United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 2018 No. 64

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CINDY HYDE-SMITH, a Senator from the State of Mississippi.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

God of wisdom and order, who filled the universe with mysteries of Your power, restore us to the image of Your glory. Create in us clean hearts, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Lord, we thank You for Your life-giving Spirit flowing through us to reinforce our faith, hope, and love.

Inspire our Senators. Give them truth in their innermost being, a sense of dedication in their work, and a spirit of cooperation that they may labor together for the good of this land we love. May they strive to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with You.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 19, 2018.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CINDY HYDE-SMITH, a Senator from the State of Mississippi, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

PROTECTING MOMS AND INFANTS ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, we all know the grief the opioid crisis produces: broken families, stolen opportunity, lost loved ones. This epidemic has been especially severe in my home State of Kentucky, claiming lives at a record pace.

In light of this urgent problem, I am proud Congress is fighting back. We have passed substantial bipartisan legislation to give communities the resources they need. The most recent government funding bill provided billions of dollars of additional support. But the work to end the suffering continues.

One of the most heartbreaking facts is the skyrocketing number of infants who are born dependent on opioids. Defenseless children start their lives suffering from addiction. That is why in 2015 I sponsored, along with Senator CASEY, the bipartisan Protecting Our Infants Act. As the first law to specifically address prenatal opioid exposure, it directed the Secretary of Health and Human Services to review the subject of opioid abuse in prenatal and infant patients. Our bill tasked the Secretary with developing strategies to fill the gap in opioid research and programming and provide recommendations for preventing further harm to expecting mothers and newborns.

Now it is time to build on our success and better protect vulnerable children, so today I will introduce the Protecting Moms and Infants Act. This legislation directs the Secretary of HHS to report on the implementation of the strategies developed in the previous bill. It would have the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention develop educational materials to better inform doctors and expecting mothers about opioid alternatives. It authorizes increased funding for competitive Federal grants to help organizations address this particular part of the opioid crisis. This bill continues our years-long efforts to protect the most vulnerable.

I thank Senator CASEY and my colleague from Kentucky, Congressman BRETT GUTHRIE, who is sponsoring companion legislation in the House.

Medical professionals, law enforcement officials, and many across Kentucky are working every day to bring an end to the misery of the opioid epidemic. This legislation will continue that fight, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

NOMINATION OF JAMES BRIDENSTINE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, yesterday we voted to advance JIM BRIDENSTINE's nomination to lead the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

JIM is a decorated pilot and combat veteran. His tenure in the House of Representatives testifies to his understanding of the issues facing today's space program and to his advocacy of NASA modernization. But, as is often the case, this well-qualified nominee has waited too long for a vote. NASA has been led by an Acting Administrator for a record 15 months. So I hope my colleagues will join me in voting to confirm JIM BRIDENSTINE today.

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

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NOMINATION OF MIKE POMPEO

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, speaking of personnel business, I wish to say a few words this morning about Mike Pompeo, our CIA Director and the President's extraordinary choice to serve as Secretary of State.

In recent days, the world learned that Director Pompeo had undertaken initial conversations with Kim Jong Un directly, over the Easter weekend, to discuss denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula. Obviously, he has the confidence of the President—engaged in the most sensitive undertaking one could imagine in today's world—and yet so many on the other side are suggesting they have reservations about this outstanding nominee.

Pursued with clear-eyed realism and clear objectives, this is a worthy effort. North Korea has been a perplexing problem for President after President after President, and Mike Pompeo is on the point of this effort, which hopefully will finally lead to some outcome. Although every Commander in Chief has insisted it would be unacceptable for North Korea to obtain a nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missile, it is this administration that finds itself having to actually achieve that objective because time has run out. So, as a matter of policy, it would be hard not to be encouraged by the fact that there were actually talks—direct talks—underway.

Based on Director Pompeo's impressive record at the CIA, the North Koreans undoubtedly view him as credible, determined, and insightful. Isn't that what we would want in a Secretary of State? The quiet nature of these discussions reflect how serious they were. The mission also speaks to Mike Pompeo's future as Secretary of State.

Here is a man who—through mastery of the daily briefings he receives, counsel on our Nation's most sensitive intelligence activities, and proven leadership in returning our CIA to the aggressive gathering of foreign intelligence—has inspired the confidence of not only the national clandestine service but, very importantly, the Commander in Chief. Hallmarks of Mike's leadership are listening, trusting career staff, acting decisively, and treating everyone fairly.

I have recently heard some critics claim that the Trump administration places too little emphasis on diplomacy. In truth, the public statements of Secretary Mattis, former Secretary Tillerson, and former National Security Advisor McMaster have signaled a clear preference for aggressive, realistic diplomacy over potentially risking American lives. I have heard Secretary Mattis say over and over again that the last thing he wants to do is use the military. He wants to buy time so diplomacy can work. But, regardless, in confirming Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State, the Senate can ensure that the Nation has a chief diplomat who enjoys the complete confidence of the President. Isn't that what we should all want, regardless of party?

Those who claim to want a larger role for diplomacy should match those words with action and vote to approve him. What would be a better example of diplomacy than just what we were talking about—the visit to North Korea and direct conversations with Kim Jong Un.

We all know Mike's resume. He is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and Harvard Law School. He has served as a U.S. Army officer, on the House Intelligence Committee, and as Director of the CIA. In my view, Mike Pompeo is uniquely qualified to restore esprit de corps throughout the ranks of the Foreign Service. It is hard to imagine a better choice for Secretary of State than Mike Pompeo.

PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCES

Mr. McCONNELL. Now, one final matter. We have been talking all week about a big philosophical difference between Democrats and Republicans. Tax reform has thrown it into stark relief.

On the one hand, the Democrats' governing philosophy is about consolidating as much money and power as possible right here in Washington, DC. Under President Obama, we watched Democratic leaders turn every challenge the country faced into an excuse to raise taxes and impose regulations. Our dear friends on the other side are the party of taxation, regulation, and litigation as well. We saw who wins under this top-down philosophy and who loses.

