, look, we know that the traditional levels of economic growth are close to 4 percent. Look at Clinton, look at Reagan—4½, 5, 6. We know that is the case. We know 3 percent is OK. But we haven't hit that in the last 10 years, so what is wrong? Well, the press started buying the line from the last administration: That is the ''new normal.'' We can't hit 3 percent anymore. We certainly can't hit 4 percent anymore. So 1½, 2 percent is America hitting on all cylinders. I believe that is a surrender. I believe dumbing down our expectations for economic growth is a retreat from the American dream.

As you know, the American people aren't buying this. They are not buying the dumbing down. They are not saying: Oh yeah, we can live with this 1½ percent growth. Sure. No problem. They are wise, and they aren't buying the dumbing down.

We all saw the book recently released by former Senator and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and her book is entitled ''What Happened.'' What happened? This is what happened: Our citizens saw the American dream slipping away after a lost decade of economic growth, and they weren't ready to surrender to the new normal.

What do we need to focus on in the Senate? We have to start moving beyond this. We have to. We need policies that are going to focus on reigniting growth—the growth that Democrats and Republicans have supported for decades. What is that? I think there is a lot of agreement—infrastructure, less burdensome regulations, energy. America has enormous supplies of energy that we can take advantage of. Yet the issue we are starting to debate now in the Senate is tax reform.

As we debate this and work in a bipartisan way—I have heard a lot of my colleagues say that we do need to undertake tax reform. We need to keep asking ourselves, on all these policies, what they will do to reignite growth, to reignite the American dream, to allow hard-working American families to keep more of their paychecks, and to return to the optimism that comes with a robust economy, not just along the coast of America but throughout the entire country, to get back to that optimism and growth. That is what I am going to be doing as we undertake this debate on tax reform.

The Trump administration is off to an OK start. The first quarter—again, kind of a hangover from the Obama years—1.2 percent growth. That is not good at all. The last quarter, second quarter, was 3.1. It hit above 3 percent, which is what the President says his policies are meant to do. As long as they are focused on that, I certainly am going to be somebody who wants to support those kinds of pro-growth policies, and I think it is imperative, whether it is tax reform, infrastructure, regulatory reform, or energy, that we all come together in this body and make sure we work together so the next decade of growth in America does not look like this last one and gets us over 3 percent, gets us back to traditional levels of growth. I don't think there is anything more important we can do in the Senate than getting back to those important levels of growth for our country and our citizens.

TRIBUTE TO TYLER ROBERTS AND MICHAEL SOUKUP

Mr. President, I wish to say a few words about some of my staff who have done a great job serving Alaskans and who are leaving my office soon. I am going to miss them a lot. One is here now, and he will probably be embarrassed that I am talking about him on the Senate floor—Tyler Roberts.

Tyler has been a legislative assistant of mine, handling healthcare, budget, tax. He is leaving to join the private sector. He has been with me from the beginning, 2½ years ago. I can tell you this: He has worked long hours serving the people of our great State and has set a tone in the office of hard work, diligent work, good-natured, and we are going to miss Tyler very much.

I wish to also recognize Michael Soukup. Michael is our digital director and press secretary. From educating Alaskans on what we are doing in DC to designing poster boards like this, creating awesome graphics and videos, Michael has been an invaluable member of my team as well. He is an artist. Like all good artists, his work has a distinctive look and style. If you see one of my photo montages on Facebook and you think it is well-done, which we do, you can thank Michael. We call them Soukup specials.

Tyler has also worked tirelessly for me and Alaska, his home State. I know that he will bring the same amount of creativity, ingenuity, and integrity to all he does as he moves into the next phase of his career.

Thank you to all my staff.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DISASTER TAX RELIEF AND AIRPORT AND AIRWAY EXTENSION ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3823.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3823) to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to provide disaster tax relief, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Cassidy amendment at the desk be agreed to and the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

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

The amendment (No. 1108) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To strike the provisions relating to development of a private flood insurance market)

Strike title IV.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 3823), as amended, was passed.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

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

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am here for the third time in as many days to talk about this Nation's response to a humanitarian crisis affecting millions of Americans—the people

of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. It is similar to the situation in Florida, in the gulf coast, and, some years ago, in Connecticut and in other parts of this country when they faced a natural disaster that was almost as devastating as an attack would be by a foreign power. Analogous but different, this category 4 Hurricane Maria caused consequences as devastating and destructive as any that man could do. It is a natural disaster, not manmade, but it is turning into a manmade disaster.

So far, the response from our government has been underwhelming. In fact, it has been inadequate and anemic. It has been shamefully slow and undersized and should be vastly upgraded and increased.

Just moments ago, I learned that Lieutenant General Buchanan has been appointed to head the military efforts in Puerto Rico. That appointment followed a call just an hour or so ago with all of the representatives, including FEMA, the Department of Defense, other Federal agencies, and the Red Cross, during which I urged our U.S. military to be mobilized, much as we would be in responding to a natural disaster in Connecticut or Texas or Florida or other places in this country on the mainland where we have seen the same kind of storm.

The 3.4 million people in Puerto Rico are almost exactly the same number as the population of Connecticut. I hope, and I believe, the response would be better in Connecticut if we were to face the same kind of natural disaster. Yet the manmade disaster is the failure to move food, fuel, medicine, water, other necessities, and communications equipment from the ports and the airports into the interior of the country, even into the major cities, where currently apparently a lack of drivers and passable roads make it all the more difficult. Whether the supplies of food and fuel and medicine and water are adequate on the island or need to be increased on an emergency basis and whether there are sufficient shipments and airlifts going into the island, the simple fact is that Puerto Rico faces a disaster—manmade after natural.

I commend the loyal and dedicated people of FEMA and all of the National Guard, including the National Guard of Connecticut, who have performed with such heroism and dedication in the face of the most difficult circumstances imaginable, but their efforts need to be matched by many others. There are 4,500 American military personnel now in Puerto Rico. Rather than 5,000, there should be 50,000 of our National Guard, not to occupy the island, not to enforce martial law but to make sure the logistics—the transportation, the means of delivery of the lifeblood of that island in food and fuel and medicine and water and other basic necessities—are sufficient to move those basic supplies to the places they are needed. The troops who are there now are performing heroic, Herculean work, and so are many volunteers, along with FEMA officials, the Coast Guard, and others, but they need more help.

Nearly a week after this storm, Maria, more than 90 percent of the island's residents are without power, 42 percent have no water, the vast majority of the country's 69 hospitals cannot function, and only 10 percent of the cell towers are working. If those conditions existed in Connecticut, I would be on the floor 24 hours a day. Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have no one here, and they have no elected Representatives in the House of Representatives. They are voiceless or at least voteless in this body. We need to stand for them, speak out, and fight for them. That is why I am here for the third day in a row.

We need a plan and a strategy, which has been lacking from this administration. In that phone call earlier today with FEMA officials and the Department of Defense, I asked about a plan. They are working on it. The military, U.S. Northern Command, is working on a plan. They could not tell me when it will be ready or what it will say or what the total number of troops or other logistical supplies will be nor could they commit that there would be a waiver under FEMA regulations of the C through G conditions, which apply to permanent recovery.

The only decision that has been made is A to B, which provides for debris and other emergency responses over the next 180 days, and that is part of what the island needs—a longer term plan as well as an immediate one to make sure there is a road to recovery, that there is a path that will provide hope. Not only is the well-being and health of this island threatened but so is hope, which is so important for progress to be made.

The people of Puerto Rico have been met with, at best, ambivalence and ambiguity by the President of the United States. Earlier this week, he seemed more inclined to blame the island itself and the size of the ocean than in advocating for help. I hope we can come together on a bipartisan basis. With the kind of situation that is there now—the danger of epidemic as well as immediate health threats before disease takes hold—we must act before people die. We must come to the aid of Puerto Rico. They need medical care. They need access to food and safe drinking water, and, yes, they need greater security.

The 78 mayors of Puerto Rico, along with the Governor, are doing also heroic and Herculean work, but a whole of government response is necessary from this body and from the Federal Government at a much higher magnitude. In the long term, we must have a martial plan—a strategy for rebuilding the island's roads, bridges, rail, airports, ports, and VA facility, much as we do in this country, except that, there, the need is so much more dire and immediate. Hospitals, transportation, electricity, power, communications, safety, housing all have been destroyed, and the consequences will be deadly.

My hope is that Lieutenant General Buchanan will expedite that plan. So far, it has been lacking. It should be done today. It should be integrated with the FEMA approach, and I hope they will permit visits by Members of the Congress who, so far, have been prevented from going there.

The American people deserve to have elected Representatives there because Puerto Rico has none here. The extraordinary work done by the cable TV and reporters for the print media and others who are there have given us a picture—and often a picture is worth a thousand words—of the devastation that now continues from a manmade disaster that must be avoided before it takes lives and destroys hope.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be able to complete my remarks.

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise to voice my strong support for the nomination of Ajit Pai to a second 5-year term as Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission.

Mr. Pai has served as a Commissioner of the FCC since 2012, when he was first confirmed by a voice vote in the Senate. Mr. Pai was designated by President Trump to be the 34th Chairman of the FCC in January of this year and was renominated to a second term to the FCC in March.

In July, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which I am privileged to chair, held a hearing on the nomination of Mr. Pai, and the committee reported out his nomination favorably on August 2.

Prior to becoming a Commissioner, Chairman Pai worked on telecommunications policy in both the public and private sectors, notably serving in the Senate as a staffer on the Judiciary Committee as well as in the general counsel's office at the FCC.

It is my belief that Mr. Pai's stellar career and communications policy, his integrity, and his tireless work ethic all serve him well as he continues to serve the FCC and guide the agency back to being a more collaborative and productive institution.

In just 9 months since becoming Chairman, Mr. Pai has made much needed reforms to improve transparency at the FCC and to improve the agency's processes. I am particularly heartened by Chairman Pai's efforts to treat his fellow Commissioners fairly by instituting the process of sharing documents with other Commissioners before discussing them publicly.

Additionally, under Chairman Pai's leadership, the public is now able to view the text of all agenda items in advance of Commission meetings. Also,

to better reflect the realities of today's competitive landscape, Chairman Pai has announced the creation of an Office of Economics and Data to provide cost-benefit analyses to better inform the FCC's work.

These measures are a significant step forward from the last Chairman's leadership style, which I frequently criticized as being hyperpartisan and warned would lead to counterproductive outcomes over the long term. That is why, a little over a year ago, I felt compelled to stand in this same spot and to strongly criticize the previous Chairman of the FCC for leading the Commission with unprecedented partisan zeal. At that time, I noted that the voting record for open meetings at the Commission showed a long history of consensus-building with the previous five permanent FCC Chairmen combining for only 14 party-line votes at open meetings during their tenures. However, this all changed under Chairman Wheeler as he pursued a highly partisan agenda, driven by ideological beliefs more than by a sober reading of the law. Chairman Wheeler forced 3-to-2 votes on a party-line basis a total of 31 times. To put it another way, in 3 years under Chairman Wheeler, the FCC saw over twice as many partisan votes than in the previous 20 years combined.

While partisan differences are sometimes inevitable, what were once very rare events have become standard operating procedure at the Commission. This extreme partisanship was used to do the following things: a complete upending of how the internet is regulated, creating years of uncertainty for everyone; stripping important consumer protection responsibilities from the Federal Trade Commission; a failed attempt to override States' rights on municipal broadband and a power grab that was overturned by the courts; increasing the size of the Universal Service Fund by billions of dollars by simultaneously undermining bipartisan efforts to improve the program's accountability; the unnecessary and possibly unlawful disclosure of trade secrets and a plan to have the FCC and its Media Bureau design and dictate the future of television ads.

I was not alone in noticing Chairman Wheeler's overreach. On several occasions other Federal agencies refused to support his actions. The Copyright Office strongly criticized a proposal for set-top boxes. The staff at the Federal Trade Commission called the FCC's privacy rules ''not optimal,'' which is bureaucrat speak for really bad. The Obama administration's Department of Justice refused to defend the FCC's unlawful action on municipal broadband.

With respect to internet regulations, I am pleased that Chairman Pai has sought to hit the reset button on the 2015 title II order because, as I have previously said, the FCC should do what is necessary to rebalance the agency's regulatory posture under current law. I continue to believe, however, that the best way to provide long-term protections for the internet is for Congress to pass bipartisan legislation.

Two and a half years ago, I put forward legislative principles and a draft bill to begin the conversation, and I continue to stand ready and willing today to work toward finding a lasting legislative solution that will resolve the dispute over net neutrality once and for all.

Thankfully, the net neutrality debate has not distracted the FCC from important work in other areas. For instance, the FCC's proposed rulemaking on robocalls is a positive step in the right direction. The government must do everything we can to protect consumers from those who are truly bad actors, but we also must be sure that the government's rules are not unfairly punishing legitimate callers who are not acting maliciously. The FCC's notice of inquiry will give that conversation a much needed jump-start.

Furthermore, Chairman Pai's focus on the expansion of rural broadband and acceleration of next-generation infrastructure deployment will help close the digital divide—a goal that we all share. He has also worked tirelessly to help ensure communications services are restored to the communities affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

Given the FCC's importance to the future of our economy and our society, it is important for the Commission to seek opportunities for common ground. In the past, people used to say that communications policy was not particularly partisan and that both sides of the aisle could often find common ground to work together. Well, times have changed, and the debate on this nomination is another example of that.

I know that agreement is not always possible. Nevertheless, as a corrective to the Commission's recent history, I urged Chairman Pai at his confirmation hearing to treat all Commissioners fairly, to respect the law, to be willing to ask Congress for guidance, and to seek consensus whenever and wherever possible. I believe doing so will improve the agency's credibility and will result in actions that are more likely to endure, and I believe that Chairman Pai will do these things.

As I noted at the outset, Chairman Pai has already made much needed reforms to improve the processes at the FCC and to empower his fellow Commissioners. He has already shown a commitment to ensuring transparency and openness at the Commission, which gives me great confidence in the direction that he will lead the agency. Chairman Pai's new approach, I believe, will lead to more long-lasting and positive results at the FCC. That is why I believe the elevation of Ajit Pai to be the Chairman of the Commission is a much needed breath of fresh air, and why I believe he should be confirmed promptly and without further delay.

So I urge my colleagues to support this nomination.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Ajit Varadaraj Pai, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission.

Mitch McConnell, Joni Ernst, Thom Tillis, Ben Sasse, Steve Daines, Mike Crapo, Jerry Moran, Tom Cotton, John Thune, Pat Roberts, James M. Inhofe, Johnny Isakson, John Cornyn, James Lankford, John Boozman, James E. Risch, Roger F. Wicker.

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 Ajit Varadaraj Pai, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 208 Ex.]

YEAS—55

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Peters
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Hatch	Risch
Capito	Heller	Roberts
Carper	Hoeven	Rounds
Cassidy	Inhofe	Rubio
Collins	Isakson	Sasse
Coons	Johnson	Scott
Corker	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Tester
Crapo	Manchin	Thune
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McCaskill	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	Young
Ernst	Moran	
Fischer	Murkowski	

NAYS—41

Baldwin	Feinstein	Markey
Bennet	Franken	Merkley
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Murphy
Booker	Harris	Murray
Brown	Hassan	Nelson
Cantwell	Heinrich	Reed
Cardin	Heitkamp	Sanders
Casey	Hirono	Schatz
Cortez Masto	Kaine	Schumer
Donnelly	King	Shaheen
Duckworth	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Durbin	Leahy	

Udall	Warner	Whitehouse
Van Hollen	Warren	Wyden

NOT VOTING—4

Cochran	Strange
Menendez	Tillis

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 55, the nays are 41.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I would like to extend thanks to my colleagues from Ohio and Maryland for allowing me to cut in line.

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. President, a few minutes ago, the Senator from Connecticut made a speech about the natural disaster and humanitarian disaster unfolding in Puerto Rico. He urged the executive branch and, in particular, FEMA, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense to move quicker to enable the Congress to do our oversight responsibilities.

Director Long at FEMA today made clear to a number of us on a conference call briefing that there are constraints into and out of the airport at San Juan. There are all sorts of legitimate arguments he has made. At the same time, it is absolutely imperative for the American people and for the disaster unfolding in Puerto Rico that the Congress, in general, and the Senate, in particular, be able to do our oversight work.

I would like to associate myself with the comments of the Senator from Connecticut.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Nebraska, and our hearts go out to those victims of the hurricane now in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, following the terrible devastation in Texas and Florida. These are American citizens who deserve our assistance and urgent help.

I am glad to hear there is now more support mobilizing on the island. I would like to associate myself with the comments of those who talk about the need to move quickly to save lives.

STOP ENABLING SEX TRAFFICKERS ACT

Mr. President, I rise to talk about something different today, something equally urgent and concerning. It has to do with legislation that is present here in the U.S. Senate and in the House of Representatives. It is about an issue called sex trafficking—human trafficking. It is a crime against humanity. It is a human rights issue that really transcends partisanship and transcends politics.

Every day that we aren't acting here to help push back against this, countless vulnerable women and children are suffering. I personally think it is a stain on our national character that sex trafficking is increasing in this country, in this century, at this time. Experts tell us that it is increasing because of the internet. So the internet, which has so many positive aspects, also has a dark side. One is the selling of children and women online with ruthless efficiency.

I appreciated the Senate Commerce Committee holding a hearing last week on bipartisan legislation called the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act. I appreciated the opportunity to testify in support of this legislation at that hearing. But, actually, the most powerful testimony by far came from a mom. Her name is Yvonne Ambrose. Yvonne received a call on Christmas Eve that every parent dreads. As a dad of three kids, I can't imagine. Her 16-year-old daughter, Desiree, was murdered while being exploited and sold for sex on backpage.com, the industry leader in the online sex trafficking of minors.

A 16-year-old girl should never have been trafficked online, but the tragedy of her death is compounded by the fact that backpage.com, the website she was bought and sold on, has repeatedly evaded justice for its role in child sex trafficking.

We know from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children that backpage alone is responsible for most child trafficking. In fact, 75 percent of all child trafficking reports the organization receives from the public have to do with backpage.com. We know from a nearly 2-year investigation by the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which I chair, that backpage actively and knowingly facilitated online sex trafficking, coached its users on how to post so-called clean ads for illegal transactions, and knowingly edited ads to conceal evidence of crimes, including the concealed evidence of underage girls being sold online.

Despite these facts, which are horrendous, courts have consistently ruled that a Federal law called the Communications Decency Act protects backpage from its liability for its role in sex trafficking. This law is 21 years old. It shields websites from liability for crimes others commit through their site. It was enacted when the internet was in its infancy. It was intended, by the way, in part to protect children from indecent material on the internet. Now it is protecting websites that sell women and children for sex.

This was never Congress's intention when enacting the Communications Decency Act. In fact, last week, California's attorney general, Xavier Becerra, testified at the Senate hearing I talked about. He was a Congressman in 1996 when the law was enacted. In discussing the Communications Decency Act, he said: ''I don't remember in 1996 believing my 'yes' vote meant I was going to allow, 21 years later, for kids to be sold through the internet for sex.''

Congress clearly did not intend for this broad immunity to occur, but courts have made it clear their hands are tied because of legal precedent and have invited the Congress to fix this injustice.

Just last month, a Sacramento judge made the most blatant call on Congress yet. The court threw out pimping charges against backpage.com because of the liability protections provided to the website under Federal law. The court opinion stated: ''If and until Congress sees fit to amend the immunity law, the broad reach of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act even applies to those alleged to support the exploitation of others by human trafficking.''

Because of this interpretation of the law over the last 20 years, only Congress can fix this injustice. Again, that is why I introduced the bipartisan Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act.

Along with coauthors Senators BLUMENTHAL, MCCAIN, MCCASKILL, CORNYN, and HEITKAMP, we are determined to get this bill passed to make a difference in the lives of countless women and children who have been exploited by online sex traffickers.

Last week's hearing was a great positive step in that direction. We had bipartisan support in the hearing, and I hope that after the hearing, we can move quickly to a markup. I thank Senator THUNE, who was on the floor earlier—chairman of the committee—for his leadership in this area.

The bill would do two things. They are both very targeted and narrow. One, it would allow sex trafficking victims to get the justice they deserve against websites that knowingly facilitate crimes against them. Second, it would allow State and local law enforcement to prosecute websites that violate Federal sex trafficking laws, again, with the knowing standard.

This standard of knowing is a high bar to meet. Websites would have to be proven to knowingly facilitate, support, or assist online sex trafficking to be liable. Because the standard is so high, our bill protects good technology companies—good actors—and targets rogue online traffickers like backpage. Our bill also preserves the Good Samaritan provision in the Communications Decency Act, which protects the actors that proactively screen their websites for offensive material.

These are commonsense updates to bring a 21-year-old statute into the 21st century.

This bill has received wide bipartisan support. Thirty-three Senators have supported it, one-third of the entire U.S. Senate as cosponsors. We also have the support of dozens of anti-human trafficking groups in all of our States, faith-based groups from around the country, law enforcement groups, all the national law enforcement groups, including the attorneys general, the groups out there that actually are involved in these prosecutions. They have all publicly endorsed this legislation.

Some significant players in the tech and business community have also stepped up to support it. Recently, Oracle endorsed the legislation, also 21st

Century Fox, Hewlett-Packard Enterprise, Walt Disney Company, and others have supported our narrowly crafted legislation because they know it is necessary, it is needed, and it doesn't affect the good actors.

I would love to see others in the tech community step forward and help us. We want them to partner with us in this. They should be as concerned as anyone, if not more, because online, on the internet, this is taking place. They should want to support, address this injustice, where traffickers exploit women and children with immunity.

Some in the tech community have argued this bill would inadvertently harm good-intentioned websites. I don't believe that is true, but, more importantly, nor do legal scholars who have looked at this.

Attorney General Xavier Becerra explained in last week's hearing that ''we have to prove criminal intent. We can't win a prosecution unless we can show that the individuals we're prosecuting, like Backpage, had the intent—the knowledge—to do what they are doing. The legislation that you have before you is very narrowly tailored. It goes only after sex trafficking.''

That was our intent, to do it narrowly. The bill targets websites that knowingly facilitate sex trafficking and protects those that don't. It is as simple as that. I think those in the tech community who remain in opposition to this legislation have to realize that by doing so, they are protecting these bad actors, bringing a bad name to the internet. Instead, they should partner with us to protect our kids.

I have spoken about courts and attorneys general calling on Congress to change the Communications Decency Act. The most powerful call on Congress actually came at the Senate hearing last week—not from a lawyer, not from a judge. It came from a mom.

Yvonne Ambrose, whom I mentioned earlier, the mother of the late 16-year-old, Desiree Robinson, with great courage, stated:

> Backpage.com and other companies like it must be held responsible for what they have created. I'm sure when this act was put in place in [19]96, the Internet was in its infancy, and it was not intended to allow companies to legally sell children on the internet. But somehow, a dollar has become more important than a human life. If you're going to fix this problem, fix it.

Let's fix it. Last week's Senate hearing was a step in the right direction. Senators from both sides of the aisle understood the injustice that occurs and were passionate in expressing their desire to find a solution. I would just tell you that we have very carefully assessed this problem over the last couple of years, carefully and thoughtfully not just assessed it but looked for a legislative fix that would be a solution to the problems we have identified. We now need to act on it as soon as possible to save those women and children who are being trafficked online every day as we wait.

The Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act stops an injustice. I urge the Senate to take up this legislation, seize this opportunity, have the markup, get it to the floor, get it to the House where there is companion legislation, and fix this problem to protect our kids.

Thank you.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, first, I want to compliment Senator PORTMAN for his leadership on this issue of ending modern-day slavery and trafficking. The United States is taking the leadership globally in fighting trafficking.

We had the Trafficking in Persons Report that is looked upon as being the most authoritative document on how well every country is doing in fighting modern-day slavery and trafficking, but we must make sure we take care of issues here at home.

I applaud Senator PORTMAN's efforts to make sure we do everything in this country we can to protect those victims who are being trafficked for sex or labor. We need to redouble our efforts. I compliment my colleague for his leadership in this area. I can tell him that all of us here want to work with him to make sure America continues to lead in our fight to end modern-day slavery.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, I would like to say one thing about the fellows who serve in our office. I know many of us are privileged to have fellows who get assigned to us. Arnold Solamillos has been assigned to my office and has helped us in so many different areas. His expertise from the Social Security Administration is a valuable service. I, personally, thank him for the contributions he has made not just to my Senate office but to the work we do in the U.S. Congress.

Mr. President, I want to comment about the status of healthcare. We had expected that the majority leader might have brought up this week the Graham-Cassidy bill as part of budget reconciliation. I can tell you I am relieved he did not, but I hope this Chamber will consider healthcare legislation not 6 months from now, not a year from now, but there is important work we need to do now in regard to healthcare, and we need to work together, Democrats and Republicans.

One of the urgent issues is to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP. That program, as I am sure the Presiding Officer knows, expires in the next 2 days. We need to make sure there is predictability for our States to continue this extremely important program that protects the health of our children.

It was created as a bipartisan program, enjoyed bipartisan support. I certainly compliment Chairman HATCH and Ranking Member WYDEN for their work together to reach an agreement on the reauthorization of this program. I hope we can consider that very shortly.

I also would like to point out that we have very important healthcare policies that have time limits on it and expire, and we need to pass what is known as extenders in health. Some of these policies expire in the next 2 days.

I am going to just mention one. There are many others I could mention, but I want to mention one that I have been involved with ever since Congress made the mistake of placing a limit known as the therapy cap on rehab services. This limit makes absolutely no sense. It made no sense 20 years ago when it was imposed. It was put in there to reach a budget number and reconciliation and had nothing to do with policy.

Today, those who have the most serious needs of therapy services are the ones who are the most at risk. So I would urge my colleagues that we need to take up these medical extenders, and we need to do it now. We need to do it quickly. We don't want to leave the uncertainty out there. Every day we leave the uncertainty, there is a question in the minds of individuals who need these services and those who are providing these services whether, in fact, Congress will extend the policies.

Let me talk a little bit about the broader issue of the Affordable Care Act. We had, I thought, a very informative hearing before the Senate Finance Committee on the Graham-Cassidy amendment to the Reconciliation Act. We had that hearing on Monday, and I thought it was a very informative hearing for the members of our committee and the American public. We had the opportunity to have one of the members of our committee on the panel of witnesses. Senator CASSIDY was a witness at the witness table. During the questioning, I said to him that he had mentioned many examples of individuals who are facing very high premium increases or they don't have the ability to pay the premiums and the out-of-pocket costs. He was using those examples, as some of my other colleagues were using, as to why we have to deal with a change in the Affordable Care Act.

I had the opportunity to question what individuals he was talking about. He identified the group. The group is those who are in the individual marketplace. These are not the families who have policies through their employers or in the group plans, these are individuals who have no other opportunity but to go into the individual market in order to buy their health insurance. Secondly, these are individuals who don't qualify for subsidies because their income is too high.

So I asked Mrs. Miller, who was on the panel who is the insurance commissioner from Pennsylvania, whether my estimate of the number of people who fall into this category is correct. She confirmed it is somewhere between 1 to 2 percent of the population that fall in the individual marketplace and incomes are too high for subsidies.

That is a significant number of Americans, and we need to deal with their concerns. Let me sort of spell out what that is all about. In my State of Maryland, the average cost—capital cost—of healthcare is somewhere around $8,600 a year. If you don't have an employer helping to contribute to your healthcare insurance or cost or you don't qualify for any subsidies and you are a husband or wife with two children, then your average costs are going to be in excess of $34,000. That is if you buy insurance so you are not exposed to the unexpected costs. A lot of families just can't afford that.

The problem is, the individual marketplace is not stable. There are too many uncertainties, and those premium costs can become unaffordable for those families whose incomes are too high to receive subsidies. It is an important group, but let's keep in mind it is 1 to 2 percent, so let's not jeopardize the healthcare of 98 to 99 percent of Americans in an effort to say we are doing something for the 1 or 2 percent.

Here is the rub. The Graham-Cassidy bill didn't help that 1 to 2 percent. In fact, it made it worse. It made it less likely that they would be able to get affordable coverage so they didn't deal with the problem that was identified for the reason for the reform. Instead, what the Graham-Cassidy bill did was basically to block grant the Medicaid Program to the States. They had a complicated formula, where many States, like Maryland, would lose a lot of money because we used our State resources to expand Medicaid, and now we are being penalized for it. The bottom line was every State was going to have a cap as to how much money the Federal Government was going to make available, and that cap became tighter and tighter every year.

So I asked one of the witnesses on our panel on Monday: How would you deal with that?

The witness who is responsible in his State said: Well, you manage to the cap. Those were his exact words: ''You manage to the cap.''

So I said to Mrs. Miller, the insurance commissioner from Pennsylvania: What does that mean, managing to the cap?

She said: Well, it means that in order to make the cap, you either knock people off the rolls and change the eligibility so fewer people have coverage in our State—and let me remind my colleagues the Congressional Budget Office, although they didn't give us a finite score, did say there would be millions of people who would lose their coverage under the Graham-Cassidy bill—so that is one way. Also, the bill eliminated the expansion of Medicaid, which was part of the Affordable Care Act and was responsible for tens of millions getting healthcare coverage. So there would be millions of people who would lose their benefits because the States have to manage to this cap that was in the bill.

The second way Mrs. Miller said you can manage to the cap is to reduce benefits, and many States have done that. They can impose caps. Caps means that if—I had so many people who wrote me letters, and I am sure the Presiding Officer got letters from people in his State—but the ones who really got to you was when you heard from a young husband and wife who have a child with special needs and that person indicated that within the first couple of months, they would have exceeded the cap that was in the insurance policies before the passage of the Affordable Care Act.

What are we supposed to do? If the State, in order to save money to manage to the cap, imposes a cap on how much the coverage is and you have a child with special needs, what do you do about that?

Well, the answer, quite frankly, is you either sell everything you have, mortgage everything you have, or go into a bankruptcy in order to take care of your child because you just can't do it.

So that is what was at risk.

There was a third way to manage to the cap, and Mrs. Miller said: We could cut provider fees, and States have done that. Cutting provider fees means that in areas where there is a large Medicaid population, you are going to have a hard time finding a hospital or a doctor that will be willing to treat the lack of access to care. We saw that over and over again, where people may have coverage, but they can't get a provider. That is not access to care.

So, for all of these reasons, what would have been done under the Graham-Cassidy bill would not have dealt with the 1 to 2 percent where we do have an issue and we need to work on it, it would have created significant problems for millions of others, and I haven't even gotten to the fact that it eliminated the Patients' Bill of Rights and insurance protections that we put into law against preexisting conditions and things like that. So I was glad to see we are not considering that amendment this week. That, to me, was the right decision.

I know we are now going to end this fiscal year in the next 2 days and that next week we are likely to see come out of the Budget Committee another budget document so that we are back on fiscal year 2018 rather than fiscal year 2017. We don't know whether that will deal with taxes or with healthcare, but there will come a time that we may be getting back to this debate. I would hope we don't need a budget resolution to do it. I hope we can move in a bipartisan manner and get some things done now to improve and stabilize the Affordable Care Act.

I have been participating, under the leadership of Senator ALEXANDER, the chairman of the HELP Committee, and Senator MURRAY, the ranking Democrat on the committee—who have been conducting hearings over the last several weeks, and we have invited Members who are not on that committee to join them. We were able to ask the witnesses questions. We were able to find out whether there were some common areas where we could in fact help stabilize the market that includes the 1 to 2 percent I have already talked about who are the ones who have issues here.

I have met with our insurance carriers in Maryland in reference to why we were having large increases in the individual marketplaces, and we went over the various reasons. The three principal reasons were all talked about in this bipartisan group. Quite frankly, Senator ALEXANDER said: Look, we are trying to see whether we can't come together with some legislation, perhaps to pass as early as this month, which gave a lot of us confidence that at long last we are coming back to work, Democrats and Republicans.

I was criticized by some of my constituents during this debate who asked: Where is your proposal? How are you going to fix it? So several months ago I filed legislation, and I was pleased to see that a couple of the issues I included in my legislation were consensus proposals in this bipartisan group that has been meeting for the last couple of weeks.

One of those that is in my legislation and that is in conversation is to have predictable funding for the cost sharing. As we know, President Trump has raised a question as to whether he is going to continue to pay the insurance companies for keeping the copays and deductibles and premiums low for low-income families. He is doing it on a month-to-month basis. If we could make that a predictable payment, as was anticipated under the Affordable Care Act, that could affect a significant part of the premium increase that has been sought in the individual marketplace. That was what was told to me in Maryland, and that was confirmed by a wide network of groups from many States in the discussions with Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY. That is something we could do right now. We anticipated that would be done. We can do that, and then we can help those people whose examples were given for reasons why we need to address the Affordable Care Act.