America did not recover quickly enough from the great recession, and the unimpressive growth we did see during the Obama administration was extremely uneven. According to one study, nearly three-quarters of the job growth and 90 percent of the net population growth from 2010 to 2016 went to metropolitan areas with more than 1 million residents. The occupant of the Chair and I represent a lot of rural and smalltown folks. They didn't benefit from whatever job creation there was; it went to the big cities all across America. In the wealthiest coastal cities, there was some improvement, but the simple fact is that the Democratic policies left the rest of the country behind. In small towns and smaller cities and rural areas, opportunities dried up, paychecks stayed flat, and hope for a more prosperous future began fading.

That is what President Trump and this Republican Congress were elected to change. Our governing philosophy is very different. We think that more of the American people's hard-earned money should be left in their own hands—their hands—to spend or save as they see fit. We think government needs to give workers and job creators some breathing room. We think every American community deserves to flourish. So we passed record-setting rollbacks of harmful Federal rules that had thrown a wet blanket on the economy, and we enacted sweeping tax reform to help families and reignite growth.

What are the early results? Consumer confidence hit a 14-year high, jobless claims a 45-year low—jobless claims, a 45-year low—and millions of Americans receiving bonuses, pay raises, and new benefits. Ninety percent of wage earners expected to see lower income taxes than last year. Ninety percent of wage earners—lower income tax rates than last year.

The philosophical difference is especially stark in States where one Senator votes to let all of this good news happen, but the other Senator tried to stop it from taking place.

Bonnie Brazzeal from Missouri told President Trump last month that she is using her tax reform bonus to save for retirement.

In West Virginia, Sean Farrell says he is using expanded 529 savings eligibility to afford Catholic school tuition for his children.

Chelsee Hatfield from Indiana is using her permanent raise to pay for community college classes, working toward her associate's degree.

At some point, the Democratic Senators from these States I just mentioned will have to explain why they voted to stop all that from happening. They will have to tell Bonnie and Sean and Chelsee that they agree with the Democratic leader, who has said Washington knows how to spend money better than citizens do.

But, my Republican colleagues and I will stay on the side of the American people.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, it is good to see the Acting President pro tempore back in the Chair a second time.

NORTH KOREA

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, let me begin by addressing the administration's ongoing effort to secure a diplomatic deal with North Korea to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

It is a worthy and ambitious goal. Indeed, we should all root for a diplomatic resolution to the decades-long conflict. It is undeniable, however, that

this meeting is fraught with peril. My primary concern is that the President, in his penchant for spur-of-the-moment decision making, could lead the United States into danger in one of two ways.

My first concern is that the President, without a clear or coherent strategy, will buy a pile of magic beans, accepting an agreement—any agreement—that allows him to declare victory. We know what he will say: the greatest compromise ever, greater than Versailles, greater than anything. Talking is good, but it is very far from an agreement to disarm.

President Trump should not accept a deal that doesn't include concrete steps to verifiably roll back North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, including those that threaten our allies and partners. So that is one concern: that the President accepts any agreement because he is just so eager to tout that he was a great deal maker and made an agreement, even if it is a rotten agreement for America.

My second concern is sort of the opposite. My second concern is that the President, without a disciplined or coherent strategy, will walk away from a bilateral meeting if he doesn't get everything he wants. There is also the possibility that the President will walk away from an agreement after the fact if he decides later he is unhappy with it. We have seen him do that on so many occasions. As someone who has negotiated deals with the President, I know it is a very real possibility.

Now, some may say that these are opposite possibilities. They are, in a certain sense. If he takes too little, he walks away because he didn't get everything. But they are all underlined by one coherent fact: There is no strategy—at least apparent to just about everyone.

The President seems to operate on a whim, saying one thing one day and another thing the next. When there is no coherent strategy, each of these dangers is too real. Either scenario could leave relations with a rogue state worse and more dangerous than before.

Now, the President said last night at Mar-a-Lago that he would leave a meeting with Kim Jong Un if it wasn't fruitful.

Mr. President, this is not like a business deal. There is a very real danger to walking away from a meeting with a nuclear-armed dictator. It could risk serious escalation. If the United States is seen as the one walking away from talks, we should be under no illusions that China, Russia, and others will not follow suit.

We all want to see negotiations with North Korea succeed. If it is true that North Korea will take its demand for U.S. troops to leave the Korean Peninsula off the table, that is a good step. Our commitment to the Korean people and our alliances with Korea and Japan are not subject to negotiation. But, I repeat, if these talks are going to truly succeed, the President and his team require a coordinated strategy, something this administration hasn't been able to show with respect to Russia, Syria, Yemen, the Middle East, and other hotspots around the world.

SPECIAL COUNSEL LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on another topic, I have come to the floor several times over the past month to document the number of ways in which this administration has signaled a willingness—perhaps a desire—to interfere with Special Counsel Mueller's probe into Russian interference in the 2016 elections.

Beyond troubling statements from the White House Press Secretary and the President's allies in the media, President Trump himself has publicly mused about the firing of the special counsel. So while I appreciate that the majority leader believes the President would be wrong to fire the special counsel, I believe it is a real mistake not to pass legislation to protect the investigation. I sincerely hope Leader MCCONNELL reconsiders his refusal to entertain bringing such a bill to the floor. It is a bipartisan bill.

I have talked to Members on both sides of the aisle who are worried about a constitutional crisis. We all know the consequence of Presidential interference in the Russian probe and how dire it would be for the rule of law, fundamental to our democracy, and the constitutional crisis that it would create should be avoided at all costs. Unfortunately, there is substantial evidence that the President has thought about firing the special counsel more than once in the past and may well do so in the future.

The bipartisan legislation introduced by Senators GRAHAM, COONS, TILLIS, and BOOKER has no real downsides to it. It would simply provide a legal avenue to restore the special counsel if existing DOJ regulations are breached and he is fired for political reasons.

So what is the reason not to do it? Why not head off a constitutional crisis at the pass rather than waiting until it is too late? The rule of law is fundamental to the functioning of our democracy. Why even flirt with the prospect of a President challenging the very nature of our system of government?

So I would urge my friend Leader MCCONNELL to think twice about this—to think not simply about his responsibilities to his party and not simply about doing what the President might want, but to our country and our Constitution. If we think of it in those terms, I think it is inevitable that we would want to pass this legislation. That is because the rule of law is fundamental to the functioning of our democracy. Why even flirt with the prospect of a President challenging the very nature of our system of governance and rules?

So I hope the Judiciary Committee moves forward with the bipartisan bill. I hope there is no attempt to water it down or to create a back channel for political interference in ongoing investigations. It is clear that several Republicans, including Chairman GRASSLEY, Senator TILLIS, Senator GRAHAM, and others, see a need to pass this legislation. Let them prevail upon the Republican leader to reconsider his position.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of JAMES BRIDENSTINE, of Oklahoma, to be Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

PUERTO RICO BLACKOUT

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, it is hard to believe, but the entire island of Puerto Rico yesterday descended into darkness. An excavation happened to hit a main line that cut out the electricity of the entire island—3½ million people—an island that is not a small island; it is a large island. It was a total blackout. Now, 24 hours later, a large number of the people on the island are still in the dark.

Tomorrow marks 7 months since Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico, and yet Puerto Ricans are still dealing with constant setbacks and unreliable power. This is simply unacceptable.

Senator RUBIO and I have asked the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Committee to conduct an additional oversight hearing on the overall hurricane recovery and get to the bottom of this. I understand this

hearing will likely take place next month.

In the meantime, this is a widespread power outage. It is the latest example of why so many people who were forced to leave the island after the storm haven't been able to return home, even though they want to. Yet, despite all the island's ongoing troubles, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, said this week it is going to terminate the transitional shelter assistance for more than 1,600 families across the United States, and 600 of them are in my State of Florida. It doesn't make sense. For too many of these displaced families, the only thing keeping a roof over their head right now is the FEMA program, and it is transitional housing assistance. What that means is, they are either in hotels or motels and, in some cases, apartments, where FEMA is providing them temporary shelter because they have been displaced from their homes; in this case, the island of Puerto Rico.

Storms like Hurricane Maria did this to the island of Puerto Rico. We have a responsibility to provide them with all the assistance we can. Senator RUBIO and I sent a letter to the FEMA Administrator and to Governor Rossello, the Governor of Puerto Rico, urging them to work together to extend this vital program. At the very least, because there are so many of these families who have children in school, to extend it to the end of the school year so the family doesn't have to be uprooted while their child is still in school.

I am happy to report that Governor Rossello has made that formal request to FEMA. The deadline is tomorrow. Hopefully, FEMA is listening to the Governor and to the pleas of Senator RUBIO and me as well because students and families have had endless disruptions and need some semblance of stability so they can finish out the year.

The hard fact is this. The situation in Puerto Rico is far from over. These are our fellow U.S. American citizens, and they desperately need our help. We should be providing them with all the help we can.

Mr. President, I want to speak on another topic.

(The remarks of Senator NELSON pertaining to the introduction of S. 2720 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. NELSON. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, we are on the nomination of Congressman BRIDENSTINE to be the new Administrator at NASA. I want to tie it into what I will talk about in a moment because it comes down to Presidential appointments and the problems we are running into with regard to them.

I was not enthused by the nomination. It is nothing personal against Mr. BRIDENSTINE. I feel that NASA is an organization that needs to be led by a space professional. Unfortunately, a few weeks ago, the Acting Administrator resigned—or, I should say, retired. His last day on the job is the 30th. So it leaves us with the prospect of this incredibly important agency for Florida and the country with a vacancy in its top job. We are on our second Acting Administrator. If one were to do the math, even if Congressman BRIDENSTINE were to withdraw and a new vetting process were to begin for a new nominee, by the time it would work its way through the administration, the committee process, and the floor, the way things are going here, we could be into February-March, at the earliest, of next year. There is no way NASA can go 2 years and X number of months without having a permanent Administrator.

One makes these decisions always under the context that a President should have significant discretion in picking the team. Whether you like it or not, millions of Americans last year voted for the President. He was elected, and he has a right to govern. In 4 years—in less than 4 years now, in 2½ years—the American people will have the chance, once again, through our democratic process, to opine on whether or not they will want him to have a second term. Our job here is to provide advice and consent. We are to analyze these nominees and determine whether or not we want to support them.

My view of it is, as has been the tradition of the Senate for the entire existence of the Republic, that we give great deference to the President on choosing the qualifications. We want to make sure that people are qualified and that there is nothing about them that would disqualify them. It is my view that the more important the job the more discretion the President deserves. It is why, although I had significant reservations about the nomination of Secretary Tillerson, I decided to support it, because I believed the President deserved significant discretion. When you get to the subsecretaries and the like, I think that discretion diminishes.

It is what has led me to decide to support Congressman BRIDENSTINE, despite my reservations, and it is what, I hope, will lead my colleagues—at least a sufficient number—to support the nomination of Mike Pompeo to be the Secretary of State.

Let me read you some of the previous votes we have had here in the Senate. All but one of them predates my service.

Colin Powell was confirmed by a voice vote, which is almost unimaginable in a 21st century Senate, but in 2001, on January 20, by a unanimous voice vote, he was confirmed as the Secretary of State.

A few years later, in 2005, Condoleezza Rice was confirmed as Secretary of State by a vote of 85 to 13. Now, it was still 13 noes, but, nonetheless, it was 85 yeses. I assure you that not everyone who voted for her was happy about her nomination. People didn't necessarily agree with her. One of the people who supported her, I believe, was future President Barack Obama.