A second issue that is included in my legislation that was very much included in this discussion is, let's make it easier for States to implement a reinsurance program. A reinsurance program takes the high risks and spreads them over so an insurance company doesn't have to impose higher premiums because they have unknown risks. It is a pretty simple process, to use reinsurance. The State Senate used reinsurance and it has worked. It was in the original Affordable Care Act.

The problem is, the States' budgets have already been put to rest. In order to do a reinsurance program, you have to put some money upfront in order to save money. The States just don't have those funds. So let's look for ways we can make it easier for States to implement the reinsurance program, and

part of that is to deal with the waivers that are in the Affordable Care Act. We have guardrails to make sure States use waivers but do not compromise the protections that are in the statute. So let's make it easier for States to implement a reinsurance program which could also bring down rates. Quite frankly, I didn't see anyone object to those two suggestions that were made, which would certainly help.

There are other things I hope we can do. The three main reasons given by the insurance carriers in Maryland for the premium increases are, No. 1, the uncertainty of the cost-sharing payments; No. 2, the reinsurance program; and, No. 3, that we are not enforcing the requirement that everybody be in the pool. We don't do that. You get those that are at the highest risk who are going to come in, but those who feel like they are not going to be using the policies stay out, and then we have adverse risk selection and therefore higher premiums than there should be.

So we really need to do a better job to try to get people into the plans. That is why many of us have been urging our appropriators to provide the funds so we can inform people about the advantages of having healthcare coverage and we can get a broader market in there. I certainly hope a law is passed by Congress that requires the coverage would be enforced. These are things I think we all could do.

There are other issues I hope we can deal with that I think will help all people, in addition to the 1 to 2 percent who need immediate help, as well as bring down the entirety of our healthcare costs. Part of that is to bring down healthcare costs generally. We all know prescription drugs are too expensive in this country. We pay twice what other countries pay. One simple way is to get the same discounts for Medicare as we get for Medicaid. My understanding is that saves billions of dollars. It was in my legislation, just one simple way. I think that if you can collect the bargaining power of the Medicare marketplace, we can certainly get better prices than we get by using a divided market.

So there are things we can do. We can have a better delivery system for providing healthcare to people in this country. I have talked about this many times—collaborative and integrative care models. In Maryland, we have Mosaic, which is a behavioral health facility, working with Sheppard Pratt, a mental health hospital. They worked together in order to have a more efficient delivery system. We need to encourage those types of models that use integrative care to bring down healthcare costs.

Lastly, we need more competition. Yes, I have always supported a public option under the exchanges. I think that makes sense.

We have a lot of other proposals that have been given. Let's sit down and talk about these proposals to see if we can't find ways to make our system better.

We have, once again, reached a situation where the majority has pulled the budget reconciliation, this time permanently, from the fiscal year 2017 calendar year. Let us start the new year that begins on October 1—the new fiscal year—with a commitment from Democrats and Republicans to work together, to share our best ideas, to make sure our children are protected by the extension of the CHIP program, to make sure policies that are currently in place that protect our constituents such as the therapy cap relief are extended.

Let's join together so the Affordable Care Act can be made stronger, particularly in stabilizing the problems in the individual marketplace, and help bring down the growth rate of healthcare costs. That is what we should be working on now, and I encourage my colleagues to do just that.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BURMA

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, anyone who watches the news, reads the newspaper, or goes on social media knows there are a lot of bad things happening in our world. Folks at home and across the globe are confronting devastations from hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, wars, and forest fires, as in my home State. Tensions between the United States and North Korea have never been higher, reaching a dangerous level. The world is watching all of this with bated breath.

In the midst of this deluge of news, a human rights catastrophe is unfolding virtually unnoticed. I am talking about the members of the Burmese military engaging in horrific acts of unthinkable violence against the Rohingya—a Muslim minority population in a predominantly Buddhist nation.

The Burmese military, along with civilian accomplices, have slaughtered more than 3,000 innocent civilians. They have raped thousands of Rohingya women. They have beheaded children as young as 6 years old. They have burned countless villages to the ground. Through these brutal acts, the Burmese military has driven half a million Rohingya refugees to camps in nearby Bangladesh, with Burmese soldiers continuing to shoot at them as they try to cross the border—a border, by the way, along which landmines have been laid by the Burmese military.

The brutality of what is happening in that country is truly beyond comprehension. The Burmese Government calls it a security operation, but we need to call it exactly what it is—ethnic cleansing. So often I have heard the words ''never again,'' that the United States will stand up to ethnic cleansing. This is one of those moments when we must stand up.

What is happening in Burma is a crime against humanity. As a country, we have more responsibility to take a stand and to speak out against it, to make the world take notice of the atrocities, call for their end, and to work toward their end.

The Rohingya are a people trapped in a cycle of violence and persecution by the Burmese Government and military. The Government of Burma has turned them into stateless people—refusing to recognize them, refusing to give them citizenship in spite of the fact that much of the Rohingya community has been there for centuries. They need our help.

The Burma Government has adopted laws that ban the Rohingyas from traveling without official permission, from owning land, from securing a public education, from obtaining employment by either a state or private business.

When the Burmese Government says that it will welcome back the refugees who can prove their citizenship, they are being completely disingenuous and completely treacherous, because they know—and the whole world should know—that the very laws of Burma make it impossible for the Rohingya to prove their citizenship since they have been denied citizenship by the Government of Burma. We cannot sit idly by and let ethnic cleansing continue.

One nation that has stepped up is Bangladesh. As the leaders of Burma have persecuted the Rohingya and burned the villages and shot the refugees as they were fleeing, the Government of Bangladesh has opened its door. It has proceeded to allow humanitarian groups access and the United Nations access. This is commendable, but more needs to be done. These refugee camps are overcrowded. There are not enough supplies, clean toilets, food, or clean water. Doctors Without Borders says that they are on the brink of a ''public health disaster.'' Unlike Bangladesh, other countries have yet to speak up.

Indeed, I am concerned by reports that some factions within India have been explicitly, publicly seeking to expel India's own Rohingya population. It is important for the international community to weigh in with them and to ask them to respect international law and to protect the Rohingya refugees. India knows full well that there is nowhere to send them. If they send them back to Burma, there will just be more persecution of the men, the women, and the children.

It underscores the fact that the Rohingya need help and that the world should answer the call. As we do, we must use what influence we have to put an end to the violence and the persecution of this ethnic minority. We need to call on Burma's leaders to protect these minorities, not to assist in the

persecution. We need to call on the Government of Burma to immediately give humanitarian groups access to the Rohingya who are trapped in Burma, in what some have described as concentration camps. We need to call on Burma's leaders to provide the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees who have been forced to flee their homes and villages with a safe and assisted right of return.

In addition, the Burmese Government—the Burmese nation—needs to figure out how to end the root causes of this conflict—an age-old ethnic and religious conflict—and find a way to embrace the diversity within their nation. Certainly, this is not the first time that the tensions have erupted into violence. It has happened time and time and time again, but this is the worst we have ever seen.

Kofi Annan, the former U.N. Secretary General, is the current chairman of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. He and his team have called on Burma to take the appropriate actions to end this cycle of violence, this cycle of radicalization.

The entire Rohingya community is counting on us—the world—to notice and to act. We must immediately see an end to the violence, full access for humanitarian organizations, cooperation with and access for the United Nations fact finding mission, the safe return of refugees, and the implementation of the full set of recommendations from Kofi Annan's report.

It is also critical that the United States and the international community continue to shed light on this horrific problem, provide sustained aid and support to the refugees in Burma and in Bangladesh, and take action to show other repressive governments that there will be consequences for pursuing this type of persecution, starting with a strong U.N. Security Council resolution.

International action to end this violence, increase humanitarian assistance, and extend our aid to the Rohingya people is the right thing to do. I pray that together we will answer that call.

I also thank my colleagues who have already been engaged in this issue. There are a number of them, but I am particularly aware of Senator Richard Durbin's, Senator JOHN MCCAIN's, and Senator BEN CARDIN's involvement and leadership.

Let's build on that foundation to have the Senate demonstrate attention to this issue through letters, and we should also try to arrange a Senate trip to visit both Burma and Bangladesh in order to draw additional international attention and build momentum for action.

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.

HURRICANE RECOVERY EFFORTS AND TARGETED TAX RELIEF

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it has been quite a few weeks now since Harvey hit and, then, Irma. Now Maria has devastated the island of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Of course, my gaze has been firmly on the devastation wrought by Hurricane Harvey back in my home State of Texas. Yet we are joined together with those who suffered under Irma and Maria, and we will remain steadfastly with them as we all work to recover from these terrible hurricanes.

Last week, I rode in a Black Hawk helicopter with Russ Poppe, as well as our Adjutant General, John Nichols. Mr. Poppe is executive director of the Harris County Flood Control District. We were able to survey in the air things I had seen up close during several trips back home, the wreckage of the land and livelihoods.

It is an emotional thing for families and homeowners to basically take all of their worldly possessions out to the front of their house and put it in the front yard because it is completely ruined as a result of the water, along with things like the drywall, trying to attack the mold before it grows and makes the house uninhabitable.

We saw from about 10,000 feet in the air what we had previously seen from the ground, but from the air, you definitely get a different perspective on the waterlogged landscape. You see so much more. You see the levees, the reservoirs, the areas hit. You see the damaged goods and drywall that people have taken out of their homes as the first step toward recovery. It definitely has an impression on you, particularly with the size and scale of the affected area. It is really hard to believe until you see it from that perspective.

So when I took off my headset and sunglasses—and by the way, Speaker PAUL RYAN joined us on that particular trip, and we all appreciate his being there. When we stepped off the chopper, what I thought about was not only what we have done so far but how much further we still had to go. It is not just about building materials, street and roof repairs, or even the temporary housing that people need, although all of those things are surely important. We need to remember that the remedies are not going to be one-size-fits-all. We need broad support, but we also need targeted and narrow support to help people get back on their feet. We need to keep each family in mind and what their own particular needs may be depending on their particular circumstances.

As I started out to say, it is not just Texas we are talking about anymore; it is Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands too. We all remember that those places were hit by Hurricanes Irma and Maria right after Texas was hit by Harvey.

I want to make one thing clear, though: We in Texas stand together with our fellow Americans who suffered from Hurricanes Maria and Irma, as well as those who suffered from other natural disasters occurring in and around our country, and we will do everything we can to help the people who were harmed and damaged, even devastated by these terrible storms. We will help them fight to get back on their feet, to recover, and to return their lives to some form of normalcy.

One way we can work together and deliver relief to different people in different geographic areas is in providing temporary tax relief. Now, I know this sounds kind of like a small thing to do, but if you think about it, this is a thousand-year storm. Hurricane Harvey dropped 34 trillion gallons of water on the same area over a period of about 5 or so days. Many people were not in the hundred-year floodplain, which is typically where you would buy flood insurance, so many people suffered losses that were not covered by flood insurance. What many of these folks will have to do is dip into their retirement savings and other savings in order to help to get life back to normal. This relief will help folks get back on their feet as they rebuild their homes and businesses and neighborhoods in the wake of these hurricanes.

We recently passed—earlier this afternoon—a Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization, but it also included the tax package I am talking about now that provides this targeted relief. These provisions will help hurricane victims in all of the devastated areas keep more of their paycheck, first and foremost, but be able to deduct the cost of their property damage on their tax return and encourage even more Americans to generously donate to hurricane relief to help their neighbors and employees.

I know this tax package is a small matter. It is not a panacea and certainly not a cure-all, and it is not supposed to fix every storm-related problem or absolve us from honoring our ongoing responsibilities in the days ahead. But as John Steinbeck once said, ''and now that you don't have to be perfect, you can just be good,'' and I think these are good reforms. They will complement other measures by the Federal Government, as well as other State and local actors.

Similar provisions were introduced in a noncontroversial section of the FAA reauthorization bill that unfortunately House Democrats, led by Leader PELOSI, tried to block earlier this week. Despite the delays, I am pleased that the House acted a second time earlier today to ensure that this relief is delivered to those who need it most—again, not just in Texas but in Florida, the Virgin Islands, and in Puerto Rico, which reportedly has been devastated. Now we in this Chamber seem to have finally gotten the message, too, by passing this relief just this very afternoon as part of the FAA bill.

Our colleague from Florida, Representative CARLOS CURBELO, said

about the hurricane victims in his home State: ''They don't have time to wait. They certainly don't have time to play political games.'' He is right, and now we can say we have taken those words to heart.

So I remember what I saw from that helicopter. Now that the time for surveying the scene has ended, what is no longer up in the air is this: For many Texans, Floridians, and Puerto Ricans, targeted tax relief will serve to make a difficult year just a little easier.

So I salute the House for getting the job done, and I am glad we in this Chamber have quickly followed suit.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I want to thank the senior Senator from Texas for his leadership in the disaster response, and I pledge my commitment to whatever is needed for Houston and the areas around Houston, as well as Florida. I appreciate the commitment at the legislative level for what needs to be done in Puerto Rico.

Mr. President, we also need to continue to apply pressure to the administration because it does appear as though there is an unequal response between what is happening in Puerto Rico and what has happened in Houston and in Florida. So we need to hold as a country the executive branch accountable for the lack of a sense of urgency for 3.5 million Americans who are mostly going to be without power for 9 months, who are currently without potable water, who are in a devastated situation. It is our obligation to do everything we can.

Mr. President, the Senate is about to make an important decision about who leads the Federal agency that oversees everything from the internet, to the TV, to radio.

This vote is a choice: We can either give our stamp of approval on the FCC's direction under the leadership of Chairman Pai, or we can decide that his leadership has put the FCC on the wrong track and that it is time for someone else to take charge.

Generally speaking, here is how I approach a nomination. There are three reasons one might reject a nominee. If the person is corrupt, it is a nonstarter. If the person is nonqualified, it is also a nonstarter. And even on policy grounds, in the policy space, just disagreeing with someone can often boil down to the fact that there is a President from another party and is not sufficient to vote no.

Chairman Pai is someone I know. He is skillful, he is a decent human being, he is very smart, and he is qualified. When we disagree, we can do it in a way that doesn't ruin our ability to work together on the following day on the following issue. And this is no small thing in today's political climate. So it is important that if we are ever going to get something done, we are able to disagree and find common ground afterward.

I do like Chairman Pai as a person. I think he is ethical and he is capable. But he is just so wrong on policy. For me, that means he is not the right leader for the FCC. I want to highlight four of the concerns I have.

First, the FCC really is trying to end the internet as we know it by getting rid of net neutrality. If they succeed, your internet service provider will have the power to stop you from seeing certain kinds of content. They will be the ones that make decisions about what you can access online and how fast and how much you have to pay for it.

Some people say that companies aren't going to change the internet because it is not in their interest to change the internet, even if the law goes away. But think about this: Most often, these ISPs are publicly traded companies, and they are going to make decisions based on their own financial interests. It is not just an objective; it is their obligation. If there is an opportunity to change their business model for internet service, they are duty bound to pursue it. They do not have any obligation to a free and open internet; they have an obligation to shareholders and to profits.

That is why net neutrality exists in the first place—because we should not leave it up to any company to decide whether they are going to charge people more to stream video, for example, or block certain content altogether. If we allow the FCC to end net neutrality, Americans across the country are going to find that the internet no longer works in the way that it should. And this has happened under Chairman Pai's leadership.

It is not just bad policy that he is pursuing; they have also had some serious process fouls. When Chairman Pai announced that the FCC was revisiting the rules, he made clear that the FCC was going to get rid of net neutrality regardless of what happened throughout the process. He said: ''This is a fight we intend to wage and it is a fight we intend to win.'' Why is that a significant thing to say? ''This is a fight we intend to wage and it is a fight we intend to win.'' This a quasi-judicial agency. They just opened up a public comment period. There were 22 million members of the public who submitted public comments after the Chairman of the Commission has already announced that he has decided which way they are going to go. I think that is antithetical to the governing statute, and it is antithetical to the basic premise that if you have an open comment period where an individual has an opportunity to express themselves, you have to listen to them. You don't say: I already decided, but you 22 million people—if you have an opinion, I will be happy to receive it and file it and do what I planned to do all along. That is the exact opposite of how this is supposed to work.

The agency proposes the rule, the public weighs in, and then the agency considers the comments from the public in making the decision. But Chairman Pai turned it upside down. The FCC has tried to diminish the fact that so many people tried to weigh in. About 96 percent of the roughly 22 million people who have weighed in have weighed in in favor of net neutrality. They are trying to lay the groundwork to get rid of net neutrality even though the vast majority of people are for it. By doing that, the FCC is effectively saying that lobbyists and law firms matter more than regular citizens.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. The FCC has claimed that cyber attacks kept people from being able to comment, but they have not been forthcoming about what exactly happened, and we are still working in our oversight role to figure that all out.

Secondly, I would like to address media ownership. Local TV broadcasters are an essential part of every community. People know their local TV station. They trust it. There is a range of perspectives offered. Because the broadcasters are based in the community, they have relationships with their viewers that make their content better and more relevant.

For decades, Congress and the FCC have taken steps to keep local broadcasting local because it benefits the public interest. These are the public airways. It is like fast food options across the country. You may not mind McDonald's once in a while, but you don't want that to be the only option in your hometown. You want something that captures the local culture in your community. That is what local broadcasting does. It makes TV in Honolulu different from TV in Hartford or Houston.

But now the American tradition of local broadcasting is in real danger because the FCC is going to change the rules so that these stations can be bought out by a single company without any limits. I have no doubt this would create a world of sort of nationalized content distributed through each of these local companies, with consumers having to watch whatever is distributed to them by their national headquarters. This is no longer local news, and this is not the broadcast media that Americans deserve.

The third area I want to talk about is broadband access. Right now, Americans have widely different levels of internet speed basically based on where they live. In some places, you have great broadband access, no trouble streaming video, accessing government services online, downloading, uploading, but in rural and Tribal communities, they are very, very far behind. As the FCC noted, 39 percent of rural America and 41 percent of those on Tribal land lack access to advanced broadband. Even if they have cell phones with internet access, a mobile network will typically offer slower speed than fixed broadband, so they can't go online and do the things we can in Washington, DC, or in many

other cities across the country. So everyone, on a bipartisan basis, understands that this needs to change.

High-speed broadband is the cornerstone to economic development, public safety, and quality of life in every community, no matter how many people live in your community. The FCC has historically worked so that every home, school, and business has had adequate access to the internet because that is what it will take to unlock the innovation and potential for all Americans.

The FCC has worked on this issue by setting the bar for what it will take to connect more Americans to the internet. There is already a threshold in place which says that this is what high-speed internet access is, so we know who has it and who doesn't. But instead of actually working to get more people broadband, the FCC is working to change the definition of broadband so that it looks as if they have gotten people more broadband. That way they can say that more Americans are covered, even if they have internet service that does not meet their needs. In other words, they are not actually solving the problem; they are literally just redefining what it means to have access. Rather than giving people access, they are papering over the problem that they are not solving. This is a real issue, and it is something that the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee members have worked on on a bipartisan basis.

The way to get more people broadband access is to get more people broadband access. It is not to change the rules and to change the metrics so that you can come back to the Congress and say: Look, we just achieved more access by allowing these companies to claim that people are covered who are not.

The fourth and final concern I want to raise is a little more sensitive because, as I said, I like Chairman Pai, and I respect Chairman Pai, but he made some comments during his confirmation hearing that worried me. I asked if he agreed with the President's comments calling the media the enemy of the state. He would not give a direct answer.

I understand that Mr. Pai is a Republican. That is not the problem. I understand Republicans will be appointed in a Republican administration. I am the former Democratic Party chairman of the State of Hawaii, so I understand party loyalty. I respect party loyalty.

We have a President and a White House that are pushing to blur the legal, moral, and ethical boundaries in our Nation's Capital. This is not the time to get cute when we ask a question about the rule of law. This is not the time to finesse an answer. The only acceptable answer is this: I will not let anyone interfere with my work, whether it is the President or anyone else, and the media is not the enemy of the state. Mr. Pai did not take that opportunity. This was one of a few opportunities Mr. Pai had to be unequivocal. The senior Senator from New Mexico, if I remember correctly, and other members of the panel, sort of gave him a second and third bite at the apple so that he could get it right. It was an easy one to get right.

I understand it is politically complicated, but sometimes you have to set aside the politics and just say what is right and do what is right. My instinct is that he will not use the FCC to do anything that crosses any ethical boundaries that I am worried about, but the fact that he will not say so leaves an opening that should not be there.

The President has tweeted about media companies that give him bad coverage. He consistently refers to the media as ''fake news'' media and ''garbage'' media and makes unsubstantiated claims about various networks and newspapers and threatens to come after them. So it is not out of the realm of possibility that this could go beyond some partisan talking point from the Democrats in the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and into a real crisis.

I just want to hear from Mr. Pai. He will be confirmed on Monday, but I want to hear from Mr. Pai that he does not believe the media is the enemy of the state and he will not allow any interference from the White House.

I would like to end by bringing this back to the American people. This vote is our chance to stand up for them. There will not be a vote on net neutrality on the floor in the next weeks or months, but they deserve to keep their faith in local broadcasting, they deserve a free and open internet, and they deserve to have adequate access to the internet no matter where they live. That is why I have to vote no on this nominee.

I admire Chairman Pai. I like him as a person, but he is the wrong leader for the FCC. I urge my colleagues to join me and vote no on his nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I, too, rise today to oppose the renomination of Ajit Pai to serve as Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. I will start my remarks by acknowledging my friend, the Senator from Hawaii, and echoing his sentiments about the respect I have for Chairman Pai's ability, his skill, his intelligence, his dedication, and commitment, but I, too, as a member of the Commerce Committee, have sat through testimony from Mr. Pai and watched a number of things unfold with regard to policy that is critically important to people of New Hampshire and our country. I find that I, too, am in a position of being unable to support this nomination.

The FCC plays a critical role in overseeing our communications networks, protecting consumers, and ensuring that our Nation's businesses can compete on a level playing field. Unfortunately, throughout his tenure at the FCC, and particularly during his time as Chairman, Mr. Pai has not demonstrated a commitment to those goals. To start, I have real concerns with the Chairman's actions to undermine net neutrality and the impact that would have on people in New Hampshire and throughout our country.

A free and open internet is essential to consumers, essential to entrepreneurs and innovative small businesses that are the foundation of our economic success. Net neutrality is the concept that internet service providers should provide equal access to applications and content online, and they should not be able to discriminate against content and content providers by making certain web pages, applications, or videos load faster or slower than others. Put simply, net neutrality ensures that even the smallest voices and businesses can be heard and can thrive. People and businesses in New Hampshire know this. Granite Staters have called and written to my office in support of net neutrality, and the FCC has received a recordbreaking number of public comments, reaching tens of millions, from people looking to make their voices heard on this topic.

Chairman Pai is not addressing the concerns of Americans who are speaking out. Instead, he is listening to big cable companies and internet service providers and taking direct aim at net neutrality protections. That is unacceptable. Protecting net neutrality is essential, but with Chairman Pai at the FCC, these critical rules are in danger.

I also oppose this nomination because Chairman Pai is putting rural broadband advancements at stake. Recently, Chairman Pai and the FCC released a notice of inquiry that raises questions about its goals, suggesting it will consider mobile broadband as an adequate replacement for fixed broadband, which would allow speeds that are two-thirds slower. For many parts of New Hampshire, mobile is not dependable enough or fast enough to meet our economy's needs, promote innovation, and connect young students with their homework. We must address the challenges that rural communities face in getting access to broadband. But by focusing instead on mobile broadband, the Chairman would have us leave rural America without a reliable connection.

Finally, I have concerns about Chairman Pai's ability to adequately evaluate the pending Sinclair-Tribune merger that sits before the FCC. For decades, our Nation has maintained a policy that limits the number of broadcast stations that one company can own nationwide. This policy has protected Americans by allowing them to receive robust and fair news content about their communities and has provided a diversity of voices in the broadcast news media marketplace.

This merger would result in Sinclair's ability to reach over 70 percent of Americans across our country, far exceeding the Commission's ownership caps and threatening the diversity in broadcast news that Americans deserve and expect.

Since Chairman Pai took the lead of the FCC, the Commission has worked to loosen regulations regarding media ownership, and, in turn, Sinclair benefited. As this proposed merger is still under consideration, we need someone at the helm of the FCC who will thoroughly vet the implications and ensure that it is in the public interest. There is too much at stake with this merger, and Chairman Pai's actions raise doubts that he can evaluate it impartially.

We need an FCC that is focused on putting consumers first and ensuring that all Americans have the opportunity to thrive in the 21st century economy. There are simply too many concerns about Chairman Pai's record, his ability to express impartiality on key decisions, and his goals for Federal Communications Commission priorities. I will vote against Chairman Pai's renomination, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you.

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

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am going to take some time this afternoon to respond to the remarks of the President's top economic adviser, Mr. Gary Cohn, with respect to this administration's approach to taxes.

Let me be clear right at the outset. The President and his parade of millionaires are executing a middle-class con job. I am going to be very specific in saying why I reached that judgment with respect to what they are saying about taxes.

The President said: ''I don't benefit. Very, very strongly I think there's very little benefit for people of wealth.'' Those are the President's exact words. ''It's not good for me, believe me,'' the President said in his speech unveiling the tax reform blueprint on Wednesday.

Unless the President paid zero tax, the President is going to benefit enormously from his tax plan. His family would save billions if the estate tax is eliminated, as he has proposed. His more than 500 passthroughs will be able to take advantage of the new Grand Canyon-sized passthrough loophole that his plan proposes. Based on his 2005 tax return—that is the only one available—the President would save millions each year if the alternative minimum tax is eliminated.

Today, the President's top adviser, Gary Cohn, said: ''We've also said that wealthy Americans are not getting a tax cut.'' They expect you to believe them and not your lying eyes.

I want to take a few minutes and describe exactly what the well-to-do are getting in this bill.

The plan outlined by the Trump administration would cost upwards of $5 trillion, and it is overwhelmingly skewed toward the wealthy and the biggest corporations. It lowers the corporate rate from 35 to 20, and much of that goes to wealthy shareholders.

The new passthrough, which would give this big gift to high-flyers, hedge funds, basically would let them start calling ordinary income business income, so it could be taxed at a much lower rate, and they would in the process harm Social Security and Medicare because they aren't paying those payroll taxes.

I mentioned the estate tax. This is for just a few thousand people. The exemption for a couple is already $11 million. This break would cost the American people between $250 to $270 billion. That is an awful lot of money to parcel out to a few thousand families.

They would lower the individual top rate from 39.6 to 35 percent. Let's make no mistake about it—the President of the United States and his top economic adviser have said they are not going to give tax cuts to the wealthy. That is not what they said yesterday. They said that the top rate was going to go down from 39.6 to 35 percent. And to add insult to injury, for those at the bottom of the economic system who pay 10 percent now, theirs would go up to 12 percent. So this is just making a mockery out of the President's pledge that this was going to be about working families and not about the wealthy. The fact is, with respect to the middle class, the Trump team is running a sleight-of-hand shell game. What they give with one hand, they just take away with the other.

They touted yesterday that they were going to be helping middle-class folks by doubling the standard deduction. First of all, that is walking back the bipartisan proposal we had here in the Senate—written by myself and my colleague Dan Coats, now a member of the Trump administration—that would triple the standard deduction.

What is particularly outrageous is that the Trump people aren't leveling with those middle-class families. Basically, they are saying: Oh, you are really going to do well. You are going to double the standard deduction. What they don't tell them is that they are going to eliminate the personal exemption that large middle-class families rely on. In effect, those large middle-class families—I think a lot of working-class families who may have supported the President—are going to see a tax increase under the President's tax outline that we heard about yesterday, even with this larger standard deduction.

The President's team also took a big pass on the opportunity to expand the child tax credit to make sure more working families would benefit from it. There are no specifics about the child tax credit in this plan.

The Treasury Secretary went on FOX News and said that the tax plan is going to cut the deficit by a trillion dollars. Mr. Mnuchin is doubling down on the failed experiment—the idea that the tax cuts, in effect, pay for themselves through economic growth. History shows that just is not true.

The tax cuts don't pay for themselves. The 2001 and 2003 Bush tax cuts were billed as tax relief for the middle class to spark economic growth. Instead, the benefits skewed to those at the very top, and they added trillions of dollars to America's debt. Middle-class wages fell. Unemployment increased. This is a pattern that working families, middle-class families, cannot afford to have repeated.

Now the Secretary of Treasury's claim is: Well, the Trump tax cuts will not just pay for themselves; they are going to bring in an additional $1 trillion in revenue atop their own cost. William Peter Wyden, age 9, my son, would say: That is just a bunch of whoppers. It couldn't be further from the truth.

As even Republican-appointed Budget Office Director Keith Hall has said and made clear, the tax cuts do not pay for themselves: ''No, the evidence is that tax cuts do not pay for themselves.'' Those are the words of the Budget Director appointed by the Republicans.

That Budget Director, Mr. Keith Hall, went on to say that the models they are doing—the macroeconomic effects, the fancy kind of economic lingo for the big picture in the long term—show it.

The other comment that was noteworthy from Mr. Gary Cohn is that the President remains committed to ending the carried interest deduction. Despite his campaign promise that won him bouquets from political commentators and typical middle-class voters, once again, the President's plan doesn't close the carried interest loophole. This is the second big occasion on which the President has failed to follow through on his campaign promise.

A few months ago, in the spring, they had a one-page outline. They said that was where they were going on taxes. They said that one-page outline was shorter than a typical Fred Meyer receipt. Fred Meyer is kind of an iconic store in our State. They had one page then and didn't do anything about following through on the President's promise to get rid of the carried interest loophole.

Yesterday—again, we didn't get a bill, but at least when you kind of eliminate all the white space, they put out close to five pages. Once again, they didn't close the carried interest loophole.

In fact, the plan gives such massive tax cuts to those at the top, investment managers will not be the only

people who can get away with paying less than their fair share. Many of the megawealthy are going to be able to do so. It is all going to be legal under the President's plan.

What is the one question on which the Trump team doesn't bend the truth? Whether their plan will protect the middle class from a tax hike. On ABC, the Trump adviser, Mr. Cohn, said that he couldn't guarantee taxes will not go up for middle-class folks. On ABC, the Treasury Secretary said that he couldn't guarantee middle-class folks would not pay more under the tax plan.

What is really striking about this, and it is quite a contrast, is that what people at the very top are going to get is spelled out in detail—in detail. They are going to see the abolition of the estate tax, an incredible windfall to a few thousand families.

Middle-class folks—can't guarantee you will not pay more. Mr. Cohn said: We are aiming to help the middle class. But then he was asked: Would you commit to it? His answer: Well, I don't know. There might be somebody somewhere.

Then there are State and local taxes. He just wouldn't stand behind the middle class the way that this administration stands foursquare behind those at the top. It is why I have said that the President and his parade of millionaires are executing a middle-class con job, and we sure saw it today.

The President's ultrawealthy, out-of-touch advisers clearly fail to understand that the time is now to deliver tax relief to middle-class folks who need it most. It is time to go back to the drawing board and come up with a plan that doesn't threaten middle-class Americans, particularly those with larger families, and doesn't hit them with a tax increase they can't afford.

I want to close by way of saying that on our side, we have repeatedly said we share the view that the tax system is a dysfunctional, broken-down mess filled with loopholes. Then you have the inversion virus. Often my wife says: Why don't you stop there? Any more is going to frighten the children.

We share the view that the tax system is broken. I have been very proud over the years to join two senior Republicans, close allies—the majority leader, MITCH MCCONNELL—in a tax reform proposal that is bipartisan that really puts the focus on the middle class and on red, white, and blue jobs.

Our proposal—the outline laid out by Democrats—was that there had to be fiscal responsibility, it had to focus on the middle class, and the tax relief couldn't go to the 1 percent. The bill I wrote that had Republican support, the outline led by the distinguished Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER, doesn't even go as far as Ronald Reagan and the Democrats went in 1986.

President Reagan, whom no one would call a flaming liberal, entered into an agreement with Democrats in 1986 that said there would be equal treatment of income earned by a cop or a nurse with that earned by someone from a hedge fund or an investment shop.

In effect, Ronald Reagan said that a dollar is a dollar is a dollar. Everything ought to be treated fairly. That was important then, and it is even more important now because, in reality, there are two tax systems in America. There is one for the cop and the nurse. They have their taxes taken out every paycheck. That taxation is compulsory—no Cayman Island deal for them.