Hillary Clinton was nominated and confirmed in the Senate by a vote of 94 to 2, and I promise you that a significant number of the Members on my side of the aisle may have respected Secretary Clinton but strongly disagreed with her and her views on a number of issues, but, nonetheless, they felt the President deserved to have his nominee.

When she resigned, her replacement was then-Senator Kerry, who was the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, with whom I had significant policy disagreements in the Senate and during his time as Secretary of State. Yet I, along with 93 other Members of the Senate, supported his nomination, and he was confirmed.

NOMINATION OF MIKE POMPEO

Madam President, we now have the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency—a man who is clearly qualified. He is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, a person who has served this country in uniform, who has served his country in Congress, who has been successful in the private sector, and who has served as the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

We have learned over the last couple of days that the President has significant trust in him, so much so that he was willing to send him privately to begin setting the stage for, perhaps, the most important short-term diplomatic engagement this country will have with North Korea. By the way, one of the most important things you want in a Secretary of State is for the President to have confidence in him. You have to have someone who, when he goes abroad and meets with people, the people know he has the President's ear and speaks for the administration. Mike Pompeo clearly has that. Yet we face the prospect of significant opposition to the point at which there are questions about whether it will pass in the committee. Although, I think it will pass on the floor.

I hope people will recalibrate their thinking. I don't think you have to agree with Mike Pompeo. You most certainly don't have to feel that he is the person you would have picked had you been President. You need to recognize that you are not the President, and none of us here are the President. The President deserves to have a team of people whom he trusts and can work with and who are qualified. I do not believe anyone could argue that Mike Pompeo is not qualified. He is certainly as qualified—in fact, I would argue

more qualified—as the person whom he would replace in terms of experience in his field. I hope people understand that and are willing to be a little bit flexible about this.

I understand the interest groups are ginning up. Listen, we have the same thing on our side of the aisle. In full disclosure and candor, when President Obama was the President, there were interest groups on the right of center who constantly pressured Congress to oppose everything, not just legislation but also nominees. I assure you that I did not get a lot of love mail when I decided to support Senator Kerry at the time. But it was the right thing to do because he was clearly qualified, and that is who the President wanted. I hope that that is what we will do in this case in confirming Mike Pompeo, because this Nation faces some very significant challenges in foreign policy that need to be immediately addressed, and we simply cannot do that without a Secretary of State.

For me, that became quite apparent this weekend. I happened to travel to Lima, Peru, for the Summit of the Americas. The Vice President attended on the President's behalf because of the situation in Syria, and the Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. SULLIVAN, was there and did a good job, but there is no replacement for a Secretary of State. We had no Secretary of State at the summit. The key issue—one that, I think, Director Pompeo, if confirmed as Secretary, could help with—is the situation in Venezuela.

VENEZUELA

Madam President, I understand that the headlines are dominated by events in the Middle East and by the geopolitical and economic and trade conflict between the United States and China, but I do want to take a moment to talk about something that I have been speaking about on the floor of the Senate for the better part of 4½ years. It is one that I know that Director Pompeo knows well, as we have talked about it extensively, and that is the growing catastrophe that is Venezuela.

To begin, I want to say clearly that we should care about it simply because that catastrophe has become a threat to the United States and to the region.

What do I mean by that?

First, the regime in control, Nicolas Maduro's, is a state sponsor of drug trafficking. It is very simple. What I mean by that is this: Drug trafficking networks enjoy the protection of the Venezuelan Government. In fact, one of the concessions—literally, one of the contracts—that the Maduro regime gives its cronies and loyalists is drug trafficking networks.

A drug trafficker who wants to move coca out through Colombia, into Venezuela, and then into the Caribbean or Europe will find the right general or the right individual in the Maduro government, and that individual will ensure that his plane is not shot down and that, in fact, the military and the government organisms of the Government of Venezuela—of the Government of Maduro—protect him, facilitate him. The people who are supposed to be stopping him are helping him. It is a racket. It resembles organized crime. That is what Maduro does.

We have seen an incredible surge in coca production in Colombia to historic levels over the last couple of years, and it is headed here, to a nation that is already struggling with an opioid crisis. We are about to be flooded with cheap cocaine once again, and a significant amount of it will be trafficked into this country with the aid, the assistance, and the support of the dictator in Venezuela. That is a threat to the United States and to the region.

No. 2, he is a threat to the United States and to the region because he has triggered a migratory crisis that is destabilizing all of Venezuela's neighbors, primarily Colombia, which each day is absorbing tens of thousands of people fleeing starvation and rampant disease, unlike anything we have ever seen, absent a natural disaster in this hemisphere. It is destabilizing countries that are already struggling.

Colombia is already struggling to try to deal with drug trafficking groups that are, in many parts of that country, more powerful than the government in some areas and the demobilization of the FARC and another terrorist group called the ELN. We have invested, along with our Colombian partners, millions and millions of American taxpayer dollars to help Colombia, which, just a decade and a half ago, was on the verge of being a failed state. We helped them to succeed. They are among our best allies in the world and, certainly, if not our best, one of the best, top-of-the-list allies in the Western Hemisphere. They are being destabilized because they are absorbing tens of thousands of migrants a day who are fleeing not just political oppression but starvation.

Healthcare experts are telling us that children in Venezuela will not fully develop physically to their full potential because they are malnourished today. Infants, newborns are dying in cribs and in hospitals because of a lack of medicine and because of a lack of food. These are images that we are used to seeing in other parts of the world, and it breaks our hearts when it happens somewhere else. This is happening in our hemisphere, and it is all man-made in one of the richest countries in the hemisphere—the most oil-rich country on the planet that just a few years ago was one of the most prosperous economies in the entire region.

People are starving, and they are starving because of a man-made crisis. The Maduro regime uses food as a weapon. No. 1, one of the other concessions it gives the cronies around Maduro is that if they are loyalists, he puts them in charge of food distribution. What does that mean? That means you can siphon the food into the black market where you can make an exorbitant profit. You obviously are going to take some for yourself so that your family gets to eat.