Then there is another tax system for the kind of people who benefit from what the President outlined yesterday. Those are the high-fliers. They get to pay what they want when they want to. I think it is very unfortunate that what the President has described is another gift to that group I just described, who pay what they want when they want to. To quote the President, it is really sad to hear that this administration and the President are pretending that they are doing something else and putting the focus on the middle class when what they really are doing is advancing the cause of the parade of millionaires, a number of whom are part of this administration.

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

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 328, 334, 335, and 336.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of John R. Bass, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., of Utah, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Russian Federation; Justin Hicks Siberell, of Maryland, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Bahrain; and A. Wess Mitchell, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (European and Eurasian Affairs).

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Bass, Huntsman, Siberell, and Mitchell nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 316, 317, 318, and 319.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Robert J. Higdon, Jr., of North Carolina, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina for the term of four years; J. Cody Hiland, of Arkansas, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas for the term of four years; Joshua J. Minkler, of Indiana, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana for the term of four years; and Byung J. Pak, of Georgia, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia for the term of four years.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Higdon, Hiland, Minkler, and Pak nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Executive Calendar Nos. 338 through 348 and all nominations placed on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy; that the nominations be confirmed; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment to the grade indicated in the United States Army under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. Michael R. Fenzel

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Jacqueline D. Van Ovost

The following named Air National Guard of the United States officers for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. Jeffery D. Aebischer
Col. Nathan B. Alholinna
Col. Boris R. Armstrong
Col. Kimberly A. Baumann
Col. Robert L. Bell
Col. Shawn N. Bratton
Col. Jeffrey L. Butler
Col. Michael E. Callahan
Col. Kevin J. Campbell
Col. Thomas S. Cauthen
Col. Lawrence L. Christensen
Col. Shawn A. Clouthier
Col. Darwin L. Craig
Col. Robert C. Desko
Col. Kevin M. Donovan
Col. Bobbi J. Doorenbos
Col. David M. Dziobkowski
Col. Randal K. Efferson
Col. Howard L. Eissler, III
Col. Shawn D. Ford
Col. Jed J. French
Col. Daniel E. Gabrielli
Col. Mark P. Gaul
Col. Rainer G. Gomez
Col. Patrick M. Guinee
Col. Penny C. Hodges-Goetz
Col. Jeremy C. Horn
Col. Cassandra D. Howard
Col. Paul D. Johnson
Col. Edward S. Jones
Col. Gary W. Kirk
Col. Heidi L. Kjos
Col. Meaghan Q. LeClerc
Col. Gregor J. Leist
Col. Suzanne B. Lipcaman
Col. Keith G. MacDonald
Col. Rolf E. Mammen
Col. Gerald E. McDonald
Col. Christopher G. McGraw
Col. Michael R. Morgan
Col. Rebecca L. O'Connor
Col. Duke A. Pirak
Col. Jeffrey L. Ryan
Col. Jon S. Safstrom
Col. William L. Sparrow
Col. James R. Stevenson, Jr.
Col. Jeffrey D. Storey
Col. Bryan J. Teff
Col. Edward L. Vaughan, IV
Col. April D. Vogel
Col. Charles M. Walker
Col. Christopher S. Walker
Col. David A. Weishaar
Col. Wendy B. Wenke
Col. Gregory T. White
Col. Brent W. Wright
Col. William T. Yates
Col. Daniel S. Yenchesky

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. John E. Cardwell

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Joseph D'Costa

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Michael A. Bills

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Daniel J. Christian

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Kenneth H. Moore

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Matthew P. Easley

The following Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. Johnny R. Bass

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Tony L. Wright

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE AIR FORCE

PN944 AIR FORCE nomination of Stephen J. Augustine, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN945 AIR FORCE nomination of William J. Vit, Jr., which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN946 AIR FORCE nomination of Theresa A. Jones, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN947 AIR FORCE nominations (2) beginning JAMES S. SHIGEKANE, and ending ANDREW H. STEPHAN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN948 AIR FORCE nominations (2095) beginning MARC AALDERINK, and ending JOSEPH R. ZITO, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN949 AIR FORCE nominations (149) beginning IAN S. ANDERSON, and ending JOAN DIAZ ZUNIGA, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN950 AIR FORCE nominations (53) beginning JENNIFER L. BAKER, and ending DORIAN R. WILLIAMS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

IN THE ARMY

PN952 ARMY nomination of Derrick C. Long, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN953 ARMY nomination of Natalie E. Vanatta, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN954 ARMY nomination of John F. Lopes, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN955 ARMY nomination of Terrance R. Latson, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN959 ARMY nomination of Robert P. L. Bailey, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN960 ARMY nomination of Mariah C. Smith, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN961 ARMY nomination of Mark W. Canary, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN962 ARMY nomination of David E. Meacher, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN963 ARMY nomination of Christopher D. McDevitt, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN964 ARMY nominations (8) beginning BRUCE M. COCCOLI, and ending SCOTT J. SHERIDAN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN965 ARMY nominations (35) beginning THOMAS A. BROOKS, and ending D012739, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN966 ARMY nominations (2) beginning EDWARD A. JARRETT, and ending CASEY T. SCHOBER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN967 ARMY nominations (19) beginning CURTIS J. ALLEN, and ending BRADLEY A. WRIGHT, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

PN979 MARINE CORPS nomination of Megan L. Bustin, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN980 MARINE CORPS nomination of Robert M. Barclay, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

IN THE NAVY

PN968 NAVY nomination of Jason A. Tews, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN969 NAVY nomination of Christopher P. Carroll, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN970 NAVY nominations (2) beginning GABRIEL PEREZ, and ending ERIC R. TRUEMPER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN971 NAVY nominations (91) beginning ANTON A. ADAM, and ending YING P. ZHONG, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN972 NAVY nominations (33) beginning ADRIENNE T. BENTON, and ending AARON R. WESSON, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN973 NAVY nominations (55) beginning SALAHHUDIN A. ADENKHALIF, and ending VICTOR T. F. WONG, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN974 NAVY nominations (107) beginning SANTIAGO A. ABADAM, II, and ending JAIME M. YORK, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN975 NAVY nominations (49) beginning SARAH A. AGUERO, and ending DENNIS E. WESTMAN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN976 NAVY nominations (123) beginning JOKO A. ABUBAKAR, and ending YUI Y. WONG, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN977 NAVY nominations (77) beginning BROOKE T. AHLSTROM, and ending MARK C. WARNER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

PN978 NAVY nominations (212) beginning MIGUEL M. ALAMPAY, and ending ZACHARY A. ZANFES, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 5, 2017.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent for rollcall vote No. 205, on the nomination of Makan Delrahim, of California, to be an Assistant Attorney General. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.

Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent for rollcall vote No. 206, the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Ralph Erickson, of North Dakota, to be a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent for rollcall vote No. 207, on the nomination of Ralph Erickson, of North Dakota, to be a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent for rollcall vote No. 208, the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Ajit Varadaraj Pai, of Kansas, to be a member of the Federal Communications Commission. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.•

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, yesterday, September 27, 2017, I was in Indiana with the President of the United States and was unable to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted in support of Mr. Heath Tarbert's nomination to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury and in support of Mr. Makan Delrahim's nomination to be an Assistant Attorney General.

CONFIRMATION OF MAKAN DELRAHIM

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, yesterday, the Senate confirmed the nomination of Makan Delrahim to be Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division. While I voted in favor of that nomination, I would like to explain my expectations for Mr. Delrahim and express my deep concerns about the Trump administration's approach to antitrust policy, such as it is, as he assumes that important position.

As a former antitrust lawyer myself, I know these are complex issues that benefit from a rigorous and nonpolitical assessment, which is best done by the talented career professionals at the Department of Justice, but I am also concerned that, in what has become a much politicized Department of Justice, such an independent review may not be respected and the recommendations of career lawyers and economists can be overridden.

At every turn, the Trump administration has catered to the interests of big business over those of the American consumer, and I am very concerned about what their approach to antitrust enforcement will be. In the past, the President has made remarks about supporting or opposing particular mergers that are deeply troubling and highly political. I am particularly concerned about this haphazard approach from the President because there are a number of major proposed and rumored mergers that will be coming before the Antitrust Division in the coming months and years, particularly in the telecommunications industry, and they will require very careful and professional review independent of politics. I am also deeply concerned about the possibility that this administration will use antitrust laws as a weapon against companies it perceives as somehow unfair to it.

For example, Sinclair Broadcast Group's proposed merger with the Tribune Media Company would give Sinclair control of stations in 42 cities, expanding its reach to a total of 108 communities. In the past, Sinclair has drawn criticism for programming that benefitted then Republican Presidential candidates Donald Trump and George W. Bush. Given reports of the President's continued attacks on the press, including reports of his threats to jail journalists, it is imperative that consumers retain access to a diversity of news sources. The Department of Justice, through its Antitrust Division, must ensure that their review of this merger is free of political considerations.

However, despite those concerns, I believe Mr. Delrahim has the qualifications necessary to lead the Antitrust Division, which does the important work of preventing unlawful anticompetitive conduct and upholding our Nation's antitrust laws. Mr. Delrahim has served as a deputy assistant attorney general in the division he would now lead, as well as chief counsel and staff director for the Judiciary Committee under then-Chairman HATCH, and as an attorney in private practice working on complicated antitrust cases. He has a remarkable personal story and has received the support of many of his peers, both Democrats and Republicans.

During his nomination hearing on May 10, Mr. Delrahim promised to protect competitive markets and consumers, vigorously enforce the antitrust laws, and to cooperate with the Judiciary Committee in a bipartisan manner. I will hold him to these promises. Importantly, he told the committee that he would follow the law and his ethical responsibilities to recuse himself in cases involving his former clients. I support his nomination with the expectation that he will honor these commitments.

Mr. Delrahim also made a number of assurances in response to written questions for the record that I submitted after his hearing, questions that were based on my concerns about the anticompetitive impact of corporate mergers, as well as about actions taken by President Trump.

In response to my question about President Trump holding private meetings with the CEO of AT&T, which is planning on merging with Time Warner, and the CEOs of Bayer and Monsanto, which are planning on merging, Mr. Delrahim promised that he would conduct antitrust investigations ''in a fair, professional, and impartial manner, without regard to political considerations.'' He promised to comply with

Department of Justice policies intended to ensure only appropriate communications with the White House.

This concern is particularly pressing because during his campaign, President Trump singled out the proposed AT&T-Time Warner merger, promising to block it. The President has also repeatedly attacked CNN, which is owned by Time Warner, and it was even reported that White House advisers have discussed the proposed merger as a ''potential point of leverage'' over the network. Mr. Delrahim specifically stated that he had no preordained outcome in mind for that merger investigation. He can be certain that the Department of Justice will receive particular scrutiny in its treatment of this merger. Leveraging antitrust laws to coerce or intimidate a media company goes against the foundational protections for a free press.

While Mr. Delrahim expressed that he shared my concerns about consolidation in the media and agricultural sectors, I regret that he refused to address my specific concerns about the proposed merger of Sinclair Broadcast Group with the Tribune Media Company and the effect of the proposed Bayer-Monsanto merger on prices for Hawaii farmers. I would have welcomed his comments about these types of mergers and I expect him, as head of the Antitrust Division, to give concerns about the impact of these types of mergers the attention they deserve.

As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I will continue to exercise oversight of the Department of Justice, and of the Antitrust Division in particular, to ensure that it is meeting the commitments Mr. Delrahim made during his nomination, especially as to his independence and his ability to be a fair, active, and nonpartisan ally of consumers and competitive markets. With this in mind, I supported his confirmation.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON AMERICANS OUTDOORS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, in 1985, when I was Governor of Tennessee, I got a call from Don Hodel, the Secretary of the Interior for President Reagan. He asked me to be the chairman of ORRRC 2, a follow-up (commission to the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, which was led by Laurance Rockefeller a generation earlier. I agreed in part because of my love for the outdoors, but also because Don told me that Gil Grosvenor would serve as vice chairman of the commission and Pat Noonan would serve on the board.

The chance to work with them and the National Geographic Society made the request to serve as chairman of the commission even more attractive. My first act as chairman was to change the name from ORRRC 2 to the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors. The new name did a better job of conveying our mission: ''to look ahead for a generation and see what needs to be done for Americans to have appropriate places to do what they want to do outdoors.''

More than a generation has passed now, and on this 30th anniversary of the commission, we can look back on the recommendations of the report and take an assessment.

Overall, the commission found that ''outdoor recreation occurs close to home, in or near towns or cities where 80 percent of us soon will live. So, more and more, the solutions must be found close to home. We have concluded that the best way to assure that Americans will have adequate outdoor recreation opportunities is through a prairie fire of concern and investment, community by community. State and local governments will play a major role, but implementation of our recommendations ultimately will depend on the efforts of thousands of individual citizens, nonprofit organizations, and businesses.''

The idea that outdoor recreation occurs close to home was especially true for me.

I was one of the luckiest guys in the world growing up in Maryville, in Blount County, TN.

When you grow up next to a national park, what do you do? You grow up in the park. You spent your weekends and special times there, and most all the memories I have are related to the Smokies.

When I was 15, my dad dropped me off at Newfound Gap on the day after Christmas. I was with two other boys in 3 feet of snow, and my dad said, ''I'll pick you up in Gatlinburg,'' which was 15 miles away. He did, later that afternoon.

Then, later that same year, we were in Spence Field, and we made an error in judgment. About 3 in the morning, I looked over, and I thought one of my bunkmates was moving around, but it turns out it was a bear. We left breakfast in our packs inside the tent, which is something you should never do and something I have never done since. These are memories that stick with us forever.

A generation earlier, in 1958, Congress created the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission to ensure America did not neglect its heritage of the outdoors. The commission was chaired by Laurance Rockefeller. Like me, Laurance Rockefeller was fascinated with the natural world from a young age. His father, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was an enthusiastic supporter of park-building and historic preservation. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., also had a hand in shaping my childhood outdoor memories.

1872, Congress established Yellowstone National Park, carving the park out of land already owned by the Federal Government. In the following years, Congress followed this model, protecting and preserving Federal acres out West. In the early 20th century, citizens in the eastern part of the country began to push for national parks of their own. However, the land was already privately owned and would need to be purchased and donated to the Federal Government before a park could be created.

In the late 1920s, $5 million was raised to create a new national park in the Smokies on the border of Tennessee and North Carolina. The two States had appropriated $2 million each for the effort and combined that with $1 million in private donations, but that was only half the money needed to purchase the land that was needed to create the new park.

That is when John D. Rockefeller, Jr., stepped in and matched the money that had been raised with a donation of $5 million through the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund. Rockefeller's donation assured the purchase of the land and the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, where I spent my childhood and still live next to today.

Nearly 25 years after the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was established, John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s son worked with Congress to find solutions to continue to protect our Nation's treasures. The Rockefeller Commission advocated for a Federal national recreation policy ''to preserve, develop and make accessible to all Americans the resources needed for individual enjoyment and outdoor recreation.''

The Land and Water Conservation Fund and the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System grew out of the recommendations of the report. Years later, the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors reaffirmed our commitment to these Federal programs, and we also took an important step forward by recommending policies that States, towns, and individuals could adopt. We focused on State and local action, calling for investments from communities around the country to help keep our outdoors great.

First, our commission recommended land trusts, ''private landowners recognizing the opportunity to provide expanded recreation resources and services to the public.'' Local land trusts have been one of the fastest growing conservation tools in the past 30 years. These local land trusts work with landowners who volunteer to preserve their property through conservation easements. According to the Land Trust Alliance's ''Land Trust Census,'' there are over 1,300 land trusts that are active in the United States.

These 1,300 national, State, and local land trusts have conserved more than 56 million acres as of the end of 2015, an increase of 9 million acres since 2010. In Tennessee, 15 active land trusts have protected nearly 900,000 acres throughout the State. In 1999, Jeanie Nelson and former Governor Phil Bredesen founded the land trust for Tennessee. In less than 20 years, the land trust has

protected over 100,000 acres of Tennessee landscapes. In 2015, the Foothills Land Conservancy, which ''is dedicated to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the lands and environments of the Southern Appalachian region,'' completed ''a record number 24 land partnerships totaling 7,215 acres'' spanning five States and seven Tennessee counties.

When our report came out 30 years ago, less than 5 million acres were protected by State and local land trusts. Today more than 20 million acres are protected by State and local land trusts. The explosion of state and local land trusts has greatly increased access to our country's outdoors.

Second, our commission recommended that ''local and state governments create a network of scenic byways, compose of scenic roadways and thoroughfares throughout the nation.'' We are seeing the benefits from that recommendation today. In 1991, Congress created the National Scenic Byways Program to recognize and protect roads for their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic value.

Today, according to the Federal Highway Administration, there are 150 designated National Scenic Byways and American Roads in 46 States throughout the Nation. Five of these national scenic byways pass through Tennessee.

In the 1980's, as Tennessee was building new highways to attract the auto industry, the State created 10,000 miles of State roads and scenic highways. These roads, marked with mockingbird signs, prohibited new billboards and new junkyards and allow people to enjoy the beauty of the state as they drive across the country. These scenic byways bring visitors to Tennessee and the beauty of our State keeps them coming back.

Third, we recommended that ''communities establish greenways, corridors of private and public recreation lands and waters, to provide people with access to open spaces close to where they live, and to link together the rural and urban spaces in the American landscape.'' Today, there are almost 1,000 greenways and trails in Tennessee that provide access to the outdoors to Tennesseans in their own communities.

A good national example of the popularity of greenways is the dramatic increase in rails-to-trails projects across the country. In communities throughout the Nation, unused railroad tracks and the land surrounding the tracks are sold or donated and converted into to new recreational trails.

According to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, there are over 22,000 miles of open trails that were converted from previous railroad tracks and rights-of-way. In Tennessee, today there are over 30 rails-to-trails projects that cover 125 miles.

Fourth, we recommended full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which was first proposed in Laurance Rockefeller's Commission. The idea for the Land and Water Conservation Fund was very simple. It was to say, ''When we have an environmental burden, we should have an environmental benefit.'' If we are going to drill for oil offshore for example, that is an environmental burden. We said let's take some of those revenues and use them for an environmental benefit.

So since the 1960s, we have used oil and gas revenues to conserve important parts of America. Rocky Fork, in my home State of Tennessee, is an excellent example of the productive use of LWCF funding. Ten years ago, the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and the Conservation Fund began working with the U.S. Forest Service, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation to protect Rocky Fork, a 10,000-acre tract in Tennessee within the Cherokee National Forest.

In 2015, working together and using Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars, Federal, State, and local partners saved the largest unprotected tract of land in the Southern Appalachians from development. To make sure everyone could enjoy this natural treasure, the State of Tennessee used some of the land to create the Rocky Fork State Park. The State park—with its proximity to the Appalachian Trail, miles of native brook trout streams with cascades and waterfalls, historic battle site, Black Bear Reserve, significant wildlife habitat and scenic vistas—may 1 day be the State's most popular park. It wouldn't have been possible without tree Land and Water Conservation Fund.

As chairman, I also called on my fellow Governors to establish State-level outdoor commissions. Twenty-five States responded by establishing commissions or holding Governors' forums. Seven additional States had recently completed conferences on the topic in anticipation of a national study. The purpose of my call to the Nation's Governors was ''to stimulate action at the local and state levels on behalf of the outdoors. More than 2,000 people testified at hearings or participated in meetings sponsored by States in 1986.'' The Tennessee State-level outdoor commission, Tennesseans Outdoors, sought to ''look 40 years down the road, to consider what people will want to do outdoors, and to see that there will be places for them to do those things.''

The Tennessee Commission recommended setting aside special places throughout the State, making the most of the State's resources, ensuring a quality environment, spreading the word on the importance of the outdoors and recreation, and providing stable funding for important conservation and outdoor recreation projects. Specifically, one of the report's recommendations was for cities to promote urban open space preservation and riverfront planning. Today all of my home State's major metropolitan areas have taken steps to implement this recommendation.

In 2004, Memphis adopted the Memphis Riverfront Master Plan, and the city has been making progress on riverfront redevelopment. Just 3 months ago, the Big River Crossing—the longest public pedestrian and bike bridge across the Mississippi River—opened in Memphis.

In 2005, the city of Chattanooga completed the 21st Century Waterfront Project, which redeveloped 129 acres ''along the river to create multiple public spaces and opportunities for citizens to enjoy Chattanooga's waterfront.''

In 2006, Nashville began the process to revise the Nashville Riverfront for the 21st Century to ''provide new public attractions, parkland and waterfront access, giving residents and visitors a reason to come and enjoy both banks of the Cumberland River.''

Also in 2006, Knoxville adopted the Knoxville South Waterfront Vision Plan to implement an improvement strategy for 750 acres along the 3-mile shoreline of the Tennessee River that flows through Knoxville.

Last year, the Tennessee Wildlife Federation called for the State to create a forum on Tennessee's great outdoors to ''assess the current status of our state's natural resources, identify critical challenges facing their management and conservation, and develop strategic solutions to ensure their persistence well into the future.''

When advocating for a new forum, Mike Butler, the CEO of the Tennessee Wildlife Federation, acknowledged the success of the implementation of many of the recommendations of the Tennesseans Outdoors report, but also recognized that much has changed over the last 30 years and ''these changes have had a profound effect on our natural resources and outdoor recreation needs.'' Mike understands the need to reexamine the issues facing our State's great outdoors and to work together to maintain and expand the benefits that our outdoors provide.

Like the State of Tennessee, 30 years ago, we looked at ways to help our future generations enjoy the great American outdoors like we did. Our report stated: ''We have learned over the course of our study of urgent needs for action to protect our outdoor recreation estate. Preservation of fast-disappearing open space, investment in rehabilitation of deteriorating facilities, getting ahead of urban growth as it races across the land—these are actions which cannot wait, but must be taken now, for tomorrow they will be more expensive, or in some cases, impossible.''

From land trusts to greenways to scenic highways, many of the recommendations have been implemented, and we, as a country, have been able to preserve some of our open spaces and protect our outdoor recreation estate.

One way to illustrate the success of these programs is to take a look at the economic benefit of today's outdoor economy. According to an Outdoor Industry Association economic study in 2012, outdoor recreation generates $646 billion in consumer spending and 6.1 million direct jobs each year. In Tennessee, outdoor recreation generates $8.2 billion annually in consumer spending and supports 83,000 direct jobs across the State.

Our work is not done. Theodore Roosevelt once said that nothing short of defending this country in wartime ''compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us. . . .''

On the 30th anniversary of the Americans Outdoors Commission report, I look forward to continuing to work to protect and preserve the great American outdoors and leave future generations a more beautiful nation.

TRIBUTE TO BOB MILLS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Bob Mills as the 67th recipient of the Dayton Region's 2017 Citizen Legion of Honor Award from the President's Club. As founder of Synergy Building Systems and Mills Development, Bob Mills' leadership and vision for quality development in and around the I–75 and I–675 corridors has made a tremendous impact on the economic vitality of the region.

More than a dozen corporate and not-for-profit boards have benefited from Bob Mills' leadership over the years, including Greene Memorial Hospital, the Air Force Museum, Wright State University Foundation, and the Dayton Development Coalition. He has been recognized for his generosity by the Dayton Regional STEM School, Beavercreek Chamber of Commerce, the American Cancer Society, the Leukemia Lymphoma Society, and as the recipient of the Mathile Community Award.

Maybe most impressive, Bob Mills and his family created the Gala of Hope Foundation and have raised more than $6 million to fight cancer and improve cancer care in the Dayton region by providing grants and funding for patient care, families, caregivers, and research.

Additionally, he and his family have worked tirelessly to support Dayton Children's new patient tower which supports local children's needs for important healthcare services.

I would like to honor and congratulate Bob Mills for his many contributions to his community and our State.

TRIBUTE TO PATRICE GORDON

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Patrice Gordon in honor of her retirement this week after 29 years of exceptional service to the Congress at the Congressional Budget Office. She began her congressional career in CBO's Natural Resources and Commerce Division in 1988 after receiving her Ph.D. in economics from the University of Maryland.

Since that time, Patrice has been recognized as one of CBO's best when it comes to focusing on details, ensuring analyses are thorough and correct, and questioning any gaps in reasoning. She is a critical thinker with an encyclopedic mind for details. Throughout her career, she has balanced her keen analytic approach with humility and kindness, becoming a mentor to many young analysts and helping them hone their quantitative skills. She is a valued colleague to everyone who has worked closely with her.

In the mid-1990s, Patrice and a few other colleagues at CBO took on the task of implementing requirements of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, and soon she would end up supervising all of CBO's work on private-sector mandates. Throughout her tenure, she helped distill the principles that guide CBO's analyses of Federal mandates, ensuring that the agency's work was consistent with the previsions of UMRA. During that time, she also reviewed virtually every bill reported by a congressional committee, including bills that regulate the transportation of snakes on airplanes to healthcare reform and bankruptcy regulation. Patrice has probably read more than 10,000 bills during her time at the Congressional Budget Office.

In short, over the past 29 years, the Congressional Budget Office and Congress have been fortunate to enjoy the dedication and insight that Patrice has brought to her work. I understand she is looking forward to playing more competitive bridge and perhaps even tuning up a clarinet and saxophone to jazz up her time away from cost estimates and mandate analyses. I know my Senate colleagues join me in extending our appreciation to Patrice for her service to our Nation and our very best wishes for a happy and productive retirement.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID AHART AND CATHY GLENN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today, I wish to congratulate and thank Mr. David Ahart and Ms. Cathy Glenn on their retirement for their more than 28 years of service to the U.S. Senate.

I have worked with Dave and Cathy in various roles within the U.S. Senate Recording Studio for nearly three decades.

Before working in the radio division, Dave worked on the television side of the Senate Recording studio.

Cathy also worked on the television side before coming to radio. Before that, she worked for Senator Dennis DeConcini of Arizona.

It is not unusual for me to go to the Senate recording studio multiple times a week. If you do the math, you can see I have gotten to know Dave and Cathy very well over the years.

I have always said that representative government is a two-way street, and communicating with Iowans through the media has always been an important part of my job. Dave and Cathy are an instrumental part of that process. Put simply, they have helped me keep in touch with Iowans, and for that, I couldn't be more grateful.

It's also worth noting that Dave and Cathy are immensely kind and patient. Many days, my schedule can change in an instant. Dave and Cathy are always generous with their time and help me and my staff complete the work that needs to be done.

Those who know Dave and Cathy know you never leave their studio without a smile and laughter. They are as friendly now as they were 30 years ago.

Dave, I hope you get back to Denison soon and stop at Cronks.

Dave had family who lived in Denison, IA. Cronks is a mutually favorite restaurant that I always try to stop at when traveling through the area.

Cathy, as you celebrate, make sure to eat an extra piece of chocolate for me. I think you have as big of a sweet tooth as I do.

I wish Dave and Cathy all the best in retirement and the years to come.

So to you two, I say thank you for all you have done. The U.S. Senate, the Senate Recording Studio, my staff and I will be forever grateful for your service.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING BAKER FURNITURE

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week, I have the distinct honor of recognizing a multigeneration cornerstone of the community in Fallon County. Baker Furniture has served the people of eastern Montana for over eight decades. Through the years, the team at Baker Furniture has skillfully navigated changes in consumer tastes and a shifting business climate in order to provide quality furniture and appliances for the folks in Baker.

Baker Furniture initially began operations on Main Street in 1936, by the original proprietor, Leif Holmlund. Leif's understudy in the furniture industry, Army veteran Orville Stevens, would eventually take the reins of the enterprise in the 1960s. Under Orville's guidance, the business flourished. Orville's sons, Tom and Dave, also pitched in to help make the business a success.

Tom and Dave went on to assume the primary duties for the business in the late 1990s. After a life that included service to his Nation, raising a family, and operating a successful business, Orville passed away in 2009. Since his passing, the business that Orville developed has continued to thrive and meet the needs of the community.

Small businesses, operated by hardworking family members, are an engine of commerce for many rural communities across Montana. Baker Furniture is a shining example of this business model, and many shoppers in Baker and the surrounding area are grateful. Thank you to the team at Baker Furniture for the many years of excellent service to your neighbors, and I wish you continued success in the future.●

RECOGNIZING THE MASSACHUSETTS WALKING TOUR

● Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the Massachusetts Walking Tour. Founded in 2010 in Webster, MA, the Walking Tour recognizes and celebrates local arts and culture throughout Massachusetts by featuring a nonprofit concert tour across the Commonwealth. Every concert is unique as it pairs the traveling musicians with local artists and outdoor recreation enthusiasts and is free for the whole community. These memorable events include diverse artistic and musical performances and even discussions about public land use with outdoor educators and trail managers. Since its founding, the Walking Tour has visited 90 towns in Massachusetts, playing 101 free community concerts. I thank founders Mark Mandeville and Raianne Richards, as well as all of the performers, artists, educators, and nature enthusiasts who have made Walking Tour such a success across Massachusetts.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

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

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

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:55 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 327. An act to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to provide a safe harbor related to certain investment fund research reports, and for other purposes.

S. 1866. An act to provide the Secretary of Education with waiver authority for the reallocation rules and authority to extend the deadline by which funds have to be reallocated in the campus-based aid programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965 due to Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma, and Hurricane Maria, to provide equitable services to children and teachers in private schools, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3229. An act to protect the safety of judges by extending the authority of the Judicial Conference to redact sensitive information contained in their financial disclosure reports, and for other purposes.

At 11:40 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3823. An act to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to provide disaster tax relief, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 11:54 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 1141. An act 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.

H.R. 3819. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

At 12:42 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2792. An act to amend the Social Security Act to make certain revisions to provisions limiting payment of benefits to fugitive felons under titles II, VIII, and XVI of the Social Security Act.

H.R. 2824. An act to amend title V of the Social Security Act to extend the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, and to amend the Social Security Act to make certain revisions to provisions limiting payment of benefits to fugitive felons under titles II, VIII, and XVI of the Social Security Act.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 1:58 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. UPTON) signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 327. An act to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to provide a safe harbor related to certain investment fund research reports, and for other purposes.

S. 1866. An act to provide the Secretary of Education with waiver authority for the reallocation rules and authority to extend the deadline by which funds have to be reallocated in the campus-based aid programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965 due to Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma, and Hurricane Maria, to provide equitable services to children and teachers in private schools, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

At 4:27 4:27 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announcing that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3823) to amend title 49, United States code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to provide disaster tax relief, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 2792. An act to amend the Social Security Act to make certain revisions to provisions limiting payment of benefits to fugitive felons under titles II, VIII, and XVI of the Social Security Act; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 2824. An act to amend title V of the Social Security Act to extend the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, and to amend the Social Security Act to make certain revisions to provisions limiting payment of benefits to fugitive felons under titles II, VIII, and XVI of the Social Security Act; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 3229. An act to protect the safety of judges by extending the authority of the Judicial Conference to redact sensitive information contained in their financial disclosure reports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 1894. A bill to exempt Puerto Rico from the coastwise laws of the United States (commonly known as the ''Jones Act'').

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, September 28, 2017, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 810. An act to facilitate construction of a bridge on certain property in Christian County, Missouri, and for other purposes.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1766. A bill to reauthorize the SAFER Act of 2013, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Brian Allen Benczkowski, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Halsey B. Frank, of Maine, to be United States Attorney for the District of Maine for the term of four years.

D. Michael Hurst, Jr., of Mississippi, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi for the term of four years.

Jeffrey B. Jensen, of Missouri, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri for the term of four years.

Thomas L. Kirsch II, of Indiana, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Indiana for the term of four years.

William J. Powell, of West Virginia, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of West Virginia for the term of four years.

(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 Mrs. ERNST (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 1881. A bill to expand eligibility for health care under the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to include certain veterans seeking mental health care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 1882. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to require the Attorney General to make procurement quotas for opioid analgesics publicly available, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 1883. A bill to require the Secretary of Transportation to publish a final rule to provide for the screening, testing, and treatment for sleep disorders of individuals operating commercial vehicles; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. LEE):

S. 1884. A bill to provide for joint reports by relevant Federal agencies to Congress regarding incidents of terrorism, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BLUNT, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 1885. A bill to support the development of highly automated vehicle safety technologies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

S. 1886. A bill to amend subchapter I of chapter 31 of title 5, United States Code, to authorize agencies to make noncompetitive temporary and term appointments in the competitive service; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

S. 1887. A bill to grant expedited hiring authority to the head of an agency to appoint college graduates and post-secondary students; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

S. 1888. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to increase the maximum amount of a Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment and to include an annual adjustment in accordance with the Consumer Price Index; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 1889. A bill to require Federal agencies and Federal courts to comply with address confidentiality programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. NELSON):

S. 1890. A bill to improve the understanding of, and promote access to treatment for, chronic kidney disease, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 1891. A bill to promote peace and justice in Afghanistan, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 1892. A bill to provide tax relief related to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. PERDUE):

S. 1893. A bill to amend the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to specify when bank holding companies may be subject to certain enhanced supervision, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. LEE, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. FLAKE):

S. 1894. A bill to exempt Puerto Rico from the coastwise laws of the United States (commonly known as the ''Jones Act''); read the first time.