Then they have the sick process where, in order for you to get food from the government, you have to show up with your government-issued ID in Venezuela. They know who the government supporters are, and they know who isn't. They know who turns out to vote, and they know who doesn't. It is a fraudulent election, by the way, because ultimately they will manipulate it as they have done before. So imagine that they know you didn't vote for them. They know how you voted because they monitor the machines. If you support the government, you get food, and if you don't, you don't get food. That is why he doesn't want food coming in.

The third is that we are engaged in what, I believe, is global competition or a battle between authoritarianism and democracy. There is a rise in the threat of authoritarianism in Turkey, in the Philippines, obviously in China and Russia, and in this hemisphere it is Venezuela. Venezuela is openly attacking the regional democratic order. They have basically canceled their Constitution. They have tried to replace the democratically elected national assembly. They have removed the legitimate judiciary branch and replaced it with loyalists of their own.

Fourth, there is a growing body of evidence that the Maduro regime provides a platform for the enemies of the security of the United States, including Russia and Hezbollah.

The spillover effects are undermining our efforts and the efforts of our regional partners to promote democracy, human rights, and stability in our own backyard in our hemisphere. That was apparent last week at the Summit of the Americas, where a growing number of countries—Argentina, Brazil, Peru—are making incredible strides and continue to build upon the democratic structures they have in place. The Peruvian President recently had to resign after a previous President resigned because the rule of law is working. In Brazil, it is the same thing. They are going to have elections this year in Mexico, in Brazil, in Colombia. These will be legitimate elections. They may elect someone who agrees with us 50 percent of the time, and they may elect someone who agrees with us 90 percent of the time, but they will elect someone. Yet, in stark contrast to that, is basically a coup d'etat that has occurred in Venezuela, where a small group of people have canceled the democratic order or at least they have tried to.

In all of this, there is great news; that is, for the first time in recent memory, the democracies of the region have come together to act on this. It began with the so-called Lima Group, which is a collection of countries that make up the overwhelming majority of the economic power and the population size of the hemisphere. They have long banded together to criticize the democratic order. We are not even officially

a member of it, but they have been supportive of the moves made by this administration to target Maduro.

Well, last week at the summit, all the members of the Lima Group, plus two—the Bahamas and the Government of the United States—issued a joint statement rejecting the sham Presidential vote on May 20 in favor of free elections and strongly urging the Venezuelan dictatorship to release all political prisoners. The problem, as I met with members of civil society and the legitimate elected representatives in the National Assembly of Venezuela, is that we have reached an inflection point now. Statements, letters, communiques are fine, but the time to act is now because people are dying. They are starving to death. The humanitarian crisis alone compels us to take action.

The question posed to me is: Well, what can we do? Some of the traditional ideas that people roll out there are additional sanctions. Sure, but there is more that can be done, and I want to quickly highlight what I hope will be the three things that happen.

The first is—well, let's decide first on a forum. The ideal forum to deal with this is a multilateral organization created specifically for the purpose of defending democracy in the Western hemisphere. That is called the Organization of American States. It is a group of 34 nations, and it was designed to deal exactly with this. Sadly, there is a small—and I mean a very small minority—of some of the smallest countries in the OAS, particularly in the Caribbean, that frankly have been bribed and/or compromised from voting against the Maduro regime because either they continue to receive cheap oil in dwindling amounts or their leaders in this government or the previous one basically stole the money and the oil, and now the Venezuelans know it, and they are going to release it publicly if these guys break from them. A small number of these countries representing less than 10 or 15 percent—maybe even less than 10 percent—of the population of the region have banded together to prevent the OAS from expelling Venezuela, a dictatorship, from the OAS, an organization of democracies. I don't think we should give up on the OAS. We should continue to try for the OAS to be the forum for the plan I am about to outline. But if that doesn't work, then there has to be an alternative, and the alternative should be the Lima Group, plus at least one—the United States. What I hope will happen is that the Lima Group will meet before or shortly after the May election and that it will be a meeting of Treasury Ministers, Foreign Ministers or both, which is why we need a Secretary of State to be there, to chart a regional approach on a way forward to Venezuela.

Here is what I believe that regional approach should be. No. 1 is that we must collectively announce that we are going to continue to increase in a multilateral way the pressure on the Maduro regime, and the way we should do that is by coordinating these national-level sanctions that target criminal elements of the Maduro regime—target these drug traffickers, target the people who are trafficking in the food and controlling the food distribution for their own purposes, target the shell companies they are using to make money, store their money, and hide their money. If all of these nations did that, encompassing the U.S. financial sector—the Brazilian, the Colombian, the Panamanian banking sectors, which will be critical in this—it would provide increasing pressure on that regime and on Maduro's loyalists to break. The goal is to maximize the pain felt by these corrupt, oppressive, and illegitimate government officials.

The second thing we need to do is address the humanitarian crisis, which is spiraling out of control. As I have said already, three to four million Venezuelans have fled their country to escape starvation, deprivation, violence. Neighboring states are bearing disproportional burdens, and they need help in doing so. I think we need to continue to provide that assistance.

Ultimately, the answer to Venezuela's future is not outside of Venezuela, but it is inside of it. That is why it is my hope that the priority of this new group—the Lima Group, plus at least one, the United States—would be to open up a humanitarian corridor that allows food and medicine to go inside Venezuela, and it can be distributed by a nongovernmental organization. Put the Catholic Church in charge or the Red Cross. It can't be the Maduro government; they will steal it. In fact, they will not even allow it. The Maduro regime will not allow humanitarian aid to come in because, one, they would lose the leverage of using food and medicine against their people and, two, they would have to acknowledge they have a crisis. We must do all we can to force that avenue to open so that we can deliver food and medicine to the people who are dying and starving. They are dying of simple diseases for a lack of basic medicine.

It is critical to let the people of Venezuela know that food, medicine, and international aid are ready to be delivered to their country by putting up pictures of the trucks and the warehouses showing that all of this food and all of these medicines are ready to come in, and the only thing standing in the way is the corrupt, evil government that today has empowered itself in their nation.

The third thing we need to be doing as part of this plan is preparing to help rebuild a free and democratic Venezuela after Maduro leaves power. The third goal I hope this gathering will reach is a consensus and an agreement that we will set up the equivalent of a Marshall Plan for Venezuela that includes investment from the Inter-American Development Bank and significant contributions from the United States and our partners to help rebuild the disaster and the catastrophe that the Maduro regime will leave behind.

We also need to help empower legitimate institutions. When we talk about the Venezuelan opposition, what we need to understand is that these are not rebels in a mountain; these are the National Assembly elected by their people. It would be as if a parallel Senate were created and we were no longer paid salaries, had staff, often no longer allowed to meet, and our laws were no longer given the force of law. That is what has happened, but the National Assembly is there. We need to support them. We need to make clear they are the legitimate representatives of the Venezuelan people—the only leaders in that government today, along with some of the Governors who were legitimately elected under the Venezuelan Constitution. They are having a problem, by the way. When they show up at our Embassy in Venezuela, they are being denied visas to travel abroad. At a minimum, we should be granting them visas to travel abroad, recognizing them as fellow Parliamentarians who have a right to speak on behalf of the people of Venezuela.

The other thing we need to do is cooperate with the real equivalent of a Supreme Court—many of whom are now in exile but who continue to meet. That is their credible and legitimate judicial system, and we should be cooperating with them and helping them. They have all sorts of information about corruption that implicates Venezuelan activities in the United States.

I will close with this. The dictatorship in Venezuela knows and the people who surround Nicholas Maduro know they are on borrowed time. It is our obligation to expedite that, not through a military intervention, not through simple unilateral sanctions—which I support, and we are prepared to continue to do—but ideally through an international, multinational, regional effort in which the United States is a partner with our allies in the region. We should continue to pressure the regime with sanctions, to deliver humanitarian aid inside and outside of Venezuela, and to create the mechanisms to rebuild that country's institutions and its economy. This is an opportunity for regional leadership.

At a time when democracy and authoritarianism are in conflict all over the world, this is an opportunity to deliver a decisive blow to authoritarianism in our hemisphere. It cannot happen with America alone, but it cannot happen without American leadership. This is the plan I hope we will pursue. This is the method I hope we will use, but to do it we need a strong leader at the Department of State to be a catalyst for all of this. This is why I urge my colleagues to rally and support doing something about Venezuela, and one of the best ways we can do that right now is to confirm Mike Pompeo as the next Secretary of State.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, NASA is a science agency. Its mission is to advance science, technology, aeronautics, and space exploration and enhance knowledge, education, innovation, economic vitality, and stewardship of the mission. That is the mission. That is why past NASA Administrators have been accomplished leaders in the fields of government, aviation, and science.

The NASA Administrator in President Obama's administration was Charles Bolden. He has a master of science degree. He was an astronaut and commanding general in the U.S. Air Force. President George W. Bush had two Administrators during his Presidency. Michael Griffin was a physicist and aerospace engineer who helped to design missile defense technology satellites early in his career. Sean O'Keefe was an engineer in the Navy who worked on nuclear submarines. Before leading NASA, he served as Deputy Director of OMB, Secretary of the Navy, and Comptroller for the Department of Defense. Daniel Golden was a mechanical engineer who previously had been a vice president at a space and technology company. He was nominated by President George H.W. Bush and also served under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Richard Truly served as vice admiral in the Navy before he became the first former astronaut to head the space agency under George H.W. Bush.

The reason we are having a robust debate about Mr. JAMES BRIDENSTINE to lead NASA is that this is the first time in history we have someone without similar qualifications to run such an important agency.

JIM BRIDENSTINE, the nominee we are considering, served as a Navy pilot, and I thank him for his service, but that does not qualify him to run NASA. Just because you know how to fly a plane does not mean you have the skills and experience to lead the Federal Government's space agency.

I am not alone in that opinion. A NASA consultant wrote that Mr. BRIDENSTINE does not have ''significant knowledge and experience with how NASA works'' or ''deep technical knowledge in aerospace systems.''

There are a lot of things a NASA Administrator has to do. Most of it is governed by law, and I expect anybody who is confirmed will follow the law, but the most solemn and serious responsibility that the NASA Administrator has is final launch authority. A launch is a culmination of work by thousands of people over many years. If something goes wrong, we could lose a payload that is worth millions of dollars or is, in fact, irreplaceable. People could die. That is why this job requires someone with good judgment and an understanding of all of the elements that go into a space launch. That is why we have always had NASA administrators who have demonstrable expertise in these fields. It is downright dangerous to have someone without this expertise with this kind of authority. Frankly, it is even more frightening to have a leader who has made a career out of ignoring scientific expertise.

JAMES BRIDENSTINE is a climate denier with no scientific background who has made a career out of ignoring science. Now I also don't have a scientific background, but I defer to scientists. I rely on the scientific consensus, and the scientific consensus is not what Mr. BRIDENSTINE says, which is that it is sort of difficult to tell how much climate change is attributable to human activity. The scientific consensus is that climate change is caused primarily by human activity, and JIM BRIDENSTINE doesn't say that is true, and that is terrifying. Forget our views for the moment about what kind of energy picture we think America should pursue. This is about whether you are going to rely upon people who actually know things or you are going to rely upon your own politics and ideology. When you have final launch authority, you better rely on science.