By Mr. UDALL (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 1895. A bill to reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. JOHNSON:

S. 1896. A bill to amend section 8331 of title 5, United States Code, and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to clarify the treatment of availability pay for Federal air marshals and criminal investigators of the Transportation Security Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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

S. 1897. A bill to help small businesses access capital and create jobs by reauthorizing the successful State Small Business Credit Initiative; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. DAINES:

S. 1898. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to retroactively repeal the individual mandate for health insurance; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CARPER, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 1899. A bill to reauthorize and extend funding for community health centers and the National Health Service Corps; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL:

S. 1900. A bill to require all persons who acquire, maintain, or use personal information to have in effect reasonable cybersecurity protections and practices whenever acquiring, maintaining, or using personal information in commerce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KING, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. Res. 270. A resolution designating September 2017 as ''National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH:

S. Res. 271. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Community Gardening Awareness Week; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. Res. 272. A resolution commemorating the 230th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution of the United States; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. SCOTT (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BROWN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. COONS, and Ms. WARREN):

S. Res. 273. A resolution expressing support for the designation of September 2017 as ''Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month'' in order to educate communities across the United States about sickle cell disease and the need for research, early detection methods, effective treatments, and preventative care programs with respect to sickle cell disease, complications from sickle cell disease, and conditions related to sickle cell disease; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. ALEXANDER):

S. Res. 274. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Retirement Security Week, including raising public awareness of the various tax-preferred retirement vehicles, increasing personal financial literacy, and engaging the people of the United States on the keys to success in achieving and maintaining retirement security throughout their lifetimes; considered and agreed to.

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

S. Res. 275. A resolution congratulating Northeastern Illinois University on the sesquicentennial of the University; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. HATCH):

S. Res. 276. A resolution designating September 2017 as ''Pulmonary Fibrosis Awareness Month''; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. REED):

S. Res. 277. A resolution designating the week of September 25 through 29, 2017, as ''National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week''; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 220

At the request of Mr. SASSE, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr.

HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 220, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion.

S. 497

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 497, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 574

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 574, a bill to restrict the use of funds for the long-range standoff weapon until the Secretary of Defense completes a Nuclear Posture Review that includes an assessment of the capabilities and effects of the use of the long-range standoff weapon, and for other purposes.

S. 593

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 593, a bill to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to facilitate the establishment of additional or expanded public target ranges in certain States.

S. 620

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 620, a bill to amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to support community college and industry partnerships, and for other purposes.

S. 680

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 680, a bill to protect consumers from security and privacy threats to their motor vehicles, and for other purposes.

S. 736

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 736, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for collegiate housing and infrastructure grants.

S. 946

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 946, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire additional Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists to provide treatment court services to justice-involved veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 1002

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1002, a bill to enhance the ability of community financial institutions to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes.

S. 1015

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1015, a bill to require the Federal Communications Commission to study the feasibility of designating a simple, easy-to-remember dialing code to be used for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system.

S. 1361

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) were added as cosponsors of S. 1361, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists to supervise cardiac, intensive cardiac, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs.

S. 1500

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1500, a bill to amend the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to ensure that the reciprocal deposits of an insured depository institution are not considered to be funds obtained by or through a deposit broker, and for other purposes.

S. 1561

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1561, a bill to repeal the Jones Act restrictions on coastwise trade, and for other purposes.

S. 1595

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1595, a bill to amend the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 to impose additional sanctions with respect to Hizballah, and for other purposes.

S. 1672

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1672, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an investment tax credit related to the production of electricity from offshore wind.

S. 1702

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1702, a bill to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to reduce predation by sea lions on endangered Columbia River salmon and other species not listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and for other purposes.

S. 1718

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1718, a bill to authorize the minting of a coin in honor of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, and for other purposes.

S. 1766

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1766, a bill to reauthorize the SAFER Act of 2013, and for other purposes.

S. 1767

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1767, a bill to reauthorize the farm to school program, and for other purposes.

S. 1808

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1808, a bill to extend temporarily the Federal Perkins Loan program, and for other purposes.

S. 1816

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1816, a bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to enhance fraud alert procedures and provide free access to credit freezes, and for other purposes.

S. 1827

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 1827, a bill to extend funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

S. 1854

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1854, a bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to enhance penalties for theft of a firearm from a Federal firearms licensee.

S. 1859

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1859, a bill to extend the moratorium on the annual fee on health insurance providers.

S. 1864

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1864, a bill to expand the use of open textbooks in order to achieve savings for students.

S. 1865

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1865, a bill to provide temporary direct hire authority for certain emergency response positions.

S. RES. 61

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 61, a resolution calling on the Department of Defense, other elements of the Federal Government, and foreign governments to intensify efforts to investigate, recover, and identify all missing and unaccounted-for personnel of the United States.

S. RES. 250

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 250, a resolution condemning horrific acts of violence against Burma's Rohingya population and calling on Aung San Suu Kyi to play an active role in ending this humanitarian tragedy.

S. RES. 264

At the request of Mr. DAINES, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 264, a resolution designating September 2017 as ''National Kinship Care Month''.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. NELSON):

S. 1890. A bill to improve the understanding of, and promote access to treatment for, chronic kidney disease, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise in support of the bipartisan Chronic Kidney Disease Improvement in Research and Treatment Act of 2017, which I am introducing with Senators BLUNT and NELSON today. This legislation seeks to make a real difference in the lives of Americans suffering from kidney disease and end-stage renal disease.

Kidney disease is the 9th leading cause of death in the United States, and unfortunately, more than 1 in 10 Americans today suffer from some form of kidney disease. More than 661,000 Americans are living with kidney failure or end-stage renal disease, which is an irreversible condition that can be fatal without a kidney transplant or life-sustaining dialysis. Of these, 468,000 patients in our Country rely on life-sustaining dialysis care to survive and roughly 193,000 live with a functioning kidney transplant.

This legislation seeks to promote research, expand patient choice, and improve care coordination for these hundreds of thousands of patients. Specifically, it would identify payment disincentives that create barriers to kidney transplants. The bill would require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to submit a comprehensive report on how and to what extent palliative care is utilized in treating individuals with advanced kidney disease and the effect of palliative care on the quality of life and treatment outcomes of individuals with ESRD. It would also direct the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to evaluate and report on the biological, social, and behavioral factors related to kidney disease and efforts to slow the progression of disease in minority populations disproportionately affected by this disease.

This legislation would improve access to pre-dialysis kidney education programs to better manage patients' kidney disease and even prevent kidney failure in some cases. Nephrologists and other health professionals would be incentivized to work in underserved rural and urban areas, and current payment policies would be modified to encourage home dialysis, which is not incentivized under the current Medicare payment structure. Patients with acute kidney injury would also be allowed to receive treatments through dialysis providers, therefore reducing costs associated with care provided in the more expensive hospital outpatient setting. Perhaps most importantly, our legislation would guarantee access to Medigap policies to all ESRD Medicare beneficiaries, regardless of age. Currently, Medicare patients under 65, whether disabled or ESRD beneficiaries do not have access to Medigap plans, even though Medicare is their primary insurance.

Lastly, the bill would expand the options for patients by allowing individuals diagnosed with kidney failure to enroll in the Medicare Advantage program starting in plan year 2020 and reauthorizing on a permanent basis the Medicare Advantage Special Needs Plan for patients with kidney failure.

I urge my colleagues to join me, Senator BLUNT and Senator NELSON in supporting the Chronic Kidney Disease Improvement in Research and Treatment Act of 2017, which will improve the care of patients who suffer from kidney disease and end-stage renal disease.

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. 1890

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 ''Chronic Kidney Disease Improvement in Research and Treatment Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.
Sec. 2. Table of contents.
TITLE I—IMPROVING PATIENT LIVES AND QUALITY OF CARE THROUGH RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
Sec. 101. Improving patient lives and quality of care through research and innovation.
Sec. 102. Enhancing care through new technologies.
Sec. 103. Understanding current utilization of palliative care services.
Sec. 104. Understanding the progression of kidney disease and treatment of kidney failure in minority populations.
TITLE II—EMPOWER PATIENT DECISION MAKING AND CHOICE
Sec. 201. Providing individuals with kidney failure access to managed care.
Sec. 202. Medigap coverage for beneficiaries with end-stage renal disease.
Sec. 203. Promoting access to home dialysis treatments.
TITLE III—IMPROVING PATIENT CARE AND ENSURING QUALITY OUTCOMES
Sec. 301. Maintain an economically stable dialysis infrastructure.
Sec. 302. Improve patient decision making and transparency by consolidating and modernizing quality programs.
Sec. 303. Increasing access to Medicare kidney disease education benefit.
Sec. 304. Certification of new facilities.
Sec. 305. Improving access in under served areas.

TITLE I—IMPROVING PATIENT LIVES AND QUALITY OF CARE THROUGH RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

SEC. 101. IMPROVING PATIENT LIVES AND QUALITY OF CARE THROUGH RESEARCH AND INNOVATION.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (in this section referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall conduct a study on increasing kidney transplantation rates. Such study shall include an analysis of each of the following:

(1) Any disincentives in the payment systems under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act that create barriers to kidney transplants and post-transplant care for beneficiaries with end-stage renal disease.

(2) The practices used by States with higher than average donation rates and whether those practices and policies could be successfully utilized in other States.

(3) Practices and policies that could increase deceased donation rates of minority populations.

(4) Whether cultural and policy barriers exist to increasing living donation rates, including an examination of how to better facilitate chained donations.

(5) Other areas determined appropriate by the Secretary.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the study conducted under subsection (a), together with such recommendations as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

SEC. 102. ENHANCING CARE THROUGH NEW TECHNOLOGIES.

(a) AGREEMENT WITH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall seek to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences within six months of the date of the enactment of this Act under which the National Academy of Sciences will conduct a study on the design of payments for renal dialysis services under the Medicare program

under title XVIII of the Social Security Act, including an analysis of whether adjustments to such payments are needed to allow for the incorporation of new technologies and therapies.

(b) CONTENTS.—In conducting the study under subsection (a), the National Academy of Sciences shall evaluate the current payment system for renal dialysis services under the Medicare program, identify barriers to adopting innovative items, services, and therapies, and make recommendations as to how to eliminate such barriers.

SEC. 103. UNDERSTANDING CURRENT UTILIZATION OF PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES.

(a) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States (in this section referred to as the ''Comptroller General'') shall conduct a study on the utilization of palliative care in treating individuals with advanced kidney disease, from stage 4 through stage 5, including individuals with kidney failure on dialysis through any progression of the disease. Such study shall include an analysis of—

(A) how palliative care can be utilized to improve the quality of life of those with kidney disease and facilitate care tailored to their individual goals and values;

(B) the successful use of palliative care in the care of patients with other chronic diseases and serious illnesses;

(C) the utilization of palliative care at any point in an illness, including when used at the same time as curative treatment; and

(D) other areas determined appropriate by the Comptroller General.

(2) DEFINITION OF PALLIATIVE CARE.—In this section, the term ''palliative care'' means patient and family centered care that optimizes quality of life by anticipating, preventing, and treating suffering. Such term includes care that is furnished throughout the continuum of the illness that addresses physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual needs and that facilitates patient autonomy, access to information and choice.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Congress a report on the study conducted under subsection (a), together with such recommendations as the Comptroller General determines to be appropriate.

SEC. 104. UNDERSTANDING THE PROGRESSION OF KIDNEY DISEASE AND TREATMENT OF KIDNEY FAILURE IN MINORITY POPULATIONS.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (in this section referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall conduct a study on—

(1) the social, behavioral, and biological factors leading to kidney disease;

(2) efforts to slow the progression of kidney disease in minority populations that are disproportionately affected by such disease; and

(3) treatment patterns associated with providing care, under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act, the Medicaid program under title XIX of such Act, and through private health insurance, to minority populations that are disproportionately affected by kidney failure.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the study conducted under subsection (a), together with such recommendations as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

TITLE II—EMPOWER PATIENT DECISION MAKING AND CHOICE

SEC. 201. PROVIDING INDIVIDUALS WITH KIDNEY FAILURE ACCESS TO MANAGED CARE.

(a) PERMANENT EXTENSION OF MEDICARE ADVANTAGE ESRD SPECIAL NEEDS PLANS AUTHORITY.—Section 1859(f)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–28(f)(1)) is amended by inserting '', in the case of a specialized MA plan for special needs individuals who have not been determined to have end stage renal disease,'' before ''for periods before January 1, 2019''.

(b) ACCELERATED ACCESS TO MEDICARE ADVANTAGE.—Section 17006(a)(3) of the 21st Century Cures Act (Public Law 114–255) is amended by striking ''2021'' and inserting ''2020.''

(c) ACCELERATED MEDPAC RISK ADJUSTMENT REPORT.—Section 17006(f)(2)(A)(i)(II) of the 21st Century Cures Act (Public Law 114–255) is amended by striking ''2020'' and inserting ''2019.''

SEC. 202. MEDIGAP COVERAGE FOR BENEFICIARIES WITH END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE.

(a) GUARANTEED AVAILABILITY OF MEDIGAP POLICIES TO ALL ESRD MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1882(s) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ss(s)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''is 65'' and inserting the following: ''is—

''(i) 65 years of age or older and is enrolled for benefits under part B; or

''(ii) is entitled to benefits under 226A(b) and is enrolled for benefits under part B.''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (D), in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting ''(or is entitled to benefits under 226A(b))'' after ''is 65 years of age or older''; and

(B) in paragraph (3)(B)—

(i) in clause (ii), by inserting ''(or is entitled to benefits under 226A(b))'' after ''is 65 years of age or older''; and

(ii) in clause (vi), by inserting ''(or under 226A(b))'' after ''at age 65''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by paragraph (1) shall apply to medicare supplemental policies effective on or after January 1, 2020.

(b) ADDITIONAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD FOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS.—

(1) ONE-TIME ENROLLMENT PERIOD.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an individual described in subparagraph (B), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall establish a one-time enrollment period during which such an individual may enroll in any medicare supplemental policy under section 1882 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ss) of the individual's choosing.

(B) ENROLLMENT PERIOD.—The enrollment period established under subparagraph (A) shall begin on January 1, 2020, and shall end June 30, 2020.

(2) INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED.—An individual described in this paragraph is an individual who—

(A) is entitled to hospital insurance benefits under part A of title XVIII of the Social Security Act under section 226A(b) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 426–1);

(B) is enrolled for benefits under part B of such title XVIII; and

(C) would not, but for the provisions of, and amendments made by, subsection (a) be eligible for the guaranteed issue of a medicare supplemental policy under paragraph (2) or (3) of section 1882(s) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ss(s).

SEC. 203. PROMOTING ACCESS TO HOME DIALYSIS TREATMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1881(b)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(b)(3)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively;

(2) in clause (ii), as redesignated by subparagraph (A), strike ''on a comprehensive'' and insert ''subject to subparagraph (B), on a comprehensive'';

(3) by striking ''With respect to'' and inserting ''(A) With respect to''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(B) For purposes of subparagraph (A)(ii), an individual determined to have end-stage renal disease receiving home dialysis may choose to receive the monthly end-stage renal disease-related visits furnished on or after January 1, 2018, via telehealth if the individual receives a face-to-face visit, without the use of telehealth, at least once every three consecutive months.''.

(b) ORIGINATING SITE REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1834(m) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(m)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (4)(C)(ii), by adding at the end the following new subclauses:

''(IX) A renal dialysis facility, but only for purposes of section 1881(b)(3)(B).

''(X) The home of an individual, but only for purposes of section 1881(b)(3)(B).''; and

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

''(5) TREATMENT OF HOME DIALYSIS MONTHLY ESRD-RELATED VISIT.—The geographic requirements described in paragraph (4)(C)(i) shall not apply with respect to telehealth services furnished on or after January 1, 2018, for purposes of section 1881(b)(3)(B), at an originating site described in subclause (VI), (IX), or (X) of paragraph (4)(C)(ii).''.

(2) NO FACILITY FEE IF ORIGINATING SITE FOR HOME DIALYSIS THERAPY IS THE HOME.—Section 1834(m)(2)(B) of the Social Security (42 U.S.C. 1395m(m)(2)(B)) is amended—

(A) by redesignating clauses (i) and (ii) as subclauses (I) and (II), and indenting appropriately;

(B) in subclause (II), as redesignated by subparagraph (A), by striking ''clause (i) or this clause'' and inserting ''subclause (I) or this subclause'';

(C) by striking ''SITE.—With respect to'' and inserting ''SITE.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), with respect to''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(ii) NO FACILITY FEE IF ORIGINATING SITE FOR HOME DIALYSIS THERAPY IS THE HOME.—No facility fee shall be paid under this subparagraph to an originating site described in paragraph (4)(C)(ii)(X).''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1881(b)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''paragraph (3)(A)'' and inserting ''paragraph (3)(A)(i)''.

(d) EXCLUSION FROM REMUNERATION FOR PURPOSES OF APPLYING CIVIL MONETARY PENALTIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1128A(i)(6) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a–7a(i)(6)) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (H)(iv), by striking ''; or'' at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (I), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(J) the provision of telehealth or remote patient monitoring technologies to individuals under title XVIII by a health care provider for the purpose of furnishing telehealth or remote patient monitoring services.''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to services furnished on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE III—IMPROVING PATIENT CARE AND ENSURING QUALITY OUTCOMES

SEC. 301. MAINTAIN AN ECONOMICALLY STABLE DIALYSIS INFRASTRUCTURE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1881(b)(14) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(b)(14)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (D), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''Such system'' and inserting ''Subject to subparagraph (J), such system''; and

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

''(J) For payment for renal dialysis services furnished on or after January 1, 2018, under the system under this paragraph—

''(i) the payment adjustment described in clause (i) of subparagraph (D)—

''(I) shall not take into account comorbidities; and

''(II) shall only take into account age for purposes of distinguishing between individuals who are under 18 years of age and those who are 18 years of age and older but shall not include any other adjustment for age;

''(ii) the Secretary shall reassess any adjustments related to patient weight under such clause;

''(iii) the payment adjustment described in clause (ii) of such subparagraph shall not be included;

''(iv) the standardization factor described in the final rule published in the Federal Register on November 8, 2012 (77 Fed. Reg. 67470), shall be established using the most currently available data (and not historical data) and adjusted on an annual basis, based on such available data, to account for any change in utilization of drugs and any modification in adjustors applied under this paragraph; and

''(v) take into account reasonable costs for determining the payment rate consistent with paragraph (2)(B).''.

(b) INCLUSION OF NETWORK FEE AS AN ALLOWABLE COST.—Section 1881(b)(14) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(b)(14)), as amended by subsection (a), is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(K) Not later than January 1, 2018, the Secretary shall amend the ESRD facility cost report to include the per treatment network fee (as described in paragraph (7)) as an allowable cost or offset to revenue.''.

SEC. 302. IMPROVE PATIENT DECISION MAKING AND TRANSPARENCY BY CONSOLIDATING AND MODERNIZING QUALITY PROGRAMS.

(a) MEASURES.—Section 1881(h)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(h)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

''(F) WEIGHTING LIMITATION.—No single measure specified by the Secretary or individual measure within a composite measure so specified may be weighted less than 10 percent of the total performance score.

''(G) STATISTICALLY VALID AND RELIABLE.—In specifying measures under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall only specify measures that have been shown to be statistically valid and reliable through testing.''.

(b) ENDORSEMENT.—Section 1881(h)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(h)(2)(B)) is amended—

(1) in clause (ii), by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''The exception under the preceding sentence shall not apply to a measure that the entity with a contract under section 1890(a) (or a similar entity) considered but failed to endorse.''; and

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

''(iii) COMPOSITE MEASURES.—Clauses (i) and (ii) shall apply to composite measures in the same manner as such clauses apply to individual measures.''.

(c) REQUIREMENTS FOR DIALYSIS FACILITY COMPARE STAR RATING PROGRAM.—Section 1881(h)(6) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(h)(6)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(E) REQUIREMENTS FOR ANY DIALYSIS FACILITY COMPARE STAR RATING PROGRAM.—To the extent that the Secretary maintains a dialysis facility compare star rating program, under such a program the Secretary—

''(i) shall assign stars using the same methodology and total performance score results from the quality incentive program under this subsection;

''(ii) shall determine the stars using the same methodology used under such quality incentive program; and

''(iii) shall not use a forced bell curve when determining the stars or rebaselining the stars.''.

(d) HOSPITALS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION.—Section 1881 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(i) HOSPITALS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a process under which a hospital or a critical access hospital shall provide a renal dialysis facility with health and treatment information with respect to an individual who is discharged from the hospital or critical access hospital and who subsequently receives treatment at facility.

''(2) ELEMENTS.—Under the process established under paragraph (1)—

''(A) the request for the health information may be initiated by the individual prior to discharge or upon request by the renal dialysis facility after the patient is discharged; and

''(B) the information must be provided to the facility within 7 days of the request being made.''.

(e) INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.—Section 1881(h)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(h)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(D) INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a provider of services or a renal dialysis facility that the Secretary determines exceeds the attainment performance standards under paragraph (4) with respect to a year, the Secretary may make a bonus payment to the provider or facility (pursuant to a process established by the Secretary).

''(ii) FUNDING.—The total amount of bonus payments under clause (i) in a year shall be equal to the total amount of reduced payments in a year under subparagraph (A).

''(iii) NO EFFECT IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS.—The provisions of subparagraph (C) shall apply to a bonus payment under this subparagraph in the same manner subparagraph (C) applies to a reduction under such subparagraph.''.

(f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to items and services furnished on or after January 1, 2019.

SEC. 303. INCREASING ACCESS TO MEDICARE KIDNEY DISEASE EDUCATION BENEFIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1861(ggg) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(ggg)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by inserting ''or stage V'' after ''stage IV''; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by inserting ''or of a physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or clinical nurse specialist (as defined in section 1861(aa)(5)) assisting in the treatment of the individual's kidney condition'' after ''kidney condition''; and

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking subparagraph (B); and

(B) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking ''(A)'' after ''(2)'';

(ii) by striking ''and'' at the end of clause (i);

(iii) by striking the period at the end of clause (ii) and inserting ''; and'';

(iv) by redesignating clauses (i) and (ii) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively; and

(v) by adding at the end the following:

''(C) a renal dialysis facility subject to the requirements of section 1881(b)(1) with personnel who—

''(i) provide the services described in paragraph (1); and

''(ii) is a physician (as defined in subsection (r)(1)) or a physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or clinical nurse specialist (as defined in subsection (aa)(5)).''.

(b) PAYMENT TO RENAL DIALYSIS FACILITIES.—Section 1881(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(15) For purposes of paragraph (14), the single payment for renal dialysis services under such paragraph shall not take into account the amount of payment for kidney disease education services (as defined in section 1861(ggg)). Instead, payment for such services shall be made to the renal dialysis facility on an assignment-related basis under section 1848.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section apply to kidney disease education services furnished on or after January 1, 2018.

SEC. 304. CERTIFICATION OF NEW FACILITIES.

(a) CERTIFICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1865(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395bb(a)(1)) is amended by striking ''or the conditions and requirements under section 1881(b)''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act and apply to a finding made on or after such date.

(b) TIMING FOR ACCEPTANCE OF REQUESTS FROM ACCREDITATION ORGANIZATIONS.—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall accept a completed application from any national accreditation body for providers and facilities that provide services under 1881(b), in accordance with section 1865(3)(A)). Any application received pursuant to the preceding sentence shall be deemed approved unless the Secretary, within 90 days after the date of the submission of the application to the Secretary, either denies such request in writing or informs the applicant in writing with respect to any additional information that is needed in order to make a final determination with respect to the application. If the Secretary requests additional information pursuant to the preceding sentence and the applicant submits such information, the application shall be deemed approved unless the Secretary, within 90 days of date of receiving such information, denies such request.

SEC. 305. IMPROVING ACCESS IN UNDER SERVED AREAS.

(a) DEFINITION OF PRIMARY CARE SERVICES.—Section 331(a)(3)(D) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254d(a)(3)(D)) is amended by inserting ''and includes renal dialysis services'' before the period at the end.

(b) NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.—Section 338A(a)(2) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254l(a)(2)) is amended by inserting '', including nephrology health professionals'' before the period at the end.

(c) NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM.—Section 338B(a)(2) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254l–1(a)(2)) is amended by inserting '', including nephrology health professionals'' before the period at the end.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. LEE, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. FLAKE):

S. 1894. A bill to exempt Puerto Rico from the coastwise laws of the United

States (commonly known as the ''Jones Act''); read the first time.

S. 1894

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

SECTION 1. EXCEPTIONS TO APPLICATION OF COASTWISE LAWS FOR PUERTO RICO.

Section 55101(b) of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) as paragraphs (2), (3), and (4), respectively; and

(2) by inserting before paragraph (2), as redesignated, the following:

''(1) the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico;''.

By Mr. DAINES:

S. 1898. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to retroactively repeal the individual mandate for health insurance; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1898

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 ''Repeal and Refund Act''.

SEC. 2. REPEAL OF INDIVIDUAL MANDATE.

(a) REPEAL OF REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN MINIMUM ESSENTIAL COVERAGE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking chapter 48.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) AMENDMENTS RELATED TO THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986.—

(i) Section 36B of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating subsection (g) as subsection (h) and by inserting after subsection (g) the following new subsection:

''(g) MINIMUM ESSENTIAL COVERAGE.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The term 'minimum essential coverage' means any of the following:

''(A) GOVERNMENT SPONSORED PROGRAMS.—Coverage under—

''(i) the Medicare program under part A of title XVIII of the Social Security Act,

''(ii) the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act,

''(iii) the CHIP program under title XXI of the Social Security Act,

''(iv) medical coverage under chapter 55 of title 10, United States Code, including coverage under the TRICARE program,

''(v) a health care program under chapter 17 or 18 of title 38, United States Code, as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary,

''(vi) a health plan under section 2504(e) of title 22, United States Code (relating to Peace Corps volunteers), or

''(vii) the Nonappropriated Fund Health Benefits Program of the Department of Defense, established under section 349 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1995 (Public Law 103–337; 10 U.S.C. 1587 note).

''(B) EMPLOYER-SPONSORED PLAN.—Coverage under an eligible employer-sponsored plan.

''(C) PLANS IN THE INDIVIDUAL MARKET.—Coverage under a health plan offered in the individual market within a State.

''(D) GRANDFATHERED HEALTH PLAN.—Coverage under a grandfathered health plan.

''(E) OTHER COVERAGE.—Such other health benefits coverage, such as a State health benefits risk pool, as the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in coordination with the Secretary, recognizes for purposes of this subsection.

''(2) ELIGIBLE EMPLOYER-SPONSORED PLAN.—The term 'eligible employer-sponsored plan' means, with respect to any employee, a group health plan or group health insurance coverage offered by an employer to the employee which is—

''(A) a governmental plan (within the meaning of section 2791(d)(8) of the Public Health Service Act), or

''(B) any other plan or coverage offered in the small or large group market within a State.

Such term shall include a grandfathered health plan described in paragraph (1)(D) offered in a group market.

''(3) EXCEPTED BENEFITS NOT TREATED AS MINIMUM ESSENTIAL COVERAGE.—The term 'minimum essential coverage' shall not include health insurance coverage which consists of coverage of excepted benefits—

''(A) described in paragraph (1) of subsection (c) of section 2791 of the Public Health Service Act; or

''(B) described in paragraph (2), (3), or (4) of such subsection if the benefits are provided under a separate policy, certificate, or contract of insurance.

''(4) INDIVIDUALS RESIDING OUTSIDE UNITED STATES OR RESIDENTS OF TERRITORIES.—Any applicable individual shall be treated as having minimum essential coverage for any month—

''(A) if such month occurs during any period described in subparagraph (A) or (B) of section 911(d)(1) which is applicable to the individual, or

''(B) if such individual is a bona fide resident of any possession of the United States (as determined under section 937(a)) for such month.

''(5) INSURANCE-RELATED TERMS.—Any term used in this section which is also used in title I of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act shall have the same meaning as when used in such title.''.

(ii) Section 36B(c)(2)(B) of such Code is amended to read as follows:

''(B) EXCEPTION FOR MINIMUM ESSENTIAL COVERAGE.—The term 'coverage month' shall not include any month with respect to an individual if for such month the individual is eligible for minimum essential coverage other than eligibility for coverage described in subsection (g)(1)(C) (relating to coverage in the individual market).''.

(iii) Clauses (i)(I) and (ii) of section 36B(c)(2)(C) of such Code are each amended by striking ''section 5000A(f)(2)'' and inserting ''subsection (g)(2)''.

(iv)(I) Subclause (II) of section 36B(c)(2)(C)(i) of such Code is amended by striking ''(within the meaning of section 5000A(e)(1)(B))''.

(II) Paragraph (2) of section 36B(c) of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(D) REQUIRED CONTRIBUTION.—For purposes of subparagraph (C)(i)(II), the term 'required contribution' means—

''(i) in the case of an individual eligible to purchase minimum essential coverage consisting of coverage through an eligible-employer-sponsored plan, the portion of the annual premium which would be paid by the individual (without regard to whether paid through salary reduction or otherwise) for self-only coverage, or

''(ii) in the case of an individual eligible only to purchase minimum essential coverage described in subsection (g)(1)(C), the annual premium for the lowest cost bronze plan available in the individual market through the Exchange in the State in the rating area in which the individual resides (without regard to whether the individual purchased a qualified health plan through the Exchange), reduced by the amount of the credit allowable under subsection (a) for the taxable year (determined as if the individual was covered by a qualified health plan offered through the Exchange for the entire taxable year).''.

(v) Section 162(m)(6)(C)(i) of such Code is amended by striking ''section 5000A(f)'' and inserting ''section 36B(g)''.

(vi) Subsections (a)(1) and (b)(1) of section 4980H of such Code are each amended by striking ''section 5000A(f)(2)'' and inserting ''section 36B(g)(2)''.

(vii) Section 4980I(f)(1)(B) of such Code is amended by striking ''section 5000A(f)'' and inserting ''section 36B(g)''.

(viii) Section 6056(b)(2)(b) of such Code is amended by striking ''section 5000A(f)(2)'' and inserting ''section 36B(g)(2)''.

(ix) The table of chapters of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking the item relating to chapter 48.

(B) AMENDMENTS RELATED TO THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT.—

(i) Section 1251(a)(4)(B)(ii) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is amended by striking ''section 500A(f)(2)'' and inserting ''section 36B(g)(2)''.

(ii) Section 1302(e)(2) of such Act is amended to read as follows:

''(2) INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE FOR ENROLLMENT.—An individual is described in this paragraph for any plan year if the individual has not attained the age of 30 before the beginning of the plan year.''.

(iii) Section 1311(d)(4) of such Act is amended by striking subparagraph (H).

(iv) Section 1312(d)(4) of such Act is amended by striking ''section 5000A(f)'' and inserting ''section 36B(g)''.

(v) Section 1363(e)(1)(C) of such Act is amended—

(I) by striking ''section 5000A(f)'' and inserting ''section 36B(g)'', and

(II) by striking ''or is eligible for an employer-sponsored plan that is not affordable coverage (as determined under section 5000A(e)(2) of such Code)'' and inserting ''or who is eligible for an employer-sponsored plan and whose household income for the taxable year described in section 1412(b)(1)(B) is less than the amount of gross income specified in section 6012(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with respect tot he taxpayer''.

(vi) Section 1332(a)(2)(D) of such Act is amended by striking ''36B, 4980H, and 5000A'' and inserting ''36B and 4980H''.

(vii) Section 1401(c)(1)(A)(iii) of such Act is amended by striking ''section 5000A(f)'' and inserting ''section 36B(g)''.

(viii) Section 1411(a) of such Act is amended—

(I) by inserting ''and'' at the end of paragraph (2),

(II) in paragraph (3)—

(aa) by striking ''and section 5000A(e)(2)'', and

(bb) by striking '', and'' and inserting a period, and

(III) by striking paragraph (4).

(ix) Section 1411(b)(4)(C) of such Act is amended by striking ''5000A(e)(1)(B)'' and inserting ''36B(c)(2)(D)''.

(x) Section 1411(b) of such Act is amended by striking paragraph (5).

(xi) Section 1411(e)(4)(B) of such Act is amended by striking clause (iv).

(C) OTHER CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 2715(b)(3)(G)(i) of the Public Health Service Act is amended by striking ''section 5000A(f)'' and inserting ''section 36B(g)''.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2013.