During his confirmation hearing, Mr. BRIDENSTINE testified that he did not know about the scientific consensus on climate change. He suggested there were other contributing factors that played more of a role, but the fact is this. Almost every climate scientist—97 percent of all climate scientists, to be exact—have concluded that humans are the primary cause of climate change. So there are two explanations for his answer. Either Mr. BRIDENSTINE has not bothered to read up on the scientific consensus on the most pressing scientific issue of our generation or he does not agree with that scientific consensus. Either explanation makes him unqualified to run NASA.

I want to end by reading a few quotes from one of my Republican colleagues. My colleague said that NASA is ''the one federal mission which has largely been free of politics, and it's at a critical juncture in its history.'' He also said any NASA Administrator would need to have the ''respect of the people who work there from a leadership and even a scientific perspective.'' He also said Mr. BRIDENSTINE would add to the politicization of NASA and that NASA, at this critical stage in its history, can't afford that.

I agree with my Republican colleague. I urge every Member of the Senate to give NASA the leader it needs and to vote no on this confirmation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, later today this body will vote to confirm my friend JIM BRIDENSTINE to be the next NASA Administrator. In that position, he will be in charge of rebuilding a space program that reflects the pioneering spirit and determination of the American people. I have known Congressman BRIDENSTINE for a long time, and I know he is just the man for this really important undertaking.

Let us review his record. The record shows that JIM BRIDENSTINE's service to our country is matched only by his eagerness to press the boundaries of sky and space.

JIM BRIDENSTINE is a veteran Navy pilot who flew combat missions in Iraq and in Afghanistan. He logged 1,900 flight hours over his 9 years of Active service, and he is still a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve.

Following his military service, JIM BRIDENSTINE worked as the executive director of the Tulsa Air and Space Museum. He even owned a team in the ambitious but short-lived Rocket Racing League.

Since his first term in Congress 6 years ago, Congressman BRIDENSTINE has served on the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee. From that position, he has been a thoughtful leader on American space policy as it relates to national security, commerce, and weather forecasting.

The name of his latest bill on these subjects speaks to JIM BRIDENSTINE's ambitious vision for the future: the American Space Renaissance Act. If ever there were a need for a renaissance in space, it is now because who can deny that ever since Neil Armstrong's fateful ''one small step'' in 1969, America has, in some respects, been retreating from space?

Just 12 years separates the start of the space race from man's first footfall on the Moon. It has been almost 50 years since then, and it is unclear that we could go back to the Moon if we wanted to in a short period of time. As Vice President PENCE pointed out recently, we have not sent an American beyond low-Earth orbit in 45 years.

In a humiliating reversal of sorts, America now relies on Russia to carry our astronauts to the International Space Station because we shuttered our own shuttle space program in 2011. In other words, after America won the space race and after America won the Cold War in one fell swoop, we gave away the distinction of manned space flight to the second-place finisher.

NASA's decline and disrepair is a great tragedy, but it is not all I see when I survey the horizon, and I know this is true of Congressman BRIDENSTINE as well. I see no reason why America, in all of her ingenuity and might, cannot be the dominant leader in space once again. Indeed, I see plenty of areas where this transformation is already underway.

In government, President Trump has signaled his commitment to American leadership in space by relaunching the National Space Council, which met for the first time last fall. Outside of government, private enterprise is pressing the boundaries of commercial space flight every single day. In the deserts of Utah, innovators like ATK are pioneering the next generation of rocket engines and space superiority capabilities. Just yesterday, the world watched

in awe as a SpaceX rocket flung a planet-hunting NASA satellite into orbit. Its mission complete, the rocket booster piloted itself back to Earth for reuse, landing nimbly on a drone ship floating out in the Atlantic Ocean.

Achievements such as these prove that Americans are still awed, still starstruck, by space exploration and all the opportunities it provides.

A new era of leaders can restore this sense of ambition in government. In the halls outside this Chamber, the Senate has a constant reminder of the importance of the space program. I refer to the commemorative mural this body commissioned in the wake of the Challenger disaster.

The mural depicts the crew looking expectantly, hopefully, off into the future. Behind them is the shuttle that carried them to Heaven, and the world is in their hands.

The Challenger Seven gave their lives in order to advance America's space program. They knew the risks—greater practically than those associated with any other profession on Earth or beyond it—but they also knew the mission was worth it because it contributed significantly to their Nation and to all mankind.

What will it say about us if we fail to carry on the mission they undertook, if instead of exploring the infinite frontier, we remain here below, passing the torch of exploration to some other power? I don't want to contemplate that future, and I don't want to believe the American people do either.

Claiming our right to a place in the stars will require an effort spanning many years and several Presidential administrations. We can begin that undertaking today by confirming a leader with a remarkable record of service to our country, a vision for the American space program that is big not small, and a genuine faith in his country that is as boundless as the heavens. That man is JIM BRIDENSTINE. Let's confirm him. Let's confirm him today.

I urge my colleagues to confirm JIM BRIDENSTINE without obstruction, without delay.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

NOMINATION OF MIKE POMPEO

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, thank you for acknowledging me and letting me speak on behalf of our nominee to be Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo.

I did not know Mike Pompeo well. As a matter of fact, I am not sure I ever met him until he was nominated. I just want to say to the people in this body, I don't think anybody would view me as an apologist in any way for the administration, and I view Mike Pompeo as a highly qualified nominee. I spent a lot of time with him privately and on the phone. He did, I thought, an excellent job in his hearing.

We have had a tradition of confirming people to important positions. Just to give a little history, John Kerry was confirmed as Secretary of State by Republicans and Democrats by a vote of 94 to 3. Obviously, John Kerry, my friend, no doubt, had been involved in partisan activities. He ran for President. He is someone, no doubt, who I am sure has said things people did not agree with.

Secretary Clinton was confirmed as Secretary of State by a vote of 94 to 2—no doubt, the same case. I am sure she said things many Republicans disagreed with when she was a political person as a U.S. Senator running for President.

Condoleezza Rice was confirmed to be Secretary of State in a vote of 85 to 13, and Colin Powell was unanimously confirmed as Secretary of State. So we have had a history of the last Secretaries of State to be overwhelmingly confirmed.