(b) REPEAL OF REPORTING OF HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Part III of subchapter A of chapter 61 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking subpart D.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Section 6056(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(d) COORDINATION WITH OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—To the maximum extent feasible, the Secretary may provide that any return or statement required to be provided under this section may be provided as part of any return or statement required under section 6051.''.

(B) Section 6724(d)(1)(B) of such Code is amended by inserting ''or'' at the end of clause (xxiii), by striking clause (xxiv), and by redesignating clause (xxv) as clause (xxiv).

(C) Section 6724(d)(2) of such Code is amended by inserting ''or'' at the end of subparagraph (FF), by striking subparagraph (GG), and by redesignating subparagraph (HH) as subparagraph (GG).

(D) Subsection (c) of section 1502 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is repealed.

(E) The table of subparts for part III of subchapter A of chapter 61 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking the item relating to subpart D.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to calendar years beginning after December 31, 2013.

(c) TAXPAYER REFUND PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall implement a program under which taxpayers who have paid a penalty under section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for any taxable year receive 1 payment in refund of all such penalties paid, without regard to whether or not an amended return is filed. Such payment shall be made not later than April 15, 2018.

(2) WAIVER OF STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.—Solely for purposes of claiming the refund under paragraph (1), the period prescribed by section 6511(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with respect to any payment of a penalty under section 5000A shall be extended until the date prescribed by law (including extensions) for filing the return of tax for the taxable year that includes December 31, 2017.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 270—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2017 AS ''NATIONAL OVARIAN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH''

Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KING, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Ms. HIRONO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 270

Whereas ovarian cancer is the deadliest of all gynecologic cancers;

Whereas ovarian cancer is the fifth leading cause of cancer deaths among women in the United States;

Whereas, in 2017 in the United States, approximately 22,440 new cases of ovarian cancer will be diagnosed and 14,080 women will die of ovarian cancer;

Whereas the mortality rate for ovarian cancer has not significantly decreased since the ''War on Cancer'' was declared more than 40 years ago;

Whereas ¼ of women will die within 1 year of being diagnosed with ovarian cancer and more than ½ will die within 5 years of that diagnosis;

Whereas, while the mammogram can detect breast cancer and the Pap smear can detect cervical cancer, there is no reliable early detection test for ovarian cancer;

Whereas the lack of an early detection test means that approximately 80 percent of cases of ovarian cancer are detected at an advanced stage;

Whereas all women are at risk for ovarian cancer, but approximately 20 percent of women who are diagnosed with ovarian cancer have a hereditary predisposition to ovarian cancer, which places them at even higher risk;

Whereas scientists and physicians have uncovered changes in the BRCA genes that some women inherit from their parents, which may make those women 30 times more likely to develop ovarian cancer;

Whereas the family history of a woman has been found to play an important role in accurately assessing the risk of that woman of developing ovarian cancer and medical experts believe that family history should be taken into consideration during the annual well-woman visit of any woman;

Whereas many experts in health prevention now recommend genetic testing for young women with a family history of breast and ovarian cancer;

Whereas women who know that they are at high risk of breast and ovarian cancer may undertake prophylactic measures to help reduce the risk of developing those diseases;

Whereas, as of 2017, the Society of Gynecologic Oncology recommends that all women who are diagnosed with ovarian cancer receive counseling and genetic testing;

Whereas many people are unaware that the symptoms of ovarian cancer often include bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly, urinary symptoms, and several other symptoms that are easily confused with other diseases;

Whereas awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer by women and health care providers can lead to a quicker diagnosis;

Whereas, in June 2007, the first national consensus statement on ovarian cancer symptoms was developed to provide consistency in describing symptoms to make it easier for women to learn and remember those symptoms; and

Whereas, each year during the month of September, the Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance and community partners hold a number of events to increase public awareness of ovarian cancer: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 2017 as ''National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month''; and

(2) supports the goals and ideals of National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month.

SENATE RESOLUTION 271—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL COMMUNITY GARDENING AWARENESS WEEK

Ms. DUCKWORTH submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:

S. RES. 271

Whereas countless families in the United States live with hunger every day and do not have access to fresh produce in their neighborhoods;

Whereas community gardens conserve limited resources and promote sustainability;

Whereas community gardens provide an important and nutritious source of fresh produce donations for local food pantries and social service agencies;

Whereas community gardens enable individuals to gain control over the quality, variety, and cost of their food supply;

Whereas community gardening encourages individuals of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds to work together, foster a better sense of community, and improve the quality of their lives;

Whereas community-based youth and school gardening programs encourage personal self-esteem and healthy attitudes toward learning;

Whereas community gardening and greening projects provide a catalyst for neighborhood and community development;

Whereas community gardens reduce city heat and preserve open spaces for present and future generations;

Whereas community gardens and other green spaces—

(1) provide a more livable environment in municipalities throughout the United States; and

(2) present a positive local image to the residents of, and visitors to, a community;

Whereas community gardens help provide local food banks with fresh produce for individuals in need; and

Whereas the last week of September 2017 is an appropriate week to designate as ''National Community Gardening Awareness Week'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate supports the goals and ideals of National Community Gardening Awareness Week, including—

(1) raising awareness of the importance of community gardens and urban agriculture;

(2) improving access to public land for the development of sustainable food projects;

(3) encouraging further growth of community gardens and other opportunities that increase food self-reliance, improve fitness, contribute to a cleaner environment, and enhance community development; and

(4) supporting cooperative efforts among Federal, State, and local governments and nonprofit organizations—

(A) to promote the development and expansion of community gardens; and

(B) to increase the accessibility of community gardens to disadvantaged population groups.

SENATE RESOLUTION 272—COMMEMORATING THE 230TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 272

Whereas, on September 17, 1787, the Constitution of the United States was signed by 39 delegates from 12 States;

Whereas the Constitution of the United States was subsequently ratified by each of the original 13 States;

Whereas James Madison and the other delegates drafted the Constitution of the United States ''in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic

Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty'' for the people of the United States;

Whereas the Constitution of the United States has provided the means and structure for the United States and the people of the United States to achieve a level of prosperity, liberty, security, and justice that is unparalleled among nations;

Whereas the contributions of the Constitution of the United States to the welfare of individuals reach far beyond the borders of the United States;

Whereas the Constitution of the United States—

(1) was the first permanent constitution in the world adopted by elected representatives;

(2) includes seminal ideas about individual rights, the separation of powers, and the rule of law; and

Whereas the Constitution of the United States has been amended 27 times since its adoption and includes amendments that reflect the will of the people of the United States ''to form a more perfect Union'', such as amendments to recognize and protect individual rights, eliminate slavery, and expand the franchise;

Whereas the Senate continues to strive to preserve and strengthen the values and rights bestowed on the United States and the people of the United States by the Constitution of the United States; and

Whereas the preservation in the hearts and minds of the people of the United States of the values and rights expressed in the Constitution of the United States would be advanced by an official recognition on September 17, 2017, of the 230th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) on September 17, 2017, commemorates the 230th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution of the United States; and

(2) calls on the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and respect, including by reading the Constitution of the United States and reflecting on the enduring structure of government built by the Founders and successive generations of people of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 273—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF SEPTEMBER 2017 AS ''SICKLE CELL DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH'' IN ORDER TO EDUCATE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES ABOUT SICKLE CELL DISEASE AND THE NEED FOR RESEARCH, EARLY DETECTION METHODS, EFFECTIVE TREATMENTS, AND PREVENTATIVE CARE PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO SICKLE CELL DISEASE, COMPLICATIONS FROM SICKLE CELL DISEASE, AND CONDITIONS RELATED TO SICKLE CELL DISEASE

Mr. SCOTT (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BROWN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. COONS, and Ms. WARREN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 273

Whereas sickle cell disease (referred to in this preamble as ''SCD'') is an inherited blood disorder that is a major health problem in the United States and worldwide;

Whereas SCD causes the rapid destruction of sickle cells, which results in multiple medical complications, including anemia, jaundice, gallstones, strokes, restricted blood flow, damaged tissue in the liver, spleen, and kidneys, and death;

Whereas SCD causes episodes of considerable pain in the arms, legs, chest, and abdomen of an individual;

Whereas SCD affects an estimated 100,000 individuals in the United States;

Whereas approximately 1,000 babies are born with SCD each year in the United States, with the disease occurring in approximately 1 in 365 newborn African-American infants and 1 in 16,300 newborn Hispanic-American infants, and is found in individuals of Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Indian origin;

Whereas more than 3,000,000 individuals in the United States have the sickle cell trait and 1 in 13 African-Americans carries the trait;

Whereas there is a 1 in 4 chance that a child born to parents who both have the sickle cell trait will have the disease;

Whereas the life expectancy of an individual with SCD is often severely limited;

Whereas, while hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (commonly known as ''HSCT'') is currently the only cure for SCD and advances in treating the associated complications of SCD have occurred, more research is needed to find widely available treatments and cures to help patients with SCD; and

Whereas September 2017 has been designated as Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month in order to educate communities across the United States about SCD, including early detection methods, effective treatments, and preventative care programs with respect to SCD, complications from SCD, and conditions related to SCD: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to hold appropriate programs, events, and activities during Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month to raise public awareness of preventative care programs, treatments, and other patient services for those suffering from sickle cell disease, complications from sickle cell disease, and conditions related to sickle cell disease.

SENATE RESOLUTION 274—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL RETIREMENT SECURITY WEEK, INCLUDING RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE VARIOUS TAX-PREFERRED RETIREMENT VEHICLES, INCREASING PERSONAL FINANCIAL LITERACY, AND ENGAGING THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES ON THE KEYS TO SUCCESS IN ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING RETIREMENT SECURITY THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFETIMES

Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. ALEXANDER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 274

Whereas people in the United States are living longer and the cost of retirement is increasing significantly;

Whereas Social Security remains the bedrock of retirement income for the great majority of the people of the United States but was never intended by Congress to be the sole source of retirement income for families;

Whereas recent data from the Employee Benefit Research Institute indicates that, in the United States—

(1) only approximately ⅗ of workers or the spouses of those workers are saving for retirement; and

(2) the amount that workers have saved for retirement is much less than the amount those workers need to adequately fund their retirement years;

Whereas the financial literacy of workers in the United States is important so that those workers understand the need to save for retirement;

Whereas saving for retirement is a key component of overall financial health and security during retirement years and the importance of financial literacy in planning for retirement must be advocated;

Whereas many workers may not—

(1) be aware of the various options in saving for retirement; or

(2) have focused on the importance of, and need for, saving for retirement and successfully achieving retirement security;

Whereas, although many employees have access through their employers to defined benefit and defined contribution plans to assist the employees in preparing for retirement, many of those employees may not be taking advantage of those plans at all or to the full extent allowed by Federal law;

Whereas saving for retirement is necessary even during economic downturns or market declines, which makes continued contributions all the more important;

Whereas all workers, including public and private sector employees, employees of tax-exempt organizations, and self-employed individuals, can benefit from developing personal budgets and financial plans that include retirement savings strategies that take advantage of tax-preferred retirement savings vehicles;

Whereas effectively and sustainably withdrawing retirement resources throughout the retirement years of an individual is as important and crucial as saving and accumulating funds for retirement; and

Whereas the week of October 15 through October 21, 2017, has been designated as ''National Retirement Security Week'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Retirement Security Week, including raising public awareness of the importance of saving adequately for retirement;

(2) acknowledges the need to raise public awareness of a variety of tax-preferred retirement vehicles that are used by many people in the United States but could be used by more; and

(3) calls on States, localities, schools, universities, nonprofit organizations, businesses, other entities, and the people of the United States to observe National Retirement Security Week with appropriate programs and activities, with the goal of increasing the retirement savings and personal financial literacy of all people in the United States, thereby enhancing the retirement security of the people of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 275—CONGRATULATING NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY ON THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE UNIVERSITY

Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 275

Whereas Northeastern Illinois University has served the Chicagoland area and beyond for 150 years, having graduated nearly 80,000 students who have—

(1) strengthened the local workforce;

(2) made a positive difference in their communities; and

(3) transformed the lives of others, just as the University has done for those students;

Whereas Northeastern Illinois University is regarded as the most diverse regional university in the Midwest and is designated by the Department of Education as a Hispanic-Serving Institution;

Whereas Northeastern Illinois University is known for—

(1) having the safest campus in the State of Illinois;

(2) being among the best institutions in the United States for adult learners; and

(3) the fact that graduates of the University have the ninth-lowest amount of student loan debt among graduates of 4-year colleges and universities in the United States; and

Whereas Northeastern Illinois University offers more than 80 undergraduate and graduate programs in the arts, sciences, education, and business at 5 locations in the Chicago metropolitan area, including in the North Park and Bronzeville neighborhoods: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates Northeastern Illinois University on the sesquicentennial of the University; and

(2) extends best wishes to Northeastern Illinois University for continued success and achievement.

SENATE RESOLUTION 276—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2017 AS ''PULMONARY FIBROSIS AWARENESS MONTH''

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. HATCH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 276

Whereas pulmonary fibrosis is a debilitating and ultimately fatal lung condition that causes progressive scarring in the lungs and has no definitive cause;

Whereas as many as 200,000 individuals in the United States are known to suffer from pulmonary fibrosis, the majority of whom are between the ages of 50 and 75;

Whereas the average life expectancy from the diagnosis of the idiopathic form of pulmonary fibrosis is just 2.8 years, and as many as 80 percent of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis patients die within 5 years of diagnosis;

Whereas pulmonary fibrosis takes the lives of 40,000 or more individuals in the United States each year—approximately 1 individual every 13 minutes;

Whereas many patients afflicted with pulmonary fibrosis are misdiagnosed for 1 year or longer after the patients are presenting with pulmonary fibrosis symptoms;

Whereas, as of July 2017, there are no confirmed biomarkers for screening and testing for pulmonary fibrosis;

Whereas a cure, treatment, or drug to halt the fibrotic process in pulmonary fibrosis does not yet exist;

Whereas the symptoms of pulmonary fibrosis vary from person to person and include shortness of breath, a dry cough, fatigue, weight loss, and aching muscles and joints;

Whereas volunteers, researchers, caregivers, and medical professionals are working to improve the quality of life for individuals with pulmonary fibrosis and for the families of those individuals; and

Whereas developing more effective treatments for pulmonary fibrosis and providing access to quality care to individuals with pulmonary fibrosis requires increased research, education, and community support services: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 2017 as ''Pulmonary Fibrosis Awareness Month'';

(2) supports the goals and ideals of Pulmonary Fibrosis Awareness Month;

(3) continues to support more robust and accelerated research to develop more effective treatments for pulmonary fibrosis and to ultimately find a cure for the disease;

(4) recognizes the courage and contributions of individuals with pulmonary fibrosis who participate in vital clinical trials to advance the knowledge of the disease; and

(5) commends the dedication of organizations, volunteers, researchers, and millions of individuals in the United States and abroad working to improve the quality of life for individuals with pulmonary fibrosis and the families of those individuals.

SENATE RESOLUTION 277—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 25 THROUGH 29, 2017, AS ''NATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY WEEK''

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. REED) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 277

Whereas the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reports that approximately 36,000,000 adults in the United States lack the basic literacy and numeracy necessary to succeed at home, in the workplace, and in society;

Whereas the literacy of the people of the United States is essential for the economic and societal well-being of the United States;

Whereas the United States reaps the economic benefits of individuals who improve their literacy, numeracy, and English-language skills;

Whereas literacy and educational skills are necessary for individuals to fully benefit from the range of opportunities available in the United States;

Whereas the economy and position of the United States in the world marketplace depend on having a literate, skilled population;

Whereas the unemployment rate in the United States is highest among those without a high school diploma or an equivalent credential, demonstrating that education is important to economic recovery;

Whereas the educational skills of the parents of a child and the practice of reading to a child have a direct impact on the educational success of the child;

Whereas parental involvement in the education of a child is a key predictor of the success of a child, and the level of parental involvement in the education of a child increases as the educational level of the parent increases;

Whereas parents who participate in family literacy programs become more involved in the education of their children and gain the tools necessary to obtain a job or find better employment;

Whereas, as a result of family literacy programs, the lives of children become more stable, and the success of children in the classroom and in future endeavors becomes more likely;

Whereas adults need to be part of a long-term solution to the educational challenges faced by the people of the United States;

Whereas many older people in the United States lack the reading, math, or English-language skills necessary to read a prescription and follow medical instructions, which endangers the lives of the older people and the lives of their loved ones;

Whereas many individuals who are unemployed, underemployed, or receive public assistance lack the literacy skills necessary to obtain and keep a job, to continue their education, or to participate in job training programs;

Whereas many high school dropouts do not have the literacy skills necessary to complete their education, transition to postsecondary education or career and technical training, or obtain a job;

Whereas a large portion of individuals in prison have low educational skills and prisoners without educational skills are more likely to return to prison once released;

Whereas many immigrants in the United States do not have the literacy skills necessary to succeed in the United States; and

Whereas National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week highlights the need to ensure that each individual in the United States has the literacy skills necessary to succeed at home, at work, and in society: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of September 25 through 29, 2017, as ''National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week'' to raise public awareness about the importance of adult education, workforce skills, and family literacy;

(2) encourages people across the United States to support programs to assist individuals in need of adult education, workforce skills, and family literacy programs;

(3) recognizes the importance of adult education, workforce skills, and family literacy programs; and

(4) calls on public, private, and nonprofit entities to support increased access to adult education and family literacy programs to ensure a literate society.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1107. Mrs. FISCHER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3823, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to provide disaster tax relief, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1108. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mr. KENNEDY)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 3823, supra.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1107. Mrs. FISCHER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3823, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to provide disaster tax relief, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. FEDERAL AUTHORITY OVER INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 14501(c) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking ''Paragraph (1)'' and inserting ''Paragraphs (1) and (6)'';

(2) in paragraph (3)(A), by striking ''Paragraph (1)'' and inserting ''Paragraphs (1) and (6)''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(6) ADDITIONAL LIMITATIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A State, a political subdivision of a State, or a political authority composed of 2 or more States may not enact or enforce a law, regulation, or other provision having the force and effect of law relating to meal or rest breaks applicable to employees whose hours of service are subject to regulation by the Secretary under section 31502.

''(B) SAVINGS PROVISION.—Nothing in this paragraph may be construed to limit the provisions under paragraph (1).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall have the force and effect as if enacted on the date of the enactment of the Federal Aviation Administration Authorization Act of 1994 (Public Law 103–305).

SA 1108. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mr. KENNEDY)) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 3823, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to provide disaster tax relief, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike title IV.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I have 6 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, September 28, 2017 at 9:30 a.m., in 216 Hart Senate Office Building, in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''Rural Development and Energy Programs: Perspectives for the 2018 Farm Bill.''

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, September 28, 2017, at 10 a.m., in closed session, to receive a briefing on North Korea.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, September 28, 2017 at 9:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Evaluating Sanctions Enforcement and Policy Options on North Korea: Administration Perspectives.''

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet in executive session during the session of the Senate on Thursday, September 28, at 10:30 a.m. in room 216 of the Capitol.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on September 28, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., in SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION OPERATION, SAFETY AND SECURITY

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Thursday, September 28, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my science fellows Michelle Romo and Beth Wester be granted floor privileges today and for the rest of their fellowship.

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that floor privileges be granted to Arnold Solamillos, who is a Brookings Fellow on my staff on loan from the Social Security Administration, during today's session of the Senate.

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

THE AMERICAN LEGION 100TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2519, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2519) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the 100th anniversary of The American Legion.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time.

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

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There being no further debate, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass?

The bill (H.R. 2519) was passed.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

MAIN STREET CYBERSECURITY ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 217, S. 770.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 770) to require the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to disseminate resources to help reduce small business cybersecurity risks, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Making Available Information Now to Strengthen Trust and Resilience and Enhance Enterprise Technology Cybersecurity Act of 2017'' or the ''MAIN STREET Cybersecurity Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Small businesses play a vital role in the economy of the United States, accounting for 54 percent of all United States sales and 55 percent of jobs in the United States.

(2) Attacks targeting small and medium businesses account for a high percentage of cyberattacks in the United States. Sixty percent of small businesses that suffer a cyberattack are out of business within 6 months, according to the National Cyber Security Alliance.

(3) The Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2014 (15 U.S.C. 7421 et seq.) calls on the National Institute of Standards and Technology to facilitate and support a voluntary public-private partnership to reduce cybersecurity risks to critical infrastructure. Such a partnership continues to play a key role in improving the cyber resilience of the United States and making cyberspace safer.

(4) There is a need to develop simplified resources that are consistent with the partnership described in paragraph (3) that improves its use by small businesses.

SEC. 3. IMPROVING CYBERSECURITY OF SMALL BUSINESSES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) DIRECTOR.—The term ''Director'' means the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

(2) RESOURCES.—The term ''resources'' means guidelines, tools, best practices, standards, methodologies, and other ways of providing information.

(3) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN.—The term ''small business concern'' has the meaning given such term in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

(b) SMALL BUSINESS CYBERSECURITY.—Section 2(e)(1)(A) of the National Institute of Standards and Technology Act (15 U.S.C. 272(e)(1)(A)) is amended—

(1) in clause (vii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) by redesignating clause (viii) as clause (ix); and

(3) by inserting after clause (vii) the following:

''(viii) consider small business concerns (as defined in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632)); and''.

(c) DISSEMINATION OF RESOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director, in carrying out section 2(e)(1)(A)(viii) of the National Institute of Standards and Technology Act, as added by subsection (b) of this Act, in consultation with the heads of such other Federal agencies as the Director considers appropriate, shall disseminate clear and concise resources for small business concerns to help reduce their cybersecurity risks.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The Director shall ensure that the resources disseminated pursuant to paragraph (1)—

(A) are generally applicable and usable by a wide range of small business concerns;

(B) vary with the nature and size of the implementing small business concern, and the nature and sensitivity of the data collected or stored on the information systems or devices of the implementing small business concern;

(C) include elements that promote awareness of simple, basic controls, a workplace cybersecurity culture, and third party stakeholder relationships, to assist small business concerns in mitigating common cybersecurity risks;

(D) are technology-neutral and can be implemented using technologies that are commercial and off-the-shelf; and

(E) are based on international standards to the extent possible, and are consistent with the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 (15 U.S.C. 3701 et seq.).

(3) NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS AND EDUCATION PROGRAM.—The Director shall ensure that the resources disseminated under paragraph (1) are consistent with the efforts of the Director under section 401 of the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2014 (15 U.S.C. 7451).

(4) SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER CYBER STRATEGY.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Director, to the extent practicable, shall consider any methods included in the Small Business Development Center Cyber Strategy developed under section 1841(a)(3)(B) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114–328).

(5) VOLUNTARY RESOURCES.—The use of the resources disseminated under paragraph (1) shall be considered voluntary.

(6) UPDATES.—The Director shall review and, if necessary, update the resources disseminated under paragraph (1) in accordance with the requirements under paragraph (2).

(7) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Director and such heads of other Federal agencies as the Director considers appropriate shall each make prominently available to the public on the Director's or head's Internet website, as the case may be, information about the resources and all updates to them disseminated under paragraph (1). The Director and the heads shall each ensure that the information they respectively make prominently available is consistent, clear, and concise.

(d) CONSISTENCY OF RESOURCES PUBLISHED BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.—If a Federal agency publishes resources to help small business concerns reduce their cybersecurity risks, the head of such Federal agency, to the degree practicable, shall make such resources consistent with the resources disseminated under subsection (c)(1).

(e) OTHER FEDERAL CYBERSECURITY REQUIREMENTS.—Nothing in this section may be construed to supersede, alter, or otherwise affect any cybersecurity requirements applicable to Federal agencies.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be considered; that the Schatz amendment No. 977, as modified with the changes at the desk, be considered and agreed to; that the committee-reported substitute amendment, as amended, be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 977), as modified, was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

On page 7, beginning on line 14, strike ''Sixty'' and all that follows through line 17.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 770), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 770

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 ''Making Available Information Now to Strengthen Trust and Resilience and Enhance Enterprise Technology Cybersecurity Act of 2017'' or the ''MAIN STREET Cybersecurity Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Small businesses play a vital role in the economy of the United States, accounting for 54 percent of all United States sales and 55 percent of jobs in the United States.

(2) Attacks targeting small and medium businesses account for a high percentage of cyberattacks in the United States.

(3) The Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2014 (15 U.S.C. 7421 et seq.) calls on the National Institute of Standards and Technology to facilitate and support a voluntary public-private partnership to reduce cybersecurity risks to critical infrastructure. Such a partnership continues to play a key role in improving the cyber resilience of the United States and making cyberspace safer.

(4) There is a need to develop simplified resources that are consistent with the partnership described in paragraph (3) that improves its use by small businesses.

SEC. 3. IMPROVING CYBERSECURITY OF SMALL BUSINESSES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) DIRECTOR.—The term ''Director'' means the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

(2) RESOURCES.—The term ''resources'' means guidelines, tools, best practices, standards, methodologies, and other ways of providing information.

(3) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN.—The term ''small business concern'' has the meaning given such term in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

(b) SMALL BUSINESS CYBERSECURITY.—Section 2(e)(1)(A) of the National Institute of Standards and Technology Act (15 U.S.C. 272(e)(1)(A)) is amended—

(1) in clause (vii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) by redesignating clause (viii) as clause (ix); and

(3) by inserting after clause (vii) the following:

''(viii) consider small business concerns (as defined in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632)); and''.

(c) DISSEMINATION OF RESOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director, in carrying out section 2(e)(1)(A)(viii) of the National Institute of Standards and Technology Act, as added by subsection (b) of this Act, in consultation with the heads of such other Federal agencies as the Director considers appropriate, shall disseminate clear and concise resources for small business concerns to help reduce their cybersecurity risks.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The Director shall ensure that the resources disseminated pursuant to paragraph (1)—

(A) are generally applicable and usable by a wide range of small business concerns;

(B) vary with the nature and size of the implementing small business concern, and the nature and sensitivity of the data collected or stored on the information systems or devices of the implementing small business concern;

(C) include elements that promote awareness of simple, basic controls, a workplace cybersecurity culture, and third party stakeholder relationships, to assist small business concerns in mitigating common cybersecurity risks;

(D) are technology-neutral and can be implemented using technologies that are commercial and off-the-shelf; and

(E) are based on international standards to the extent possible, and are consistent with the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 (15 U.S.C. 3701 et seq.).

(3) NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS AND EDUCATION PROGRAM.—The Director shall ensure that the resources disseminated under paragraph (1) are consistent with the efforts of the Director under section 401 of the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2014 (15 U.S.C. 7451).

(4) SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER CYBER STRATEGY.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Director, to the extent practicable, shall consider any methods included in the Small Business Development Center Cyber Strategy developed under section 1841(a)(3)(B) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114–328).

(5) VOLUNTARY RESOURCES.—The use of the resources disseminated under paragraph (1) shall be considered voluntary.

(6) UPDATES.—The Director shall review and, if necessary, update the resources disseminated under paragraph (1) in accordance with the requirements under paragraph (2).

(7) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Director and such heads of other Federal agencies as the Director considers appropriate shall each make prominently available to the public on the Director's or head's Internet website, as the case may be, information about the resources and all updates to them disseminated under paragraph (1). The Director and the heads shall each ensure that the information they respectively make prominently available is consistent, clear, and concise.

(d) CONSISTENCY OF RESOURCES PUBLISHED BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.—If a Federal agency publishes resources to help small business concerns reduce their cybersecurity risks, the head of such Federal agency, to the degree practicable, shall make such resources consistent with the resources disseminated under subsection (c)(1).

(e) OTHER FEDERAL CYBERSECURITY REQUIREMENTS.—Nothing in this section may be construed to supersede, alter, or otherwise affect any cybersecurity requirements applicable to Federal agencies.

NATIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MONTH

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 267 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 267) designating September 2017 as ''National Workforce Development Month.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 267) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of September 25, 2017, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 272, S. Res. 273, S. Res. 274, S. Res. 275, S. Res. 276, and S. Res. 277.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

SIGNING AUTHORITY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader and the senior Senator from Alaska be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions on Friday, September 29, 2017, through Monday, October 2, 2017.

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

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 1894

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1894) to exempt Puerto Rico from the coastwise laws of the United States (commonly known as the ''Jones Act'').

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m., Monday, October 2; 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 Pai nomination, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; further, that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, all postcloture time on the Pai nomination expire at 5:30 p.m.; finally, that at 5:30 p.m., the Senate vote on confirmation of the Pai nomination with no intervening action or debate and, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2017, AT 3 P.M.

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.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:17 p.m., adjourned until Monday, October 2, 2017, at 3 p.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

THOMAS HARKER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, VICE SUSAN J. RABERN.

ROBERT H. MCMAHON, OF GEORGIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, VICE DAVID J. BERTEAU, RESIGNED.

JOHN P. ROTH, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE, VICE RICARDO A. AGUILERA, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

ROBERT HUNTER KURTZ, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, VICE SANDRA BROOKS HENRIQUEZ, RESIGNED.

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

BRUCE LANDSBERG, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 31, 2022, VICE CHRISTOPHER A. HART, TERM EXPIRING.

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

DANA BAIOCCO, OF OHIO, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF SEVEN YEARS FROM OCTOBER 27, 2017, VICE MARIETTA S. ROBINSON, TERM EXPIRING.

FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

RAYMOND MARTINEZ, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADMINISTRATION, VICE THOMAS F. SCOTT DARLING III.

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

KENNETH E. ALLEN, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2021, VICE C. PETER MAHURIN, TERM EXPIRED.

A. D. FRAZIER, OF GEORGIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2022, VICE VERA LYNN EVANS, TERM EXPIRED.

JEFFREY SMITH, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2022, VICE MARILYN A. BROWN, TERM EXPIRED.

JAMES R. THOMPSON III, OF ALABAMA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2021, VICE JOE H. RITCH, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

IRWIN STEVEN GOLDSTEIN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, VICE RICHARD STENGEL, RESIGNED.

SEAN P. LAWLER, OF MARYLAND, TO BE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, AND TO HAVE THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE, VICE PETER A. SELFRIDGE.

JAMES RANDOLPH EVANS, OF GEORGIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO LUXEMBOURG.

NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD

LINDA A. PUCHALA, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 1, 2018. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

JAMES BLEW, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, EVALUATION, AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, VICE CARMEL MARTIN, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

NORMAN EUELL ARFLACK, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE PARKER LOREN CARL, TERM EXPIRED.

MICHAEL T. BAYLOUS, OF WEST VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF WEST VIRGINIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE JOHN DALE FOSTER, TERM EXPIRED.

DAVID G. JOLLEY, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE JAMES THOMAS FOWLER, RETIRED.

DANIEL R. MCKITTRICK, OF MISSISSIPPI, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE DENNIS J. ERBY, TERM EXPIRED.

JESSE SEROYER, JR., OF ALABAMA, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF ALABAMA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE ARTHUR DARROW BAYLOR, RETIRED.

ERIN ANGELA NEALY COX, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE SARAH R. SALDANA, RESIGNED.

THE JUDICIARY

RYAN T. HOLTE, OF OHIO, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS FOR A TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE NANCY B. FIRESTONE, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

DUANE A. KEES, OF ARKANSAS, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE WILLIAM CONNER ELDRIDGE, RESIGNED.

MATTHEW D. KRUEGER, OF WISCONSIN, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE JAMES L. SANTELLE, RESIGNED.

THE JUDICIARY

HOWARD C. NIELSON, JR., OF UTAH, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF UTAH, VICE BRIAN THEADORE STEWART, RETIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

CHRISTINA E. NOLAN, OF VERMONT, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF VERMONT FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE ERIC STEVEN MILLER, RESIGNED.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate September 28, 2017:

THE JUDICIARY

RALPH R. ERICKSON, OF NORTH DAKOTA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE EIGHTH CIRCUIT.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

ROBERT J. HIGDON, JR., OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

J. CODY HILAND, OF ARKANSAS, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

JOSHUA J. MINKLER, OF INDIANA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

BYUNG J. PAK, OF GEORGIA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JOHN R. BASS, OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN.

JON M. HUNTSMAN, JR., OF UTAH, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

JUSTIN HICKS SIBERELL, OF MARYLAND, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN.

A. WESS MITCHELL, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS).

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. MICHAEL R. FENZEL

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. JACQUELINE D. VAN OVOST

THE FOLLOWING NAMED AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. JEFFERY D. AEBISCHER
COL. NATHAN B. ALHOLINNA
COL. BORIS R. ARMSTRONG
COL. KIMBERLY A. BAUMANN
COL. ROBERT L. BELL
COL. SHAWN N. BRATTON
COL. JEFFREY L. BUTLER
COL. MICHAEL E. CALLAHAN
COL. KEVIN J. CAMPBELL
COL. THOMAS S. CAUTHEN
COL. LAWRENCE L. CHRISTENSEN
COL. SHAWN A. CLOUTHIER
COL. DARWIN L. CRAIG
COL. ROBERT C. DESKO
COL. KEVIN M. DONOVAN
COL. BOBBI J. DOORENBOS
COL. DAVID M. DZIOBKOWSKI
COL. RANDAL K. EFFERSON
COL. HOWARD L. EISSLER III
COL. SHAWN D. FORD
COL. JED J. FRENCH
COL. DANIEL E. GABRIELLI
COL. MARK P. GAUL
COL. RAINER G. GOMEZ
COL. PATRICK M. GUINEE
COL. PENNY C. HODGES–GOETZ
COL. JEREMY C. HORN
COL. CASSANDRA D. HOWARD
COL. PAUL D. JOHNSON
COL. EDWARD S. JONES
COL. GARY W. KIRK
COL. HEIDI L. KJOS
COL. MEAGHAN Q. LECLERC
COL. GREGOR J. LEIST
COL. SUZANNE B. LIPCAMAN
COL. KEITH G. MACDONALD
COL. ROLF E. MAMMEN
COL. GERALD E. MCDONALD
COL. CHRISTOPHER G. MCGRAW
COL. MICHAEL R. MORGAN
COL. REBECCA L. O'CONNOR
COL. DUKE A. PIRAK
COL. JEFFREY L. RYAN
COL. JON S. SAFSTROM
COL. WILLIAM L. SPARROW
COL. JAMES R. STEVENSON, JR.
COL. JEFFREY D. STOREY
COL. BRYAN J. TEFF
COL. EDWARD L. VAUGHAN IV
COL. APRIL D. VOGEL
COL. CHARLES M. WALKER
COL. CHRISTOPHER S. WALKER
COL. DAVID A. WEISHAAR
COL. WENDY B. WENKE
COL. GREGORY T. WHITE
COL. BRENT W. WRIGHT
COL. WILLIAM T. YATES
COL. DANIEL S. YENCHESKY

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. JOHN E. CARDWELL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. JOSEPH D'COSTA

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. MICHAEL A. BILLS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. DANIEL J. CHRISTIAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. KENNETH H. MOORE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. MATTHEW P. EASLEY

THE FOLLOWING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be brigadier general

COL. JOHNNY R. BASS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. TONY L. WRIGHT

IN THE AIR FORCE

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF STEPHEN J. AUGUSTINE, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF WILLIAM J. VIT, JR., TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF THERESA A. JONES, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JAMES S. SHIGEKANE AND ENDING WITH ANDREW H. STEPHAN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH MARC AALDERINK AND ENDING WITH JOSEPH R. ZITO, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH IAN S. ANDERSON AND ENDING WITH JOAN DIAZ ZUNIGA, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JENNIFER L. BAKER AND ENDING WITH DORIAN R. WILLIAMS, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

IN THE ARMY

ARMY NOMINATION OF DERRICK C. LONG, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF NATALIE E. VANATTA, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF JOHN F. LOPES, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF TERRANCE R. LATSON, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF ROBERT P. L. BAILEY, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATION OF MARIAH C. SMITH, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF MARK W. CANARY, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATION OF DAVID E. MEACHER, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER D. MCDEVITT, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH BRUCE M. COCCOLI AND ENDING WITH SCOTT J. SHERIDAN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH THOMAS A. BROOKS AND ENDING WITH D012739, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH EDWARD A. JARRETT AND ENDING WITH CASEY T. SCHOBER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CURTIS J. ALLEN AND ENDING WITH BRADLEY A. WRIGHT, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF MEGAN L. BUSTIN, TO BE MAJOR.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF ROBERT M. BARCLAY, TO BE MAJOR.

IN THE NAVY

NAVY NOMINATION OF JASON A. TEWS, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER P. CARROLL, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH GABRIEL PEREZ AND ENDING WITH ERIC R. TRUEMPER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ANTON A. ADAM AND ENDING WITH YING P. ZHONG, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ADRIENNE T. BENTON AND ENDING WITH AARON R. WESSON, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH SALAHHUDIN A. ADENKHALIF AND ENDING WITH VICTOR T. F. WONG, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH SANTIAGO A. ABADAM II AND ENDING WITH JAIME M. YORK, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH SARAH A. AGUERO AND ENDING WITH DENNIS E. WESTMAN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JOKO A. ABUBAKAR AND ENDING WITH YUI Y. WONG, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH BROOKE T. AHLSTROM AND ENDING WITH MARK C. WARNER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH MIGUEL M. ALAMPAY AND ENDING WITH ZACHARY A. ZANFES, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2017.

WITHDRAWALS

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on September 28, 2017 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nominations:

RYAN DEAN NEWMAN, OF NEW MEXICO, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, VICE ALISSA M. STARZAK, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON APRIL 28, 2017.

DAVID G. EHRHART, OF TEXAS, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE, VICE GORDON O. TANNER, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON JUNE 12, 2017.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

DISASTER TAX RELIEF AND AIRPORT AND AIRWAY EXTENSION ACT OF 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of H.R. 3823, the Disaster Tax and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017.

Hurricane Harvey flooded the Houston region with 21 trillion gallons of water causing tragic and catastrophic results in my district.

Hurricane Harvey destroyed 185 thousand homes in the Houston region, displacing my constituents and harming their livelihoods.

Hurricane Harvey has created an incredible need for enhanced assistance in rebuilding efforts.

My principal focus is to do what is best for my constituents and that is why I support the underlying bill.

H.R. 3823 grants individuals and businesses in areas affected by hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria a tax relief in addition to extending the authorization for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) through March 31, 2018, without privatization of air-traffic control.

Although I support clean reauthorization of the FAA, which is long overdue as a result of the inability of those responsible to craft legislation that obtains bipartisan majority support, I do not support the attached partisan package of extraneous provisions added to the reauthorization.

I also do not support a reauthorization of the FAA that would privatize air-traffic control.

My Democratic colleagues had 21 tax relief provisions to add to the reauthorization.

H.R. 3823 only contains 7 of those provisions; however, they are very important hurricane relief provisions.

On health care, H.R. 3823 extends just three of the many programs set to expire at the end of the month, leaving out bipartisan priorities like CHIP and Community Health Centers extenders.

Additionally, the tax provisions concerning disaster victims were assembled without bipartisan input and leave out important items that were included for victims of prior disasters like Hurricane Katrina.

And finally, this bill blocks the path for any DREAMers legislation to be considered.

Going forward, I would like to see the items just mentioned to be added to the reauthorization bill.

H.R. 3823 would provide tax credits, deductions, and other relief to taxpayers in disaster areas affected by hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

Most measures would apply to taxpayers in parts of Florida, Puerto Rico, Texas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, where the president declared a major disaster zone warranting federal assistance as of Sept. 21.

The budget effects of the tax provisions would be considered emergency spending for budgetary purposes and not count against the spending caps.

The provisions are similar to relief provided after hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma.

The measure specifically helps hurricane victims keep more of their paycheck, deduct more of the cost of their expensive property damage, and have more affordable and immediate access to money they have saved for their retirement.

The legislation will also encourage even more Americans to donate generously to help those in need.

The bill would waive the 10 percent penalty on early distributions from retirement accounts for taxpayers in affected areas.

Individuals would be eligible to make the withdrawal if their primary residence was in one of the disaster areas as of the date of the storm and they sustained an economic loss.

The withdrawn amount would be included in the taxpayer's gross income, and would be spread over three years unless the taxpayer opted to claim it in a single year.

If the taxpayer repaid the distribution within three years, it would be considered a rollover for tax purposes and they could claim a refund for their previous income tax payments.

The withdrawal would have to occur by Jan. 1, 2019, and wouldn't be subject to withholding.

An individual could withdraw as much as $100,000 as hurricane distributions over their lifetime.

Plan sponsors would not be in violation of the Internal Revenue Service's retirement plan rules unless they distributed more than $100,000 to an individual.

Individuals could return withdrawals they had made for a home purchase in a disaster area between Feb. 28 and Sept. 21 if the home wasn't purchased or constructed because of the hurricanes.

The bill would increase the size of a loan an individual can take from their employer retirement fund. Loans could be for as much as $100,000—less other outstanding loans—or half the present value of the vested balance of the plan.

The bill would delay repayment deadlines for individuals with outstanding loans as of the date of the disaster.

The repayment date for loans due on or before Dec. 31, 2018, would be delayed for one year.

Individuals who took out loans after the hurricanes would not receive the extension.

The bill would create a credit for businesses that were rendered inoperable by the hurricanes but that retained their employees.

Employers could receive a credit for 40 percent of each employee's wages.

The credit amount couldn't exceed $6,000 per employee.

The employee's principal place of employment would have to be in one of the disaster zones.

Businesses would receive credits for wages on each day they were inoperable after the date of the hurricane and before Jan. 1, 2018.

The credit would be for wages paid each day until significant operations resumed, even if the employee returned to work or worked at a different location.

The limit on the deduction for contributions to charitable organizations would be suspended for donations made between Aug. 23 and Dec. 31 to relief efforts in the hurricane disaster areas.

Taxpayers wouldn't have to itemize their tax return to claim the deduction.

The deduction is normally limited to 50 percent of adjusted gross income (AGI) for individuals and 10 percent of taxable income for corporations.

The bill would allow individuals to contribute as much as their AGI, less any other charitable contributions.

Amounts greater than AGI could be carried over to other tax years.

I would allow corporations to contribute as much as their taxable income, less any other charitable contributions.

Donations in excess of taxable income could be carried over.

The charitable organization would have to provide written confirmation that the funds would be used for relief efforts.

Partnerships and S corporations would each have to elect the deduction.

The bill would allow taxpayers to deduct uncompensated casualty losses related to the hurricane even if their losses didn't meet the minimum threshold for the deduction, currently 10 percent of AGI. The deduction would be net of any personal casualty gains.

Taxpayers wouldn't have to itemize their return to claim the deduction.

The taxpayer's standard deduction would be increased by the net disaster loss, including for purposes of calculating whether they are liable for the alternative minimum tax.

The bill would establish a special rule for determination of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit.

If a taxpayer had received one or both of the credits in the previous tax year but their earned income was too high to qualify in 2017, they could substitute their 2016 income to claim them.

Individuals would qualify if their principal residence was in the hurricane disaster zone, or in the surrounding disaster area and they had been displaced by the hurricane.

Puerto Rican taxpayers' eligibility for the child tax credit would be based on their Social Security earnings.

The child tax credit is only available to Puerto Rican families with three or more children.

The EITC is not typically available to residents of Puerto Rico, according to a report from the Congressional Research Service (CRS).

The bill would direct the Treasury Department to provide funding to the government of Puerto Rico for the estimated amount of tax relief for residents who would be eligible under the bill.

The Puerto Rican government would have to promptly distribute the funds.

Puerto Rico would have to have a plan for disbursing the funds approved by the Treasury before the money would be provided.

The Treasury Department would reimburse the U.S. Virgin Islands, which has a ''mirror'' tax system, for any reduction in tax revenue caused by the bill.

Residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands are also generally ineligible for the EITC but can claim the child tax credit, according to CRS.

For the reasons mentioned above I support H.R. 3823.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF JEFFREY H. BROTMAN

HON. SUZAN K. DelBENE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of my friend and constituent, Mr. Jeffrey H. Brotman, who recently passed away at the age of 74.

Jeff was a Washington state native well known for his business accomplishments. From growing up working in his father's stores to opening Bottoms and eventually as a founder of Costco, Jeff's work made a significant impact around the world.

But he wasn't just a business leader. Jeff's generosity and tireless dedication to bettering our community will have a lasting impact on the Puget Sound region.

Jeff was a dedicated Husky and served as a University of Washington trustee. He also chaired the Million Dollar Round Table, working to bring people together to help others today and long into the future. In recognition of his work, he received the 2014 United Way Beacon Award for Visionary Philanthropy.

I would like to commemorate Jeff's lifetime of achievements. He will be remembered by his uplifting demeanor and abiding optimism, and as a committed community servant whose important work will continue to echo in years to come. My thoughts are with his wife, Susan, his children Justin and Amanda, and all of his family and friends.

RWANDA: DEMOCRACY THWARTED

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I held a hearing on democratic governance in Rwanda. Rwanda is an important African ally. This East African nation has been a valuable contributor to peacekeeping in Africa and is the sixth largest troop and police contributor to United Nations missions. However, reports have increased about the status of human rights and rule of law inside Rwanda and its efforts to silence critics living abroad. This hearing will examine the future of democracy and rule of law in Rwanda in light of persistent criticism of its government's behavior at home and on the international stage.

Rwanda is a constitutional republic dominated by a strong presidency. In 2015, the country held a constitutional referendum in which an estimated 98 percent of registered voters participated. Approximately 98 percent of those who voted endorsed a set of amendments that included provisions that would allow the president to run for up to three additional terms in office, meaning Paul Kagame could be President for more than 20 more years. His election to a third term in August 2017 was achieved with 99 percent of the vote.

A popular politician in the United States or most other countries would be unlikely in most circumstances to win nearly 100 percent of the vote in a free, fair and competitive election. Consequently, it is difficult to believe that even someone as widely admired as President Kagame has been could be that popular. Such suspicion is stoked by reports of vote irregularities and actions by the Rwandan government to restrain opposition activism and enact stringent controls on opposition activism, including legal restrictions on civil liberties and stringent controls on the free flow of information.

An example of why there is skepticism about the nature of free elections in Rwanda is the case of businesswoman Diane Rwigara, who ran as a critic of Kagame. Days after she launched her campaign, nude photos allegedly of her were leaked onto the Internet in an attempt to discredit her. She said she would not be intimidated and continued her campaign. On July 7th, the National Electoral Commission disqualified her and two other candidates on technical grounds, alleging that they had not collected enough valid signatures. Amnesty International said that the election would be held in a ''climate of fear and repression'' and the commission's decision was criticized by the U.S. State Department and the European Union.

Following the election, Rwigara launched an activist group called the People Salvation Movement to challenge the regime on its human rights record, saying that the country's parliament is little more than a rubber-stamp. Within days, her home was raided, and she was arrested for forgery and tax evasion. Although she was released, Rwigara, was rearrested for forgery and offences against state security; her mother and her sister also were subsequently arrested for tax evasion.

This is not the only case of harsh punishment of those who criticize the Kagame government. David Himbara, one of our witnesses today, was a close adviser to President Kagame and has an inside view of how this government deals with those seen as failing the government or those who disagree. He testified on the inner workings of the Kagame government at our May 20, 2015, hearing on Rwanda. Another witness at that May 2015 hearing was Robert Higiro, who told a chilling account of being solicited to commit the murders of two formerly high-ranking military and security officials. That account was backed by authenticated recordings of Rwanda's security chief offering large sums of money for the murders. In fact, after Higiro testified about this offer, he had to move from Belgium to the United States because his life was in danger. Both of our Rwandan witnesses have new information that will be important for our government's policy toward Rwanda.

During a staff delegation to South Africa last year, two of my staff spoke with officials in the Government of South Africa, which was highly offended that the Rwandan government would be involved in the murder of a dissident on New Year's Eve 2013. My staff also spoke with Rwandan refugees in South Africa who reported being afraid of officials at the Rwandan embassy in South Africa, who they said had threatened them for seeking asylum.

Again, Rwanda is not your typical dictatorship in which all people suffer under an unpopular leader who does not provide for social services or security. Many Rwandans apparently genuinely feel the government is acting in their interest, especially in providing for inter-ethnic harmony. It is this anomaly we seek to better understand through today's hearing.

My office has compiled a report on our government's human rights issues with Rwanda, and we are due to discuss these matters with them further. We would be a poor ally if we did not caution the Rwandan government about human rights abuses the international community cites, including governments in Africa. We hope these abuses can be stopped, but until such time as they are, we cannot ignore them and must bring them up in our interactions with the Government of Rwanda whether or not they readily accept the view others have of their behavior. It is in their interest and ours that we do so.

REMEMBERING AND HONORING JEROME MILEUR

HON. RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Mr. Speaker, today I remember and honor the life of Jerome Mileur who passed away on September 5 this year.

Jerry was born in Murphysboro, Illinois in 1934 where he honed a love of government, politics, baseball and corny humor punctuated with comedic puns. A loyal son of Illinois, Jerry earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from his beloved Southern Illinois University where he served for many years on the board of directors of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute.

An accomplished author and editor, Jerry joined the Political Science faculty of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1967 where his teaching and research focused on U.S. political parties and elections for nearly four decades. He served as chair of the Department of Political Science, received the UMass Amherst Chancellor's Medal, founded the Jackie Robinson Initiative which marked the 50th anniversary of baseball's integration and advised a cadre of doctoral students.

So many people knew Jerry's passion for baseball. He could be seen wearing a baseball cap with a pencil in hand to keep score at nearly every game he attended in person, and he was the longtime owner of the Harrisburg Senators minor league baseball franchise. As a diehard Cubs fan myself, Mr. Speaker, I must say Jerry's one irredeemable feature was his passionate devotion to the St. Louis Cardinals. In all seriousness, though, Jerry's historical study of the St. Louis Cardinals led to the publishing of two books about the Cardinals, and he finished the manuscript for a third book just days before his death.

Jerry's commitment to his communities, both in Illinois and in Massachusetts, could be evidenced by his governmental and political activity, his substantial support for the arts, and

his longstanding weekly meals and happy hours with friends of all ages.

On behalf of all of Jerry's countless friends and associates, I just want to thank him for all he has done for the people of Illinois and our country.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we might all keep in our thoughts and prayers the Mileur family and friends as they mourn their loss. In that spirit, I celebrate Jerry's life and think about what an impact that life made on so many people.

DLA & COMPANY

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud DLA & Company for receiving the City of Wheat Ridge's Chamber Business of the Year Award. This award recognizes businesses or individuals for their contribution to the community, and are a positive reflection of the City of Wheat Ridge's values.

DLA & Company was founded by Dale Anderson in 1985 as an independent full-service financial planning firm committed to helping individuals and business owners pursue their financial goals. DLA & Company was one of the founding businesses of the Wheat Ridge Chamber of Commerce. Dale chaired the Leads Group, and is a member of the Wheat Ridge Business Association, the West Chamber of Commerce and the High Plains Drifters Charter Club of the International Federation of Fly Fishers.

I applaud Dale Anderson for being the recipient of this well-deserved honor by the City of Wheat Ridge, and I congratulate him on his success.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BOLIVAR HIGH SCHOOL FISHING TEAM

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Bolivar High School Fishing Team and their recent victory in the National Youth Fishing Association (NYFA) South Division Championship.

Bolivar High School anglers, Andrew Johnson and John Hubbert, emerged as champions of the high school division on Sunday, July 16, 2017.

Taking place at the Pomme de Terre Lake, the NYFA South Division event brought 290 high school and middle school teams to southern Missouri where the anglers from Bolivar took first place. John and Andrew not only brought home a trophy but $2,000 worth of scholarship money as well.

I am honored to both recognize and congratulate Andrew and John, along with the Bolivar High School Fishing Team, on this terrific achievement. On behalf of Missouri's 7th Congressional District, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating this team and these two individuals on their outstanding achievements.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR LUKE KENLEY FOR HIS SERVICE TO INDIANA

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the retirement of Senator Luke Kenley from the Indiana State Senate after 25 years. For decades Senator Kenley has served not only his constituents in Indiana's 20th Senate district, but has served our state and our nation. The people of Indiana's Fifth Congressional District are forever grateful for Senator Kenley's commitment to making our Hoosier home and our country a better, safer, place to live.

The oldest of eight children, Howard ''Luke'' Kenley is a life-long Hoosier and was raised in Hamilton County. He and his siblings split time between Noblesville during the school year and working summers at his grandparents' west Texas cattle ranch in Ft. Stockton. Senator Kenley graduated from Noblesville High School as their senior class president in 1963, where he met his high school sweetheart and future wife, Sally. Senator Kenley then attended Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, my alma mater. He graduated in the class of 1967 earning his bachelor's degree in economics. Following graduation from Miami, he went on to Harvard to pursue his law degree. Senator Kenley left law school in 1969 during the fourth year of the Vietnam war to enroll in officer candidate school (OCS) where he graduated first in his class with the rank of Lieutenant. After completing OCS, Senator Kenley returned to Harvard to finish his law degree in 1972. Senator Kenley then returned to Noblesville to start his career and begin a family with his wife, Sally.

Senator Kenley practiced business law in Indianapolis for two years, after which he left to run the family business, founded in 1940 by his grandfather R.A. Kenley. Under his leadership Kenley Supermarkets, in Noblesville, grew tremendously from 20 employees and $2 million in yearly sales to two stores and 175 employees with $16 million in yearly sales. Senator Kenley managed operations from 1974 to 1998, at which time Marsh Supermarkets purchased the business. In addition to his time at the helm of Kenley Supermarkets, Senator Kenley served as the Noblesville City Court judge at the urging of Hamilton County Republican leaders. In 1990, after 15 years and 40,000 cases, Senator Kenley retired from the bench. It was not long before he was again asked to serve. In 1992, Senator Kenley was tapped to fill the vacancy in state Senate campaign in his home district. Senator Kenley won the seat and has served with distinction ever since his first term.

He earned respect from his peers during his very first term and he was awarded ''Freshman Legislator of the Year''. During his career in the Senate, Senator Kenley worked tirelessly on the Tax and Fiscal Policy committee to make Indiana a fiscally responsible and affordable state. He is responsible for pushing through the largest tax cut in Indiana's history, while simultaneously leading the charge on welfare reform. His budgetary talents led him to the chairmanship of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and in turn led him to become one of the key architects of the Indiana state budget. This year Indiana will once again have a balanced budget, including provisions for a long term road maintenance plan and no tax increases. During his eight-year tenure as chairman, Indiana has seen its reserves grow to two billion dollars, while also eliminating excess taxes. Senator Kenley, in addition to his work on the budget, sat on the Education and Career Development Committee. He consistently pushed for continued K–12 funding as well as school choice. During his tenure, Senator Kenley helped to craft the Community Transition Program, which seeks to create a better transition back to society for offenders following their release from prison. Continuing with his care for all life, Senator Kenley's determination in protecting the unborn has led Indiana to be one of the most pro-life states in the nation. Senator Kenley was recognized for his numerous contributions in both 2013 with a Sagamore of the Wabash as well as in 2014 through the Distinguished Public Official Award from Ivy Tech Community College, well-deserved recognitions indeed.

During his vibrant career, Luke also served as the Board President for the Noblesville Boys and Girls Club while also maintaining active memberships in the Noblesville Chamber of Commerce, the United Way of Central Indiana, Elks Lodge No. 576, the American Legion, the Hamilton County 50 club, and the First United Methodist Church of Noblesville. In 2004, he acted as the coordinator for Hamilton County Veteran's Organization Vietnam Wall Recreation Activities. Senator Kenley and his wife Sally's crowning achievement have been helping establish the Noblesville Education Foundation, which provides access to financial and material resources for Noblesville teachers. In addition to the Foundation, they created the ''Strings'' music program for Noblesville schools. He also holds annual leadership conferences at the State House for high school senior class presidents from his district about the importance of public service. Senator Kenley says ''It's important for our young people to think about public service as part of what they're going to contribute . . . It's part of the commitment to the success of our society.'' He says for democracy to work, ''Everybody's got to pitch in''.

Senator Kenley's lifetime of service to his community, through his military service, as Noblesville City Court judge, as state Senator, and as the architect of our state budget and our state's fiscal stability, he has been invaluable not only to his district but to our whole state and nation. Thanks to his dedication to fiscal responsibility, to K–12 education, and numerous other projects throughout his career, Indiana is a great place to live and do business. On behalf of all Hoosiers, I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to Senator Kenley for his lifetime of service. I wish the very best to Senator Kenley, his wife Sally, their three children John, Bill, and Etsy as well as the rest of the Kenley family in his well-deserved retirement at home and on the ranch.

HONORING ANDREW ''ANDY'' RIENDEAU GOODWIN

HON. C. A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to honor the life and legacy of Andrew ''Andy'' Riendeau Goodwin, a Maryland National Guardsman and member of the Abingdon Fire Company.

A native of Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, and a resident of Abingdon, Maryland, he was the son of Timothy Riendeau and Elizabeth Goodwin.

Andy attended Harford Community College where he earned an Associate of Arts Degree after graduating from Aberdeen High School as the Captain of his soccer, lacrosse and wrestling teams.

Andy was a member and Sergeant of the Abingdon Fire Company of Abingdon, Maryland.

A proud member of a military family, on October 2, 2015, Andy enlisted in the Maryland Army National Guard and was assigned to A Company, 1st Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment as a 15F, Aircraft Electrician, where he developed a passion for the helicopter unit and earned numerous commendations, including the National Defense Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Basic Aviation Badge.

Andy had a passion for the outdoors and enjoyed hiking, camping, fishing, and clay shooting. He was not only a cherished uncle, but a role model to his niece and nephews. He is survived by his brother, sister, nephews, niece, and grandparents.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join with me today to acknowledge the service and sacrifice of Andy Riendeau Goodwin and that of his family. It is with great sadness that I mourn his loss and commemorate Suicide Awareness Month. Today I humbly express my condolences to his family and wish them peace and comfort in the days ahead.

H.R. 3354, STATE ASSESSMENT GRANTS AMENDMENT

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my bipartisan amendment to H.R. 3354 to increase funding for State Assessment Grants.

I want to thank my colleague and friend, Representative COSTELLO for his continued leadership on this issue, and for his commitment to a successful implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

In the last Congress, we passed the Every Student Succeeds Act, a bipartisan bill, to leave behind No Child Left Behind. After 14 years, Democrats and Republicans in both Chambers came together on a compromise legislation to update federal K–12 education policy and reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

ESSA ensures equity protections for America's students. It supports our most vulnerable and underserved students and works to close the achievement gap. ESSA gives states and school districts flexibility to develop their own plans for holding schools accountable, measuring student success, and encouraging improvements. It also recognizes the important role of assessments in education. Assessments serve as a tool to monitor student progress and gauge how students are performing across each state. Assessments also inform teacher instruction by providing valuable information to support student learning. ESSA includes provisions from the SMART Act, a bipartisan bill I authored with Representative COSTELLO to help make assessments more effective.

Our amendment would provide full funding for ESSA's State Assessment Grants. State Assessment Grants provide critical resources to help states and school districts build high-quality assessment systems that support teachers and students. By fully funding State Assessment Grants, states and school districts can audit their assessment systems and reduce excessive, repetitive testing. This funding can also help states—like my home state of Oregon—develop new assessments to strengthen student learning. Oregon is preparing to pilot a K–3 formative assessment to improve student outcomes.

The good work being done in Oregon is an example of what is possible if states have the resources and flexibility they need to focus on student success. I thank my colleague Representative COSTELLO for his partnership, and I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

IN CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL BAKERY DAY

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on September 28, to celebrate the first ever National Bakery Day and to honor our independent bakeries.

Local and family-owned bakeries put bread on our tables and a touch of sweetness in our lives, all while reflecting the uniqueness of our neighborhoods. They're small businesses that invest in Main Street and provide good jobs and give back to our communities in many ways.

Grandma's Bakery, in White Bear Lake, Minnesota and others like it around the country succeed along with their communities. Located in historic downtown White Bear Lake, Grandma's owners John and Deb Lupo employ 100 hundred staffmembers making delicious breads, delectable pastries and other goodies. By investing in the bakery and the community, John and Deb have grown Grandma's Bakery into a beloved institution and a destination in White Bear Lake.

All across Saint Paul and the East Metropolitan area, independent bakeries are part of the lifeblood of their neighborhoods—like Dorothy Ann Bakery in Woodbury, the excellent Saint Paul bakeries A Piece of Cake, Wuollet's, PJ Murphy, Trung Nam, Morelos, Mojo Monkey Donuts, Pancho Villa, and so many others. Bakeries are special places that deliver wholesome goodness and a place for neighbors to gather.

National Bakery Day is a way to celebrate not only the important role that bakeries play in our lives, but also the creativity and talent required of bakers to make the tasty baked goods that are so hard for us to turn down. Bakeries help us preserve and enjoy the individual character of the community and the traditions passed down from generation to generation.

Bakeries are with us not only during meals, but also during important and joyous moments in our lives such as weddings, birthdays and graduations. In recognition of National Bakery Day, I thank independent, local bakers around the country for the important place that they hold in our communities.

DOWN RIVER EQUIPMENT

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Down River Equipment for receiving the City of Wheat Ridge's Special Recognition Award—A ''Colorado Company to Watch'' Award. The Special Recognition Award recognizes businesses or individuals showing strong community ties and a positive reflection of the City of Wheat Ridge's values.

Down River Equipment was named a Colorado Company to Watch by the Colorado Office on Economic Development and Trade as a ''second stage'' company for their performance in the marketplace, innovative products, unique processes and philanthropic actions. ''Second stage'' companies are those who have moved past the startup stage and into a period of growth. Down River Equipment has been manufacturing and supplying river equipment in Colorado since 1985. The company is owned by boaters and employs an experienced team to assist with all the customer's river needs. The company specializes in the custom fabrication, distribution and retail of equipment of all types of river adventures.

I applaud Down River Equipment for being the recipient of this well-deserved honor by the City of Wheat Ridge, and I congratulate them on their success.

HONORING MARY KELLEY

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Mary Kelley of the District of Columbia on her retirement on September 29, 2017, after more than 34 years of service to the U.S. House of Representatives.

During Mary Kelley's tenure, she has worked for both the Office of the Clerk and the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). She is retiring as the Resource Manager for the Office of Acquisitions Management within the CAO.

Mary Kelley began her career in December 1983 as a Clerk Typist for the Office of the Clerk. During her time with the Clerk, she

worked for various offices, including Office Equipment Services and Office Systems Management. She also held various positions within these offices, including Equipment Accounts Clerk, Senior Accounts Payable Specialist and Manager.

In 1995, Mary Kelley began working for the CAO. She has worked for various offices within CAO, including House Support Services, the Office Supply and Gift Shop and Acquisitions Management. As the Resource Manager for the Office of Acquisitions Management, she was responsible for the development, analysis and execution of personnel and operational budgets and oversight of payment process activities, among other assigned duties. She planned and provided assistance to the management team in preparation of the annual budget.

Upon her retirement, Mary Kelley plans to do more traveling. In addition, she hopes to become a volunteer with the Washington Nationals, her favorite baseball team. I am pleased and proud that Mary Kelley is a D.C. resident.

Therefore, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Mary Kelley for her many years of dedicated service and outstanding contributions to the U.S. House of Representatives. We wish her many wonderful years in fulfilling her retirement dreams.

HONORING RETIRED ARMY LIEUTENANT COLONEL HAROLD T. RIGGINS, III

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, today we honor retired Army Lieutenant Colonel Harold T. Riggins, III, decorated combat soldier, community trailblazer, and passionate advocate for veterans transitioning from military to civilian life.

During 27 years of active military duty—first as an enlisted Sergeant, then as an officer—LTC (R) Riggins deployed with the 101st Airborne Division for two tours in Iraq, earning distinction as a proven combat leader. For his outstanding service, he was awarded the Legion of Merit, two Bronze Stars, coveted Ranger Tab, and multiple medals and badges.

While working post-retirement as program director for the Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP), he personally walked 38,000 Fort Campbell soldiers, hand-in-hand, through one of the toughest processes they experience at the end of their careers. Working with multiple city, county and state governments, and thousands of companies in a one-stop facility, he delivered a ''smooth takeoff'' for each of the 400 soldiers transitioning monthly from the Army, helping them successfully move into the National Guard and Reserves, higher education, civilian or self-employment worldwide, while learning to plan financially and utilize federal and state benefits. His servant attitude, superior management, and infinite compassion make him an inspirational model for military personnel nearing end of service.

Leadership is not as it appears, but as it performs. We now celebrate LTC (R) Riggins, who for seven dynamic years ensured the 1 percent of Americans who sacrificed to serve our nation thrive in the communities they love.

HONORING MAYSVILLE'S 50TH AUTUMN LEAF FESTIVAL

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the city of Maysville as its residents prepare for their 50th Autumn Leaf Festival.

Each year, this event brings friendly faces together to celebrate the dawn of a new season. Friends and neighbors participate in games, savor Autumn-themed treats, and cheer as they watch a parade pass through their community's streets.

The people of Maysville invest their time and energy in this festival because, for them, this celebration is a way to serve their neighbors and put a smile on their faces.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot imagine northeast Georgia without the city of Maysville, whose people help make our region the welcoming place that we know and love.

This fall, the leaves will take on new colors and the air will become cooler, but the people of Maysville will remain unchanged—their warmth and compassion renewed with every season, as we see through their 50th Autumn Leaf Festival.

JOSEPH F. CHEFF

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Joseph Cheff, who has celebrated his retirement from Passaic County Education Associations this past Friday.

Expressing how much Mr. Cheff meant to Passaic County is a delightful task. As a fellow official in the education system, as an admirer, and as a Patersonian, it gives me great pleasure to add my personal appreciation and commendation.

Mr. Cheff served in the school district at the peak of his memorable career. In 1982, he was a mathematics instructor for the Paterson Public School borough. Joseph Cheff's mission statement was to prepare each student for success in the collegiate institution of their choice and in their careers. His role in education and leadership leaves a positive mark on New Jersey's youth.

Throughout the course of his life he has been involved in numerous organizations such as Paterson Education Association, where he resides as delegate assemblyman. One of his most prominent affiliations was as president of The Passaic County Education Association, where he believed that every student should have an extraordinary educational experience.

As president of Passaic County Education Association, his mission was to extend an opportunity for representation of various education groups to confer about problems affecting public education in Passaic County. Ultimately his desire was to facilitate the dissemination of information from national, state, county, and local educational associations.

Joseph Cheff continued to strive for the efforts of the teacher's union rights, tenure reform, and teacher evaluations on NJSBA (New Jersey School Boards Association). The services provided by the NJSBA allowed teachers and members of the New Jersey schools to carry out their daily responsibilities, tackle difficult situations, and realize the rewards of successful boardsmanship. By standing up for teacher's rights, Cheff knew that teachers with a less strenuous work life would not only become more relaxed in their workplace, but also outperform expectations and truly interact with their students, so as to contribute to the reformation of a poorly established educational program, and create informative methods of educating students for their futures.

It is an honor to commemorate the outstanding career of Mr. Joseph Cheff. Your hard work and tireless advocacy for both students and teachers, has impacted the community of Passaic for years to come. You are a wonderful person with a caring heart and your work will live on.

The job of a United States Congressman involves much that is rewarding, yet nothing compares to recognizing and commemorating over 30 years of the contributions and services you have contributed to the residents of Passaic County from Mr. Joseph Cheff.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues in extending our gratitude towards a humanitarian who has planted the seed for aspiring students. Let us celebrate over 30 years of his dedicated service to not only the Paterson Public School System, but also for his tireless, hard work and amicable efforts as President of the Passaic County Education Association, Mr. Joseph Cheff.

FOUR SEASONS FARMERS AND ARTISANS MARKET

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Four Seasons Farmers and Artisans Market for receiving the City of Wheat Ridge's Cultural Commission Award for 2017. The Cultural Commission Award recognizes businesses or organizations that actively contribute to the enrichment of the culture of the City of Wheat Ridge.

This award recognizes the business that has made an impact by encouraging culture and arts, promoting awareness of the city's cultural activities, diversity and heritage and supports opportunities in art education for all ages incorporating art into the architecture and design of their building.

I applaud the Four Seasons Farmers Market of Wheat Ridge for being the recipient of this well-deserved honor by the City of Wheat Ridge, and I congratulate them on their success.

HONORING MR. DON STRAIT

HON. ELIZABETH H. ESTY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Don Strait, a champion for Connecticut's environment, who recently retired after 25 years as the President of Connecticut Fund for the Environment. As President, Don has played a crucial role in numerous achievements in environmental protection and conservation in our state, and his work will benefit generations to come.

Since 1992, Don has been Executive Director and President of Connecticut Fund for the Environment, which later merged with Save the Sound. His tireless work in our state with local, state, and federal leaders has led to substantial victories for protection and conservation of our air, land, and water. The organization helped protect thousands of acres of land in western Connecticut vital to recreation and wildlife, and has ensured enactment of landmark climate policies, clean car laws, and environmental regulations vital for our public health.

Don facilitated the organization's merger with Save the Sound in 2004 and brought his track record of success to the group's expanded focus on both Connecticut's and the Long Island Sound's environmental quality. Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound has been instrumental in reforming sewage management around the Sound, water quality monitoring, and the successful fight against the planned Broadwater gas plant.

What's more, Don has generously shared his time and expertise to support the crucial work of other leading groups in our state. He cofounded the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters to mobilize environmentally conscious citizens and has served on boards of Restore America's Estuaries and the State Environmental Leadership Program.

Mr. Speaker, Don Strait has been a dedicated and visionary leader for Connecticut. Present and future generations in our state owe him a great deal for protecting our world, and I am lucky to call him a friend. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

RECOGNIZING MR. ROBERT NEWLEN

HON. MAC THORNBERRY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize and thank Mr. Robert Newlen, Deputy Librarian of Congress, for more than 40 years of dedicated service to the Library of Congress. Prior to his current position, Mr. Newlen served in a wide variety of leadership roles within the Congressional Research Service and the Law Library, as well as Chief of Staff.

Throughout his distinguished career, Mr. Newlen received various awards and recognitions. I know, however, what he has valued the most is the opportunity to serve and to promote the value of knowledge with Members of Congress, staff, and countless others.

The Library of Congress is a great gift to this country and to all who benefit from this treasury of learning. Robert has devoted his career to building up this institution in every way possible. And, at a time when truth sometimes seems elusive, he and his colleagues strive to make accurate information the foundation of what we do.

Mr. Newlen will leave this week to pursue other opportunities, but I have no doubt that his spirit of service will go with him. On behalf of all of us who have benefitted directly or indirectly from his work, I offer my sincere gratitude.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF AVENUES

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Avenues' 65th anniversary, which will be celebrated on September 28, 2017. For over six decades, Avenues has served disabled Pennsylvanians throughout Schuylkill, Carbon, Northumberland, Lebanon and Luzerne Counties.

Avenues was originally founded as United Cerebral Palsy of Schuylkill County in 1952 by a group of sixty parents whose children had special needs. The group's prime focus was addressing the lack of local medical care and educational services for their children. On September 12, 1952, the founders filed an application for a charter to become a member of United Cerebral Palsy. The organization was incorporated in November that year as United Cerebral Palsy of Schuylkill County.

Today, Avenues is responsible for planning, promoting and assisting the establishment, maintenance and operation of training centers or clinics for the education, social and physical betterment of those with Cerebral Palsy and similar disorders. Its aid has supported a wide array of research in the prevention and treatment of developmental disabilities and handicaps. It sponsors various educational campaigns for the general public to raise awareness about the requirements of and problems facing special-needs clinics. Avenues is a great wealth of information to its clients and their parents, families and friends.

It is an honor to recognize Avenues as it celebrates its 65th anniversary. I am grateful for the assistance it provides to people across its service area which includes Counties in my congressional district. May its staff and volunteers be able to continue their work helping Pennsylvanians with disabilities for many, many years to come.

CONGRATULATIONS TO KRYSTAL CAYLOR

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Krystal Caylor on her 2017 gold medal in the 200-yard individual medley race.

Competing in the Missouri State High School State Activities Association swimming championships, Ms. Caylor proudly represented the 7th district's Kickapoo High School located in Springfield, Missouri. Ms. Caylor went on to take the gold and win the 200-yard individual medley with a time of 2:03.48.

Ms. Caylor has now finished her Kickapoo swimming career and intends to continue her swimming career at the collegiate level at the University of Indianapolis.

I am honored to recognize Ms. Caylor for her outstanding achievement and wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors. On behalf of Missouri's 7th Congressional District, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ms. Caylor on her outstanding performance.

EMILY GREEN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Emily Green for receiving the City of Wheat Ridge's Rising Star Award. This award recognizes businesses or individuals improving the organization and the community, and are a positive reflection of the City of Wheat Ridge's values.

The Rising Star Award is given each year to a member who has made a difference in the Wheat Ridge Business Association. Emily made a difference immediately upon her entrance to the Association. She joined various committees, volunteered, became a board member and subsequently became a board officer. Emily schedules and plans the monthly "Biz Mix" networking event; finding a location, obtaining food and drink sponsors and advertising the events. Emily also owns a local business, Cibo Meals. This meal-delivery service brings fresh, creative, and environmentally-responsible vegetarian meals around Northwest Denver using reusable Mason jars.

I applaud Emily Green for being the recipient of this well-deserved honor by the City of Wheat Ridge, and I congratulate her on her success.

H.R. 3354, TITLE VIII NURSING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my amendment to highlight the importance of each of the individual Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs, including Advanced Education Nursing; Nursing Workforce Diversity; Nurse Education, Practice, and Retention; and the Nurse Faculty Loan Program. Title VIII programs are a critical lifeline for America's nursing workforce and the patients they serve.

Demand for healthcare services provided by nurses continues to grow, so we should be expanding not cutting programs that maintain a

highly-educated nursing workforce. Just last year, Title VIII supported more than 61,000 students in almost every state.

Additionally, Title VIII programs create a culturally diverse workforce to make sure that our increasingly diverse patient population is cared for by culturally aware providers. Title VIII programs also prepare nurses to serve the most vulnerable communities and regions, such as rural areas that are in desperate need of providers.

I was disappointed to see that this bill condensed funding for the Title VIII programs into a single-line item. Each of the programs is designed to target specific needs within the nursing workforce and patient population, and that is why it's imperative that we preserve funding for each individual program.

I will continue to advocate for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development and hope my colleagues will join me in supporting continued funding for the individual programs.

TAIWAN'S NATIONAL DAY

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to remind my colleagues that October 10th is Taiwan's National Day—also known as Double Ten Day. As this day approaches, I would like to congratulate President Tsai Ing-wen and the people of Taiwan, both on this occasion and on building one of the world's great democracies.

Over the past 30 years, Taiwan has come to embody the same principles we hold dear: constitutional government, democracy, and free enterprise. With its successful, sixth-direct presidential election last year, Taiwan continues to serve as a proud example of democratic success in the Asia-Pacific region. But rather than focusing solely within its own borders, Taiwan has been able to use its immense capabilities to become a leader both in the export of culture humanitarian work, and technical expertise the world over.

Given Taiwan's vibrant democracy, I urge my colleagues and the House as a body to advocate for Taiwan's return to both the World Health Assembly and the International Civil Aviation Organization, as well as its meaningful participation in other international organizations where it cannot be a member. Arguments against Taiwan's inclusion in these bodies belie the immense benefit that Taiwan can provide; Taiwan's omission is a detriment to both to the mission of these organizations and the wider world.

The bond between the United States and Taiwan, cemented by the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances, remains strong. I reaffirm it today, and again congratulate the people of Taiwan on this important occasion.

THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF ST. ELIZABETH

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention the extraordinary efforts and dedication of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, who were honored on Saturday, September 23, 2017 during St. Joseph's Healthcare System's Charity Ball on Ellis Island, where they celebrated 150 years of service to the community.

The Sisters of Charity in the United States were founded by Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, in the spirit of Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint Louise de Louise de Marillac in Emmitsburg, Maryland, in 1809 by Mother Mary Xavier Mehegan. After the establishment of the Convent Station in 1860, Mother Mehegan swiftly established educational programs amongst other community outreach programs and institutions to address and assist with services to the public. In 1886, the Sisters established St. Joseph's Hospital in Paterson, NJ.

During the 1860's, the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth had difficulty gathering funds for the fledgling hospital. The Sisters petitioned the city for its support and reached out within the community, such as, local factories, workers, owners, and some of the wealthier residents in the community for financial assistance. They farmed their land to feed the patients and would sell the remainder in order to support their hospital. They depended on the generosity and kindness of the community to help the infirmed citizens find comfort and care. Through all of this dedicated hard work, support and effort, the Sisters slowly expanded the hospital and began to build the large healthcare system that we know today.

Throughout the majority of St. Joseph's history, charismatic and determined women guided the hospital, turning challenges into opportunities. In 1875, Sister Mary Clare Reilly became the first of several influential leaders who would shape the essence of St. Joseph's.

A champion for the hospital for more than four decades, ''Mother Clare'' as she was called, was renowned for her strength of judgement, business sense, and ability to be flexible and progressive.

In more recent times, we appreciate the significant contributions that Sister Jane Frances Brady made to the success of St. Joseph's. Sister Jane remains an icon in The State of New Jersey as a passionate advocate for the needs of the sick and the poor. Sr. Jacqueline Burns, SC, also a dynamic leader and immediate past Chairperson of the Boards of Trustees of SJHS, led the integration of the Healthcare System and revitalization of our organization.

The Sisters provide an inspirational leadership presence throughout St. Josephs Healthcare System, with 30 sisters ministering within SJHS. Today, the sisters sponsor one college, two academies, three hospitals and one women's center. The Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth remain focused on the heart of their calling: service and advocacy through their work including research and dialogue on major issues of social and global significance.

The job of a United States Congressman involves much that is rewarding, yet nothing compares to recognizing and commemorating individuals who have dedicated their lives to serving the people. The Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth's commitment to public service is truly commendable.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues to celebrate the long record of service to their community by the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF PATRICK AWOSOGBA AND SUPPORT OF CHILDREN'S CARDIOMYOPATHY AWARENESS MONTH

HON. BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Patrick Awosogba and in support of Children's Cardiomyopathy Awareness Month.

Patrick Awosogba was an avid baseball player and a graduate of East Brunswick High School. In 2015, Patrick tragically passed away while playing pick-up basketball during his freshman year at Rutgers University from an undiagnosed case of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is a chronic and degenerative heart disease that thickens the heart muscle, causing an irregular heartbeat and which can tragically lead to death. Patrick was a beloved son and brother and cherished member of his community.

September is Children's Cardiomyopathy Awareness Month. Cardiomyopathy is one of the leading causes of sudden death in young people, and the primary cause of heart transplants in children over the age of one. Knowing your family's history and heart health, and discussing it with your doctor, can help determine whether your child is at risk. The mortality rate for pediatric cardiomyopathy exceeds that of all childhood cancers combined, and yet there is a shocking lack of both awareness and research on this terrible disease.

Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation, based in my home state of New Jersey, is a leading nonprofit which provides resources and support to families struggling to care for their children suffering from this condition. They work to raise awareness for the potentially fatal disease. Along with their grassroots network of families, they also advocate for research and policies that help those suffering from pediatric cardiomyopathy.

I urge my colleagues to join me in remembering the life of Patrick Awosogba and in raising awareness for pediatric cardiomyopathy.

SEYFER AUTOMOTIVE

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Seyfer Automotive for receiving the City of Wheat Ridge's Business of the Year Award for 2017.

The Business of the Year Award recognizes local businesses who demonstrate a commitment to their community, strong management practices and are a positive reflection of the City of Wheat Ridge's values.

As noted in their mission and vision statement, ''For over 50 years, Seyfer Automotive has provided expert, quality auto repair. Wheat Ridge drivers have come to know them for their reputation of fixing problems that no other shop can fix. Their mission is to provide their customer and their vehicle with the quality service they expect and deserve. The

Wheat Ridge auto repair team takes pride in their ability to outperform local dealerships.''

I applaud Seyfer Automotive for being the recipient of this well-deserved honor by the City of Wheat Ridge, and I congratulate them on their success.

IN RECOGNITION OF D/F/LT. MARY KAPP FOR HER DISTINGUISHED CAREER IN THE MICHIGAN STATE POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Detective 1st Lieutenant Mary Kapp for over 33 years of distinguished service to the Michigan State Police Department. She has worked tirelessly to help keep Michigan communities safe through her career as a law enforcement officer.

Lieutenant Kapp has served in the Michigan State Police Department since the 1980s. Prior to becoming a trooper, she was an athletic trainer in Lansing; she chose to pursue her dream career as a police trooper after the Michigan State Police Department dropped its height requirement. She has served in various capacities at the Michigan State Police Department, including as commander of the Monroe Post, as administrative leader of the Monroe Area Narcotics Team and Investigative Services, as a law enforcement officer overseeing Detroit casinos and as leader of the Downriver Area Narcotics Organization. The initiatives and programs implemented by Lieutenant Kapp has helped to make Michigan communities safer to live and work in.

Throughout her tenure, Kapp has been a tireless advocate for drug reform and community outreach, especially to high school students. She was named the 2016 Prevention Person of the Year by the Michigan Prevention Association, in honor of her work collaborating with local organizations and coalitions. Successful programs ran by Kapp include the Downriver Anti-Trafficking Coalition, Stop Underage Drinking and Drugs Coalition, and regular visits to local high school classrooms. Kapp is committed to educating community members about substance abuse and aided the department in collecting over 990 pounds of prescription drugs in 2016. She has performed the critical work of ensuring that Michigan residents remain safe at great personal risk. She is loved in our community, and her hard work and expertise will be missed.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Detective 1st Lieutenant Mary Kapp for her service to the state of Michigan. She has helped make the community safer through her work and outreach.

HONORING THE 2017 PORTUGUESE AMERICAN LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with my colleagues, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. CICILLINE, and Mr. ZELDIN, Co-Chairs of the Congressional Portuguese Caucus, to recognize the recipients of the 21st Annual Portuguese-American Leadership Awards as bestowed by the Portuguese American Leadership Council of the United States (PALCUS). These recipients are unique individuals who have accomplished much throughout their careers and continue to uphold their cultural traditions and lead the next generation.

Receiving the Leadership in the Arts Award, Ms. Ana Ventura Miranda founded the Arte Institute on April 11, 2001, an organization dedicated to promoting Portuguese culture, highlighting multiple aspects of Portuguese art including literature, music, dance, and film. This institute serves as a platform for Portuguese artists to connect and showcase their work in New York. In 2011, Ms. Ventura Miranda organized the first New York Portuguese Short Film Festival showing a total of twenty films, providing Portuguese film directors an opportunity to share their work.

Receiving the Leadership in Scholarship Award, Dr. Francisco Cota Fagundes of the University of Massachusetts Amherst is in his thirty-ninth year of teaching. Dr. Fagundes's studies are focused on contemporary Portuguese literature, specifically of the Portuguese North American diaspora. At the University of Massachusetts Amherst, he is a Professor of Spanish and Portuguese Studies. Dr. Fagundes has also written over thirty books and numerous articles on a wide array of topics.

Receiving the Leadership in Entrepreneurship Award, Ms. Maria Lawton ''the Azorean Green Bean'' is known for her authentic, Azorean cooking. With her popular cookbook Azorean Cooking: From My Family's Table to Yours, Ms. Lawton continues her quest to recreate her family recipes for everyone to enjoy.

Receiving the Leadership in Education Award, Mr. Alan Tenreiro is the President of Mt. Saint Charles Academy, a Catholic Junior and Senior High School located in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. Over the years, Mr. Tenreiro has been recognized for his leadership work as a principal. During his tenure at Cumberland High School, the school saw a significant rise in test scores, major drop in disciplinary issues, and an increase in the amount of advanced placement classes offered.

Receiving the Leadership in Community Service Award, Ms. Rosa Leal is the Founder & President of the Daughters of Portugal. Ms. Leal is the founder and main organizer in the Mineola Portugal Day Parade. This year she was honored as the Grand Marshal of the event. In addition, Ms. Leal also serves as the Vice President of the New York Portuguese-American Leadership Conference.

Receiving the Young Portuguese-American ''Promessa'' Award, Mr. Adam Costa is also a 2017 United Kingdom Fulbright Scholar recipient. As a graduate of Bridgewater State University in 2017, Mr. Costa will be using his Fulbright Scholarship to begin a master's program in politics abroad in England at the University of Manchester. He will continue his comparative research which he started at Bridgewater State on youth violence reduction programs.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that we ask our colleagues to join us in recognizing and honoring the 21st Annual Portuguese-American Leadership Award recipients. These individuals are exemplary leaders who continue to inspire the next generation of Portuguese American Leaders.

HONORING CLARIBEL LOUISE LEMM HILL AND HAROLD MILLARD ''BUD'' HILL

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Clair and Harold Hill upon the occasion of their one-hundredth birthdays. Clair was born on August 14, 1917 and Harold was born September 16, 1917.

Clair and Harold were born and raised in Chico, California where they graduated from Chico High School. They were married on September 4, 1938. Harold enlisted in the United States Air Force during World War II, serving from December 1943 to January 1946. He attended radar school, and they moved to Boca Raton, Florida where he worked as a radar instructor. In 1956, Clair and Harold moved to Santa Rosa, California, where they have lived ever since.

Harold started a successful insurance business and Clair became an artist. She sold her beautiful landscape paintings all around Sonoma County. She also started a popular costume rental business, designing and sewing the costumes herself. They have three daughters, Patricia, Janet and Barbara, nine grandchildren and seventeen great-grandchildren. Their home is a gathering place for family, friends and neighbors who enjoy their warm hospitality.

Clair and Harold have been valuable members of our community and have served as strong mentors to our young people. Clair volunteered with the P.T.A., Campfire Girls and the 4–H Club. Harold was a member of the Lions Club and Elks Club. For many years, he volunteered in an elementary school classroom and as an after school mentor for children who needed extra support.

Clair and Harold have enjoyed watching their family expand and have continued to develop their interests and skills. Clair was an avid flower gardener and was active in the Redwood Garden Club. She is a talented cook and baker. Harold enjoys growing vegetables, and reading and writing poetry. He is a lifelong golfer, hitting a hole-in-one at the age of 98.

Mr. Speaker, Clair and Harold Hill have led long, wonderful lives. Their service during World War II, entrepreneurial spirit and lifelong community service epitomize what Tom Brokaw has called the Greatest Generation. It is therefore fitting and proper that we honor them on their one hundredth birthdays this year.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KATHERINE M. CLARK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I was regrettably detained and missed Roll

Call vote number 538. Had I been present, I would have voted no.

MIKE STITES

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Mike Stites for receiving the City of Wheat Ridge's City Council Partnership Award for 2017. Selected by the Wheat Ridge City Council, the Council Partnership Award recognizes businesses or individuals showing strong community ties and a positive reflection of the City of Wheat Ridge's values.

The Council unanimously selected Mr. Stites for his lifelong commitment to Wheat Ridge. Mr. Stites recently closed his successful B&F Tire Company on 38th Avenue where he and his father ran the shop until Mr. Stites retired in early 2017.

I applaud Mike Stites for being the recipient of this well-deserved honor by the City of Wheat Ridge, and I congratulate him on his success.

THE DREAM ACT

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to include in the RECORD letters of support for the DREAM Act from several California colleges and universities, and the County of Los Angeles:

SEPTEMBER 8, 2017.

Re Immigration Reform for Undocumented Students.

Hon. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO,
Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE NAPOLITANO: On Tuesday, U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that the administration planned to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. This program provides immigrant students brought to the United States as minors the opportunity to enroll in a college or university and seek authorization to work without fear of deportation. To date, nearly 800,000 students have applied for DACA status, with nearly one-third—223,000—calling California home. These students are currently pursuing academic and vocational pathways that position them for future success; the termination of the DACA program threatens these students, their families, our institutions, and our communities. Accordingly, we implore Congress to act swiftly to create a permanent solution for these students.

At minimum, we urge the passage of H.R. 496, the ''Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy'' or BRIDGE Act, sponsored by Reps. Coffman (R–CO) and Gutiérrez (D–IL). This bipartisan bill would codify the DACA program, allowing students registered under DACA to continue their studies and/or maintain the ability to work with a new, protected status for a period of up to three years. It would also safeguard the privacy of their personal information except in cases of national security or criminal investigation.

More so, we encourage you to adopt a more comprehensive measure, such as H.R. 3440, the DREAM Act of 2017, sponsored by Reps. Ros-Lehtinen (R–FL) and Roybal-Allard (D–CA). This bipartisan bill would create a pathway to permanent legal status for students and military service personnel who call the United States home. In doing so, this more comprehensive measure would communicate that students' and veterans' efforts to work hard, protect our nation, graduate from college, and find meaningful and gainful employment, would give them a permanent opportunity to provide financially for their families, to engage in community and civic life, and, ultimately, to achieve the American dream.

Though a politically complex issue, we entreat you to act now. An Economist/YouGov poll taken September 3–5, 2017, reveals widespread bipartisan support for the DACA program. Nearly 60% of all registered voters supported or strongly supported DACA, including 53% among Republicans and 70% among Democrats. In addition, more than 55% of voters under age 29 and older than age 65 support this program. It enjoyed favor across race, ethnicity, and income levels. In addition, education leaders of private and public institutions across the state have pledged near-universal support for students in the DACA program, and faith communities are overwhelmingly supportive of immigration reform measures that offer protection to DACA/DREAMer students.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS,
Los Angeles, CA, September 15, 2017.

Hon. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE NAPOLITANO: We are writing to respectfully urge you to support a permanent legislative solution for all the recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and their families.

The pending termination of the DACA program puts at stake the future of nearly 800,000 young people nationwide. California is home to one in four DACA recipients, of which half reside in Southern California. In addition to the personal impact to these young individuals and their families, DACA's termination would hurt the nation's economic viability. Ending DACA and admonishing recipients from the labor force could cost the United States $460.3 billion in GDP and decrease Social Security and Medicare contributions by $24.6 billion over the next decade.

Action by Congress in the next six months is critical to the future of DACA recipients and our nation. Our Board supports the DREAM Act of 2017, bipartisan legislation that would allow DACA recipients to earn lawful permanent residence and provides them a pathway to American citizenship. The DREAM Act exemplifies the type of strong legislative solution that would allow these young immigrants to continue contributing to our communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS,
Chairman of the Board, Supervisor, Second District.

HILDA L. SOLIS,
Supervisor, First District.

SHEILA KUEHL,
Supervisor, Third District.

JANICE HAHN,
Supervisor, Fourth District.

KATHRYN BARGER,
Supervisor, Fifth District.

IN MEMORY OF MR. ALTO ''BUD'' ADAMS, JR.

HON. THOMAS J. ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Alto ''Bud'' Adams, Jr. of Fort Pierce, Florida, who passed away on September 22nd at the age of 91 in his home on Adam's Ranch in Fort Pierce.

Bud Adams, a larger than life cowboy known for his integrity and firm handshake, was a fixture in Florida's agricultural community. Bud was the patriarch of the Adams Ranch, a four generation family operation that spans 80 years and spreads across more than 50,000 acres in four counties. He began managing the ranch with his father in 1947 after serving in the Navy during World War II. A legend among Florida cattlemen, Bud was responsible for the development of the Braford breed of beef cattle, a breed capable of withstanding Florida's hot and rainy summers. He served as the President of the Florida Cattlemen's Association, and is also a member of Florida's Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Bud was also an ardent conservationist and environmentalist who not only believed, but proved, that the land could be worked in a way that preserved Florida's natural beauty. He was an avid wildlife and nature photographer who could capture the natural splendor of God's creation through the lens of his camera. His photographs of Florida's landscape and wildlife have been featured in numerous books and magazines. For his conservation efforts, Bud was recognized by both the National Cattlemen's Association and the Florida Cattlemen's Association for environmental stewardship, and he was named landowner of the year by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Bud's land that he bought, developed, managed, and cared for with his family, will continue to stand as a lasting testament to his dedication to preserving Florida's beauty.

Bud is survived by his loving wife of 67 years, Dorothy ''Dot'' Adams, his three sons Alto, Michael, and Robert, his fourteen grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, Florida has truly lost an icon. My thoughts and prayers are with Bud's family and loved ones as they mourn his passing. Bud Adams will be greatly missed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RAUL RUIZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, there is no question that we should deport known criminal gang members who are undocumented. That's why I voted for H.R. 3697, the Criminal Alien Gang Member Removal Act. However, I have real concerns about the overly vague language of

this bill and believe there is much room to improve. We need to make sure that families, humanitarian aid workers, and religious institutions that help rehabilitate gang members are not penalized. I am disappointed that the House leadership did not follow regular order or allow amendments to the bill, so we could have addressed these concerns. I urge the Senate to work together to make improvements to the overly broad language in the bill.

TIM ROGERS

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Tim Rogers for receiving the City of Wheat Ridge's Mayor's Partnership Award for 2017. Selected by the Mayor of Wheat Ridge, Joyce Jay, the Mayor's Partnership Award recognizes businesses or individuals that show strong community ties and a positive reflection of the City of Wheat Ridge's values.

The Mayor selected Mr. Rogers for his continued support of the City of Wheat Ridge. Besides his day job as a commercial real estate broker for Genessee Commercial Group, Rogers is the Chair of ''Renewal Wheat Ridge,'' the City's Urban Renewal Authority. Under his guidance, the City has seen growth and development of new housing and retail opportunities, among other developments and projects within the city.

I applaud Tim Rogers for being the recipient of this well-deserved honor by the City of Wheat Ridge, and I congratulate him on his success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, September 26, 2017, I requested and received a leave of absence for the rest of the week due to an illness in the family.

For the information of our colleagues and my constituents, below is how I would have voted on the following vote I missed during this time period.

On Roll Call 532, on ordering the previous question (providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2824 and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2792) Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons Act), I would have voted no;

On Roll Call 533, on agreeing to the Resolution to Increasing Opportunity through Evidence-Based Home Visiting Act and providing for consideration of the Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons Act, I would have voted no;

On Roll Call 534, on approving the Journal, I would have voted no;

On Roll Call 535, on agreeing to the Pascrell Amendment, I would have voted aye;

On Roll Call 536, on motion to recommit with instructions (Increasing Opportunity and Success for Children and Parents through Evidence-Based Home Visiting Act), I would have voted aye;

On Roll Call 537, on passage of Increasing Opportunity and Success for Children and Parents through Evidence-Based Home Visiting Act, I would have voted no;

On Roll Call 538, on ordering the previous question, Providing for consideration of H.R. 3823, Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017; and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules, I would have voted no;

On Roll Call 539, on agreeing to the Resolution, I would have voted no;

On Roll Call 540, Recognizing that for 50 years the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has worked toward stability, prosperity, and peace in Southeast Asia, I would have voted aye;

On Roll Call 541, Democratic Motion to Recommit to H.R. 3823, I would have voted aye;

On Roll Call 542, on passage of H.R. 3823, Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017, I would have voted no; and

On Roll Call 543, Passage of H.R. 2792, Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons Act of 2017, I would have voted no.

CELEBRATING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OAK LAWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Oak Lawn Chamber of Commerce as it celebrates 70 years of service to the community.

Founded in 1947, the Oak Lawn Chamber started as a small group of local business owners. Since then, it has grown to more than 350 members who work tirelessly to promote the local business community in Oak Lawn, Illinois. The Chamber is successful because leaders like current Executive Director Julie Miller and President Adam Woodworth strive to fulfill the mission of advancing the business community ''with constant integrity, fairness, and cooperation to promote and improve the economic atmosphere, business climate, and image of Oak Lawn.''

The Chamber takes great pride in being an active member of the community and its members show their commitment to the organization and its role in the area at a variety of programs throughout the year. Events such as health fairs, small business clinics, and business showcases facilitate invaluable relationships between businesses and their local clientele.

Additionally, the Oak Lawn Chamber of Commerce offers valuable marketing and communications resources to help promote and inform small businesses. Specifically, their legislative committee aims to keep members informed about proposals from all levels of government that could impact them.

Through its dedication to the interests of local business owners, the Oak Lawn Chamber of Commerce has contributed immensely to the hospitable business climate of Oak Lawn and the surrounding area. I sincerely offer the Chamber' s many dedicated members my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of its 70th anniversary.

Among those most dedicated to advancing the mission of the Oak Lawn Chamber of Commerce, is the following list of past presidents.

1947—James Sweeney, 1949—Charles McKay, 1950—Matt Smilde, 1951—Elmer Buell, 1953—Warren Schlieske, 1955—Roland Beckley, 1956—Milt Betterman, 1957—Al Schintz, 1958—Stephen Kizaric, 1959—William Cairnes, 1960—Stanley Dawson, 1961—Donald Talac, 1963—Erwin Fueren, 1964—Dr. J. Salus, 1965—Percy Cump, 1966—John Spicer, 1968—Lou Kole, 1969—Ron Frank, 1970—Matt Lamb, 1972—Vincent Barcelona.

1973—Le Roy Corradino, 1974—Frank Bablak, 1975—Merrill Stenbon, 1976—Davis Boyd, 1977—Milt Andersen, 1978—Betty Gallo, 1979—Lou Mirabelli, 1980—Barbara Kozlarek, 1981—Sal Crivellone, 1982—Vina O'Malley, 1983—Robert Gaul, 1984—Linda McFarland, 1985—James Buschbach, 1986—Marie Napolillo, 1987—Paul Paskvan, 1988—Tom Gavin III, 1989—Marianthe Karson, 1990—Robert Kuenster, 1991—George Freitag, 1992—Dorthea Grieco.

1993—Shirley Mis, 1994—Brian Anderson, 1995—Klem Brzuskiewicz, 1996—Joann Buschbach, 1997—James Brady, 1998—Laura Shallow, 1999—Chris Augle, 2000—Doris Marks, 2001—Chuck Dinolfo, 2002—Patricia Nienhaus, 2003—Dave Kobak, 2004—Anne Marie Casey, 2005—Jack Baker, 2006—Leo Gutchewsky, 2007—Kevin Mathers/Jackie Truty, 2008—Jackie Truty, 2009—Glen Kato, 2010—Rita Olsen, 2011—Christy Hernandez, 2012—Karen Boll, 2013—Jeff Reichl, 2014—Michelle Williams, 2015—Jennifer Villifan, 2016—Larry Lehman.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, on September 28, 2017, I missed four Roll Call votes because I was attending a funeral for my cousin in New Jersey. Had I been present, I would have voted:

YES on the Democratic Motion to Recommit on H.R. 3823, Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017 (Roll Call No. 541). This amendment includes the full, bipartisan National Disaster Tax Relief Act, which I introduced with my colleague Representative TOM REED from New York. The Reed-Pascrell bill would help victims of natural disasters recover faster with tax relief to alleviate cleanup and rebuilding expenses. The bipartisan bill would provide tax relief to communities across the country devastated in a presidentially-declared disaster in recent years. The amendment takes nothing away from the underlying bill, only making tax relief more robust for victims of recent hurricanes, and adding tax relief for victims of Sandy and other disasters.

NO on final passage of H.R. 3823, Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017 (Roll Call No. 542). I was pleased to support aid to those affected by Harvey and Irma and will continue to do so. We urgently need to deliver relief and assistance to those currently impacted by Hurricane Maria in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, where the

entire island has lost power and many are without water. But, I would have cast my vote in opposition to this legislation before us today, which does not even come close to providing the robust relief that Puerto Rico needs. The Congress and this Administration need to step up and help Puerto Rico recover. However, this bill includes extraneous provisions that provide limited tax relief to 2017 hurricane victims while omitting natural disaster tax relief for victims of disasters from 2012 through 2016. The bill before us today completely circumvented the committee process, despite the fact that Representative REED and I have had legislation on comprehensive disaster tax relief for years.

NO on final passage of H.R. 2792, the Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons Act of 2017 (Roll Call No. 543). This bill would harm vulnerable seniors and individuals with disabilities by cutting off their live-saving Supplemental Security Income benefits without due process, and in many cases for offenses with low monetary values, probation violations for misdemeanor offenses, and unpaid court fees or fines. I voted in opposition to this bill when it was considered by the Committee on Ways and Means on September 13, 2017, and I would have opposed it again today.

YES on the Journal Vote.

CONGRATULATIONS TO STRAFFORD HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the 2017 Strafford High School Girls Basketball Team on an undefeated season that was topped off with a state championship title.

The Strafford Indians maintained absolute perfection throughout the 2017 girls basketball season, failing to lose a single game and finishing with an outstanding 33–0 win-loss record.

Strafford emerged victorious in March 2017 with a Missouri Class 3 girls basketball state championship. This is the Indian's second straight girls basketball state championship in a row after a title in 2016 as well.

I am honored to recognize the Strafford High School Girls Basketball Team on their magnificent season and dedication to hard work and excellence. On behalf of Missouri's 7th Congressional District, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating these impressive young women on their great season.

HONOR FLIGHT OF OREGON

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the twenty World War II veterans and one Korean War veteran from Oregon who are visiting their memorial on the National Mall on Saturday, September 30th, 2017 through Honor Flight of Oregon. Every time I have the chance to meet one of these heroes from the ''Greatest Generation,'' I am reminded of the poignant words of General Dwight D. Eisenhower. In a message to Allied troops just before D-Day, he said, ''The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you.''

He was right then, of course, Mr. Speaker. But over seventy years later, liberty-loving people everywhere continue to owe these heroes for their extraordinary service and their incredible stories of sacrifice and bravery on behalf of our country. That's why it is my privilege to enter their names into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD today.

The veterans on this Honor Flight from Oregon are as follows: William Cochran, Army; Warren Davis, Army; Richard Fultineer, Army; William Johnson, Army; John Ritz, Army; Jack Downs, Army Air Force; Lawrence Willis, Army Air Force; Charles Kriegh, Marine Corps; Hiram Underwood, Marine Corps; Harry Howard Jr., Merchant Marine; John Webber, Merchant Marine; Raymond Ayers, Navy; Ernest Gallo, Navy; Paul Gessford, Navy; Lawrence Horton, Navy; Stanley Luther, Navy; Lester Manosar, Navy; Harold Simpson Sr., Navy; Orville Stoltz, Navy; Gerhard Tank, Navy; and Paul Vincent, Navy.

These twenty-one heroes join over 150,000 veterans who have been honored through the Honor Flight Network of volunteers nationwide since 2005.

I would also like to recognize the fourteen guardians traveling on this trip who have also served our country: Leon Clay Jr., Air Force; Charles Wills, Air Force; Ronald Kohl, Army and Air Force; Lyle Gessford, Army; Steven Howard, Army; Terry Wynkoop, Army; Gordon Wood, Marine Corps; Laurie Dutton, Navy; Terry Haines, Navy; David Haines, Navy; Chester Johnson, Navy; Larry Kennedy, Navy; Richard Santillie, Navy; and Tanya Wilson, Navy.

I would also like to recognize Richard Wing Jr., who served our Veterans for 36 years as an RN at the VA Hospital, in Palo Alto, California.

And, of course, none of this would be possible without Gail Yakopatz, the longtime President of Honor Flight of Oregon. Gail has assisted hundreds of veterans, has been a tireless advocate for Oregon's veterans and is someone I am proud to call my friend!

Mr. Speaker, at the height of the Civil War in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln wrote, ''Honor to the Soldier, and Sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country's cause.'' Each of us in this Chamber and in this nation should be humbled by the courage of these brave veterans who put themselves in harm's way for our country and way of life. As a nation, we can never fully repay the debt of gratitude owed to them for their honor, commitment, and sacrifice in defense of the freedoms we have today.

My colleagues, please join me in thanking these veterans and the volunteers of Honor Flight of Oregon for their exemplary dedication and service to this great country.

TINAMARIE SEYFER

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Tinamarie Seyfer for receiving the City of Wheat Ridge's Member of the Year Award. This award recognizes businesses or individuals who have dedicated the past year for their contribution to the organization and the community, and are a positive reflection of the City of Wheat Ridge's values.

Tinamarie Seyfer spearheaded a new fundraising idea at the Wheat Ridge Holiday Lighting Ceremony—the tree auction. Tinamarie found groups and businesses to donate and decorate the trees for auction. She then worked to deliver the trees to the buyers' homes or offices. Tinamarie serves on the Wheat Ridge Business Association board and assisted with the 2017 Ridgefest Car Show along with her husband, Troy. Tinamarie and Troy also hosted one of the monthly ''Biz Mix'' networking events, as well as owning her own business, ''Five Rings Financial.''

I applaud Tinamarie Seyfer for being the recipient of this well-deserved honor by the City of Wheat Ridge, and I congratulate her on her success.

H.R. 3354

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 3354, the Make America Secure and Prosperous Appropriations Act. I am grateful to the Chairman and Ranking Member for including many of my policy priorities in the bill, but I cannot support the final measure because of the devastating cuts to education funding, environmental resources, and our nation's healthcare system.

In 2015, Congress passed the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act. It is our responsibility to provide the resources necessary for states and localities to fully serve students as authorized by ESSA. Unfortunately, the bill we are voting on undermines one of the great successes of the ESSA by significantly underfunding the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants. Congress intended these grants to go to school districts so they can provide locally-tailored programming and supportive services for students, including school-based mental health programs, drug prevention programs, expanded access to arts, music, and foreign language programs, and other programs that fit the needs of districts. I am grateful that my amendment to highlight the need for full funding of this program was included in the bill, but I am deeply disappointed that we have not committed to providing this critical resource to local communities.

Another central tenet of the ESSA was a commitment to reducing student testing, and making sure that states and school districts are able to audit their assessment systems and eliminate duplicative and ineffective tests.

The State Assessment Grants provide funding for these efforts, and I thank the Appropriations Committee for accepting my bipartisan amendment to fully fund these efforts.

The final bill includes my bipartisan amendment to increase funding for Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations Grants, which will provide tradeswomen in Oregon the support and assistance necessary to advance their careers and retain good-paying jobs. The bill also includes my amendment to fund Title VIII Nursing Workforce Programs through separate line-items, which will preserve funding for the individual programs, including Advanced Education Nursing; Nursing Workforce Diversity; Nurse Education, Practice, and Retention; and the Nurse Faculty Loan Program.

Additionally, my amendment to provide critical resources to combat coastal climate threats by highlighting the need for funding ocean acidification programs was adopted, as was my amendment to increase funding to mitigate harmful algal blooms. Ocean acidification and harmful algal blooms are decimating our oceans and lakes, destroying wildlife, and crippling our local economies. Increasing funding for NOAA's ocean acidification and harmful algal blooms programs will give our coastal communities additional resources to understand and address these threats.

Despite these victories, the bill did not earn my support because of the harmful cuts and policy riders that remain. The bill underfunds the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and undermines the National Oceans Policy. It eliminates Title X Family Planning, and eliminates funding for Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs. The bill undermines the Affordable Care Act by prohibiting funding from being used to further provisions of the law, including ACA navigators. As Congress continues work on an FY2018 funding package, I urge my colleagues to put aside their partisan policy priorities and advance a bill that invests in our communities and sets them up for success.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MARKUP

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank Chairman ROYCE for convening this mark-up on a number of substantive pieces of legislation. As our time is limited, I will focus on a few key items.

I am an original cosponsor of H.R. 3445, and I thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL, as well as my friend and colleague KAREN BASS, for trying to strengthen the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

I would like to thank my good friend and fellow member of the New Jersey delegation, ALBIO SIRES, for his bipartisan Global Health Innovation Act of 2017, H.R. 1660, of which I am a cosponsor.

This bill will allow us to exercise greater oversight over USAID programs and to gauge how effectively USAID is developing and utilizing innovations in health programs.

I support H.R. 3320 and commend Chairman YOHO for his work on this timely bill. The Chinese Communist government has been slowly squeezing Taiwan's international space, taking extraordinary measures to exclude Taiwan from multi-lateral institutions like the World Health Organization.

Such exclusions create real international blind spots that pose threats to global health and security. As you all know, SARS spread from Taiwan and China to other parts of the globe.

With the World Health Organization in particular, I intend to push for admission of Taiwan.

I commend Ranking Member, Mr. ENGEL, along with Chairman YOHO, Mr. CHABOT, and Mr. SHERMAN, for putting together H. Res. 422, on Hong Kong.

The threats to Hong Kong's autonomy and its freedoms are real and progressing. These freedoms and the rule of law are vital economic interests of the United States and the foundation of the city's vitality, creativity, and entrepreneurial sprit.

Beijing has become more assertive in Hong Kong's affairs over the past several years and ramped up efforts to destroy the pro-democracy movement over the summer. Six legislations were disqualified through unprecedented interventions by the National People's Congress into Hong Kong's judiciary. The pan-democratic minority could stop pro-Beijing legislation in the past, but now it cannot. China can push through any measure it wants now with its block of unelected legislators.

And, as you all know, the Hong Kong government has re-sentenced the leaders of the peaceful Umbrella Movement of 2014. Joshua Wong, Nathan Law, and Alex Chow should now be considered Hong Kong's first political prisoners. They will not be the last, as new trails begin soon.

This resolution is needed but should not be our last word. That is why I introduced, along with Congressman TIM WALZA (a fellow CECC Commissioner), the Hong Kong Human Rights & Democracy Act—a bill that I introduced in the last Congress and which has been introduced by Senator MARCO RUBIO and Senator BEN CARDIN in the Senate.

I would urge my colleagues to consider this legislation and find ways to protect U.S. interests in a free and autonomous Hong Kong in addition to Ranking Member ENGELS' resolution which is before us today.

Hizballah is a cancer that has metastasized in Lebanon and threatens to invade nearly every corner of the region if we do not stay vigilant. H.R. 3329, introduced by Chairman ROYCE, would choke off additional sources of financial support for this malignant growth, particularly by targeting the group's grass roots fundraising enterprise that it expanded to circumvent existing sanctions. Building on the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act that the House passed unanimously in 2015, this bill would require third-party sanctions on those who substantially support Hizballah fundraising operations.

The reports required in this legislation would also go further to ferret out the extent of the group's fundraising network, which it would rightly classify as a transnational criminal organization. Make no mistake: Hizballah is an international crime syndicate, wrapped in an Iranian paramilitary proxy, inside a terrorist organization, masquerading as a political resistance movement.

H.R. 3342 introduced by MIKE GALLAGHER would direct our government to use the tools at its disposal to impose penalties on Hizballah for employing human shields to defend its installations and outposts. Hizballah's use of innocent human lives to protect its nefarious activities is a clear human rights violation and plainly demonstrates that Hizballah is an enemy of Lebanon's freedom-loving people. The bill also encourages the President to direct our Permanent Representative at the United Nations to use her voice and vote to push for a resolution condemning this sickening practice. I can confidently say that the United States could not ask for a stronger or more clear-eyed defender of American interests and the security of our most critical regional ally, Israel, at the UN than Ambassador Haley.

RECOGNIZING DAVID C. PUCKETT

HON. TIM WALBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. David C. Puckett as he completes 35 years of service as CEO of American 1 Credit Union, headquartered in Jackson, Michigan.

In 1982, David Puckett began his journey as General Manager of a small, local credit union which had 15 employees and two locations. Today, American 1 Credit Union has nearly 200 employees, provides service to 56,000 members, and has 13 branches located across the state.

David Puckett not only effectively shaped the fiscal success of American 1 Credit Union, but also forged a lasting legacy of giving back to the people of Jackson County. Over the years, American 1 has funded and provided manpower to support many community programs such as Rose Pageant scholarships, the Rose Parade, the Kids Fest program and the American 1 Grand Prix.

Throughout his tenure, David has brought the private and public sectors together in ways that have benefited the community. The most noteworthy example of these partnerships is the agreement made in 2016 in which American 1 will donate $4 million towards the construction of a convention center in Jackson. The American 1 Credit Union Convention Center will be utilized for conferences, trade shows, weddings, and entertainment, and will foster the ongoing development of Jackson's downtown riverfront area.

David Puckett's leadership and spirit of cooperation will be remembered for years to come by all who continue to benefit from the results of his commitment. I congratulate David on an impressive career at American 1 Credit Union and wish him the best in the future.

WHEAT RIDGE ANIMAL HOSPITAL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Wheat Ridge Animal Hospital for receiving the City of Wheat

Ridge's Reinvestment Award for 2017. The Reinvestment Award recognizes businesses who play an active role in improving the City of Wheat Ridge.

Wheat Ridge Animal Hospital, with more than thirteen years in Wheat Ridge, was selected because of their redevelopment of an old office building, demolition of a blighted older business and their accommodation for parking in their new facility. The company purchased an older two story office building that had been shuttered for over three years. The owners of Wheat Ridge Animal Hospital completely rehabilitated the building to accommodate the re-use.

I applaud Wheat Ridge Animal Hospital for being the recipient of this well-deserved honor by the City of Wheat Ridge, and I congratulate them on their success.

HONORING COMMUNITY CLINIC ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND OTHER COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS IN CALIFORNIA'S 44TH DISTRICT

HON. NANETTE DIAZ BARRAGÁN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to a health care success story that so many of us here, on both sides of the aisle, can appreciate: the role that our nation's community health centers play in providing high-quality primary and preventive care to more than 27 million patients in nearly 11,000 communities nationwide. Unfortunately, these centers are at risk unless Congress acts quickly to extend funding for programs that support CHCs.

CHCs have provided care for low-income, rural, and underserved communities for more than fifty years. In that time, many of these health centers have expanded to offering integrated services like behavioral health, dental care, and—increasingly—substance use disorder treatments essential to combating nationwide epidemics like opioid addiction. It's this kind of integrated and patient-centered care that leads to better health outcomes for patients, as well as cost-savings for both our nation's health care system and for taxpayers.

In my district, we have 15 federally funded health center organizations who collectively leverage $46.4 million in federal investment to serve 500,328 people at 22 locations. I've been to many of these locations, and seen in person what a difference these organizations make in the lives of our neighbors, and in the health of our community.

Two years ago, the House of Representatives voted overwhelming to extend funding for CHCs as part of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015. Now that that deadline is upon us, Congress must act again. This time Congress must pass a long-term extension of at least five years, so that our CHCs can have the predictability and stability they need to recruit providers, purchase equipment, and plan strategically for how to meet the current and future needs of communities. I strongly support keeping funding levels for CHCs whole, something more than 350 members in both the House and Senate signed letters supporting earlier this year.

For the sake of our communities and their health, we can't delay in securing funding for CHCs. It's time to fix the health center funding cliff and invest in a local solution we all know delivers results.

TRIBUTE TO RICK ELKINS' DEDICATED CAREER IN JOURNALISM AND SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY

HON. KEVIN McCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an exceptional newsman and life-long journalist, whose desire and commitment to inform and strengthen the community led him to an impressive career in journalism spanning nearly four decades.

Rick Elkins retired this August from the Porterville Recorder, leaving an unparalleled legacy of service not only to the newspaper, but also to the community he covered. As one of California's longest-serving and most locally-invested journalists, Rick spent 22 out of his 39 years in journalism at the Porterville Recorder before his retirement last month.

Rick began his career as a reporter in January of 1976. Ever since, his inquisitive nature has yielded countless stories covering many facets of life. From our region's historic drought to the infamous Tulare County cocaine bust in the late 1980s, Rick kept the people of Porterville and the surrounding communities well-informed for decades. The magnitude of his service has earned him recognition as one of California's great journalists.

There are many individuals around our community who turned to the Porterville Recorder to learn what was happening in Porterville and Tulare County because of Rick's professionalism and dedication to truthful news coverage. His career and contributions reflect his attitude toward treating the community as a family, among which was his leadership in returning the Porterville Recorder's focus to local news first. As the Representative for California's 23rd Congressional District, I greatly value the importance of an informed citizenry and holding elected officials accountable. The press plays a key role in that. I always looked forward to being interviewed by Rick—he always had his thumb on the pulse of the community and got to the crux of the issues on the community's mind. This approach to journalistic integrity was also reflected by how he ran the Porterville Recorder, earning the respect of his reporters, staff, and the local community. Rick's reporting reflected his passion to make sure his readers got the facts of the story and he respected them enough to allow them to draw their own conclusions.

I am confident Rick's legacy will live on for generations to come and that his contribution to our community will have a lasting impact. I thank Rick for his lifetime of service to journalism and his lasting impact on Porterville. I'm sure Rick is looking forward to spending more time with his wife, Doris, and Dana, his daughter, as he begins this new chapter of his life. I wish Rick and his family happiness in his retirement and look forward to his continued involvement in our community.

WHEAT RIDGE POULTRY

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Wheat Ridge Poultry and Meats for receiving the City of Wheat Ridge's Business of the Year Award for 2017.

The Business of the Year Award recognizes local businesses who demonstrate a commitment to their community, strong management practices and are a positive reflection of the City of Wheat Ridge's values.

As noted in their mission and vision statement, ''Your local butcher has been on duty since 1942 offering fresh cuts of beef, pork and chicken served from our fresh meat case. Add simplicity, variety and freshness to your family table. Our poultry comes from farms where the birds roam free and animals have spacious barns. Our selection of jams and jellies offers nothing but the freshest fruits and finest ingredients.''

I applaud Wheat Ridge Poultry and Meats for being the recipient of this well-deserved honor by the City of Wheat Ridge, and I congratulate them on their success.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S6193–S6235

Measures Introduced: Twenty bills and eight resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 1881–1900, and S. Res. 270–277. **Page S6223**

Measures Reported:

S. 1766, to reauthorize the SAFER Act of 2013, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Page S6222**

Measures Passed:

Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act: Senate passed H.R. 3823, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to provide disaster tax relief, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Page S6205**

McConnell (for Cassidy) Amendment No. 1108, to strike the provisions relating to development of a private flood insurance market. **Page S6205**

The American Legion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act: Senate passed H.R. 2519, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the 100th anniversary of The American Legion. **Page S6232**

MAIN STREET Cybersecurity Act: Senate passed S. 770, to require the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to disseminate resources to help reduce small business cybersecurity risks, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, and the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S6232–33**

McConnell (for Schatz) Modified Amendment No. 977, of a perfecting nature. **Page S6233**

National Workforce Development Month: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 267, designating September 2017 as "National Workforce Development Month", and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S6234**

Signing of the Constitution of the United States 230th Anniversary: Senate agreed to S. Res. 272, commemorating the 230th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution of the United States. **Page S6234**

Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 273, expressing support for the designation of September 2017 as "Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month" in order to educate communities across the United States about sickle cell disease and the need for research, early detection methods, effective treatments, and preventative care programs with respect to sickle cell disease, complications from sickle cell disease, and conditions related to sickle cell disease. **Page S6234**

National Retirement Security Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 274, supporting the goals and ideals of National Retirement Security Week, including raising public awareness of the various tax-preferred retirement vehicles, increasing personal financial literacy, and engaging the people of the United States on the keys to success in achieving and maintaining retirement security throughout their lifetimes. **Page S6234**

Northeastern Illinois University Sesquicentennial: Senate agreed to S. Res. 275, congratulating Northeastern Illinois University on the sesquicentennial of the University. **Page S6234**

Pulmonary Fibrosis Awareness Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 276, designating September 2017 as "Pulmonary Fibrosis Awareness Month". **Page S6234**

National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 277, designating the week of September 25 through 29, 2017, as "National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week". **Page S6234**

Signing Authority—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the Majority Leader and Senator Murkowski be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions on Friday, September 29, 2017 through Monday, October 2, 2017. **Page S6234**

Pai Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Ajit Varadaraj Pai, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission. **Pages S6202–05, S6205–16**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 55 yeas to 41 nays (Vote No. 208), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Pages S6207–08**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 3 p.m., on Monday, October 2, 2017, Senate resume consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided between the two Leaders, or their designees; that notwithstanding the provisions of Rule XXII, all post-cloture time on the nomination expire at 5:30 p.m.; and that at 5:30 p.m., Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination, with no intervening action or debate. **Page S6234**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 95 yeas to 1 nay (Vote No. EX. 207), Ralph R. Erickson, of North Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

Pages S6193–S6202, S6235

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 95 yeas to 1 nay (Vote No. 206), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S6197**

J. Cody Hiland, of Arkansas, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas for the term of four years.

Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., of Utah, to be Ambassador to the Russian Federation.

Joshua J. Minkler, of Indiana, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana for the term of four years.

A. Wess Mitchell, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (European and Eurasian Affairs).

John R. Bass, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Justin Hicks Siberell, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Byung J. Pak, of Georgia, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia for the term of four years.

Robert J. Higdon, Jr., of North Carolina, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina for the term of four years.

59 Air Force nominations in the rank of general.

9 Army nominations in the rank of general.

Routine lists in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy. **Pages S6216–18, S6235**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Thomas Harker, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Robert H. McMahon, of Georgia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

John P. Roth, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force.

Robert Hunter Kurtz, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Bruce Landsberg, of South Carolina, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board for a term expiring December 31, 2022.

Dana Baiocco, of Ohio, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of seven years from October 27, 2017.

Raymond Martinez, of New Jersey, to be Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

Kenneth E. Allen, of Kentucky, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2021.

A. D. Frazier, of Georgia, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2022.

Jeffrey Smith, of Tennessee, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2022.

James R. Thompson III, of Alabama, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2021.

Irwin Steven Goldstein, of New York, to be Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy.

Sean P. Lawler, of Maryland, to be Chief of Protocol, and to have the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service.

James Randolph Evans, of Georgia, to be Ambassador to Luxembourg.

Linda A. Puchala, of Maryland, to be a Member of the National Mediation Board for a term expiring July 1, 2018.

James Blew, of California, to be Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, Department of Education.

Norman Euell Arflack, of Kentucky, to be United States Marshal for the Eastern District of Kentucky for the term of four years.

Michael T. Baylous, of West Virginia, to be United States Marshal for the Southern District of West Virginia for the term of four years.

David G. Jolley, of Tennessee, to be United States Marshal for the Eastern District of Tennessee for the term of four years.

Daniel R. McKittrick, of Mississippi, to be United States Marshal for the Northern District of Mississippi for the term of four years.

Jesse Seroyer, Jr., of Alabama, to be United States Marshal for the Middle District of Alabama for the term of four years.

Erin Angela Nealy Cox, of Texas, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Texas for the term of four years.

Ryan T. Holte, of Illinois, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Duane A. Kees, of Arkansas, to be United States Attorney for the Western District of Arkansas for the term of four years.

Matthew D. Krueger, of Wisconsin, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin for the term of four years.

Howard C. Nielson, Jr., of Utah, to be United States District Judge for the District of Utah.

Christina E. Nolan, of Vermont, to be United States Attorney for the District of Vermont for the term of four years. **Page S6234**

Nominations Withdrawn: Senate received notification of withdrawal of the following nominations:

Ryan Dean Newman, of New Mexico, to be General Counsel of the Department of the Army, which was sent to the Senate on April 28, 2017.

David G. Ehrhart, of Texas, to be General Counsel of the Department of the Air Force, which was sent to the Senate on June 12, 2017. **Page S6235**

Messages from the House: **Page S6222**

Measures Referred: **Page S6222**

Measures Read the First Time: **Pages S6222, S6234**

Enrolled Bills Presented: **Page S6222**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Pages S6222–23**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S6223–25**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S6225–31**

Additional Statements: **Pages S6221–22**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S6231–32**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S6232**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S6232**

Record Votes: Three record votes were taken today. (Total—208) **Pages S6197, S6202, S6207–08**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 5:17 p.m., until 3:00 p.m. on Monday, October 2, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S6234.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

2018 FARM BILL

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Committee concluded a hearing to examine rural development and energy programs, focusing on perspectives for the 2018 Farm Bill, after receiving testimony from Anne C. Hazlett, Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development, Richard A. Davis, Acting Administrator, Rural Housing Service, Chad Parker, Acting Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, and Chris McLean, Acting Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, all of the Department of Agriculture; Aleta Botts, Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development, Elizabethtown; Elmer Ronnebaum, Kansas Rural Water Association, Seneca, on behalf of the National Rural Water Association; Chris Stephens, Coweta-Fayette Electric Membership Corporation, Palmetto, Georgia; Denny Law, Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc., Wall, South Dakota, on behalf of NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association; Brent Shanks, Iowa State University NSF Engineering Research Center of Biorenewable Chemicals, Ames; and Mark Olinyk, Harvest Energy Solutions, Jackson, Michigan, on behalf of the Michigan Energy Innovation Business Council and the Michigan Farm Bureau.

NORTH KOREA

Committee on Armed Services: Committee received a closed briefing on North Korea from officials of the intelligence community.

NORTH KOREA SANCTIONS

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine evaluating sanctions enforcement and policy options on North Korea, focusing on Administration perspectives, including S. 1591, to impose sanctions with respect to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, after receiving testimony from Sigal Mandelker, Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence; and Susan Thornton, Acting Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

TSA MODERNIZATION

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security concluded a hearing to examine Transportation Security Administration modernization, focusing on improvements to aviation security, after receiving testimony from Brian C. Weiler, Springfield-Branson National Airport, Springfield, Missouri; and Stephen A. Alterman, Cargo Airline Association, on behalf of

the Aviation Security Advisory Committee, Sissy Pressnell, Security Manufacturers Coalition, and Michael White, Cargo Network Services Corporation, on behalf of the International Air Transport Association, all of Washington, D.C.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 1766, to reauthorize the SAFER Act of 2013, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute; and

The nominations of Brian Allen Benczkowski, of Virginia, Assistant Attorney General, Halsey B. Frank, to be United States Attorney for the District of Maine, D. Michael Hurst, Jr., to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi, Jeffrey B. Jensen, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri, Thomas L. Kirsch II, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Indiana, and William J. Powell, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of West Virginia, all of the Department of Justice.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 34 public bills, H.R. 3860–3893; and 6 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 82–83; and H. Res. 544–547 were introduced. **Pages H7634–36**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H7636–37**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H. Res. 488, resolution of inquiry requesting the President and directing the Attorney General to transmit, respectively, certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the removal of former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–335); adversely; and

H.R. 1107, to promote conservation, improve public land management, and provide for sensible development in Pershing County, Nevada, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–336). **Page H7634**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Dr. J. Todd Mullins, Christ Fellowship Church, Palm Beach Gardens, FL. **Page H7591**

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by voice vote. **Pages H7591, H7615**

Suspension: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measure:

Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria Education Relief Act of 2017: S. 1866, to provide the Secretary of Education with waiver authority for the reallocation rules and authority to extend the deadline by which funds have to be reallocated in the campus-based aid programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965 due to Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma, and Hurricane Maria, and to provide equitable services to children and teachers in private schools. **Pages H7593–95**

Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017: The House passed H.R. 3823, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and to provide disaster tax relief, by a yea-and-nay vote of 264 yeas to 155 nays, Roll No. 542. Consideration began yesterday, September 27th. **Pages H7602–14**

Rejected the Nadler motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Ways and Means with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a yea-and-nay vote of 188 yeas to 227 nays, Roll No. 541. **Pages H7603–12**

H. Res. 538, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3823) was agreed to yesterday, September 27th.

Control Unlawful Fugitive Felons Act of 2017: The House passed H.R. 2792, to amend the Social Security Act to make certain revisions to provisions limiting payment of benefits to fugitive felons under titles II, VIII, and XVI of the Social Security Act, by a yea-and-nay vote of 244 yeas to 171 nays, Roll No. 543. **Pages H7595–H7602, H7614–15**

Pursuant to the Rule, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted. **Page H7595**

H. Res. 533, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 2824) and (H.R. 2792) was agreed to Tuesday, September 26th.

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet

at 11:30 a.m. tomorrow, September 29th and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12 noon on Monday, October 2nd for Morning Hour debate. **Page H7619**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:42 p.m. and reconvened at 4 p.m. **Pages H7632–33**

Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 3823, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, and to provide disaster tax relief. **Page H7633**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 12 noon on Monday, October 2nd for Morning Hour debate. **Page H7633**

Senate Messages: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today and message received from the Senate appear on pages H7619 and H7633.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H7611–12, H7613–14 and H7614–15. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

Committee Meetings

EXAMINING INSURANCE FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance held a hearing entitled "Examining Insurance for Nonprofit Organizations". Testimony was heard from Baird Webel, Specialist in Financial Economics, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a markup on H. Res. 422, urging the adherence to the "one country, two systems" policy as prescribed in the Joint Declaration between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of the Hong Kong; H.R. 425, the "FTO Passport Revocation Act of 2017"; H.R. 1196, the "Counterterrorism Screening and Assistance Act of 2017"; H.R. 2658, the "Venezuela Humanitarian Assistance and Defense of Democratic Governance Act of 2017"; H.R. 3320, to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to regain observer status for Taiwan in the World Health Organization, and for other purposes; H.R. 3342, the "Sanctioning Hizballah's Illicit Use of Civilians as Defenseless Shields Act"; H.R. 3445, the "AGOA and MCA Modernization Act"; H.R. 3329, the "Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act of 2017"; and H.R. 1660, the "Global Health Innovation Act of 2017". H. Res. 422, H.R. 425, H.R. 1196, H.R. 2658, and H.R. 3329 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 1660, H.R. 3320, H.R. 3342, and H.R. 3445 were ordered reported, without amendment.

RULEMAKERS MUST FOLLOW THE RULES, TOO: OVERSIGHT OF AGENCY COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law held a hearing entitled "Rulemakers Must Follow the Rules, Too: Oversight of Agency Compliance with the Congressional Review Act". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 1159, the "United States and Israel Space Cooperation Act". H.R. 1159 was ordered reported, without amendment.

THE GREAT AMERICAN ECLIPSE: TO TOTALITY AND BEYOND

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Research and Technology; and Subcommittee on Space held a joint hearing entitled "The Great American Eclipse: To Totality and Beyond". Testimony was heard from James Ulvestad, Acting Assistant Director, Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences, National Science Foundation; Thomas Zurbuchen, Associate Administrator, Science Mission Directorate, National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D988)*

H.R. 3110, to amend the Financial Stability Act of 2010 to modify the term of the independent member of the Financial Stability Oversight Council. Signed on September 27, 2017. (Public Law 115–61)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 36, the ''Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act'', 5 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

3 p.m., Monday, October 2

Senate Chamber

Program for Monday: Senate will resume consideration of the nomination of Ajit Varadaraj Pai, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission, post-cloture, and vote on confirmation of the nomination at 5:30 p.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

12 p.m., Monday, October 2

House Chamber

Program for Monday: To be announced.

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