I realize we are in an atmosphere now where that is just not going to be the case. I realize that my Democratic friends in many cases feel that in supporting Pompeo, it is a proxy for support of the Trump administration policies, which many of them abhor. I understand that. There will be a few Democrats who I believe will support him.

I want to say to people in this room, our President has very entrepreneurial tendencies. He talks to people on the phone late at night. He comes in in the morning sometimes with differing points of view than he had the day before. We had evidence of that recently on Syria, where one day, we are going to leave Syria, and the next day, General Mattis and others intervened, and thankfully we are going to stay there and complete the work we are doing against ISIS.

I would argue to people here that we need to have someone like Mike Pompeo, who serves the Nation so well.

This is a person, by the way, who graduated first in his class at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, in 1986. He served as a cavalry officer patrolling the Iron Curtain before the fall of the Berlin Wall. He also served with the 2nd Squadron, 7th Cavalry, in the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division. After leaving Active Duty, Mr. Pompeo graduated from Harvard Law School, having been editor of the Harvard Law Review.

Sometimes we meet people in life who are just sharper than we are, who have had an incredible academic background. I can't even imagine having accomplished some of the things he has accomplished in life.

I know the Presiding Officer served, thankfully. We appreciate that he served in our military. People who have served in the military typically have more respect for diplomacy than those who have not because they understand that their diplomatic effort, if successful, is the thing that keeps our men and women out of harm's way. They know that. Pompeo is committed to that. He was there at the Iron Curtain and understood what diplomacy did to free people and keep conflict from occurring. I know he is highly committed to that.

We have had cultural issues at the State Department, there is no question. I think everyone understands that. Our former Secretary of State is someone with whom I had a good relationship. No doubt there were some things that were left undone at the State Department. We have a lot of positions that are unfilled. All I can say is that I know our nominee is highly committed to promptly filling those positions. We have some culture issues there as a result. We do, there is no question. We know that. We acknowledge that.

As head of the CIA, every month Mike Pompeo sits down with CIA employees in a casual setting where they call him Mike, and they talk with him about what is going on. He is a person who knows how to build culture. He has done so at the CIA. He understands the importance of the professionals who have committed their lives—just like the Foreign Service officers at the State Department—to the CIA. So we have someone who I know is going to build culture. We have someone who I know is committed to diplomacy.

Let's talk about where we are in the world today. We have crises all over the world. We have issues with North Korea, Syria, Russia, concerns about some of the things China has done, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq. Who in the world can possibly know more currently about where we are than our Director of the CIA? I can't imagine there is a person in Washington who has more current knowledge about threats—the people involved in those threats, the people we can use to help us deal with those threats—than the Director of the CIA. There could be no one here more qualified or more knowledgeable to step in immediately and deal with the kinds of issues we have to deal with around the world.

Look at what has happened in North Korea just recently. We know that the back channels to North Korea have always been through intelligence. We understand that. He was exactly the right person to be there to talk and do the precursor work that needs to be done. Many others need to be involved—Secretary of Energy, Secretary of Defense; many other people, obviously—but Director Pompeo was exactly the right person to go and demonstrate his ability to be dealt with with respect.

I will be leaving this body in 8½ months. It has been the greatest privilege of my life to serve here. As I said to my Republican colleagues yesterday at lunch, I actually think the talent and the caliber of people here in the Senate have risen since I have been here. I think we have the best group of Senators today serving in the Senate that we have had since I have been here. I see a crop of people running for these seats, and I think it may even improve next time.

It pains me to know that my friends on the other side of the aisle know that this is a qualified person, this is a person who has demonstrated incredible

excellence in his life—he served his country. He has been in the private sector. He served in this body; he was a Congressman. Now he has distinguished himself with his service as Director of the CIA. By the way, in this position, I know many of my Democratic friends have lavished praise on him because of his transparency and honesty in dealing with them but also the way he has built an excellent culture there.

We will have a vote on Monday night in the committee. I hope we are able to send him out of committee and to the floor. I hope that the Members on the other side of the aisle who have not yet said how they are going to vote will think about the circumstances we are in today and feel that they can support a highly qualified Secretary of State because they know that having someone like him giving advice to the President, leading diplomacy, making sure the State Department, with the great professionals we have there, is given the ability to do what it does best by leveraging its efforts around the world—I hope that people will think about this and realize that we are much better as a nation having Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State than not having him as Secretary of State and will vote aye on the floor.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I rise today to talk with this body about the NASA Administrator.

Later today, we are going to have a vote that is extremely important for the future of NASA and the future of space exploration, what we are going to do with our satellites, what we are going to do on climate issues, and what we are going to do on weather. All of those are related to NASA.

JIM BRIDENSTINE, who is a friend and who is a fellow Oklahoman, the current Congressman from Tulsa, OK—Oklahoma's 1st District—is the person the President has tapped to say: That is the person I support to be the next NASA Administrator.

He has for months and months and months gone through the process. He has gone through committee hearings and has gotten all kinds of support. The committees he served on in the House of Representatives sent a bipartisan letter with wide majorities to the Senate saying: We have worked with JIM BRIDENSTINE. He is exceptionally knowledgeable about issues on space. He is a great choice.

They sent that letter over from the House to the Senate.

Multiple individuals have written letters in support of JIM BRIDENSTINE, including Sean O'Keefe, who is a former NASA Administrator. Buzz Aldrin also sent an extensive letter in support of JIM BRIDENSTINE and also wrote a pretty remarkable op-ed about JIM BRIDENSTINE, in support for him.

We have had multiple different groups that are space related who have sent us all kinds of information and endorsements about JIM BRIDENSTINE leading NASA and being the next Administrator.

There has been a lot of support from around the country and from multiple individuals—former NASA Administrators, former astronauts, individuals who have risen up—but I still have people who bump into me and say: I don't know who he is. Well, I get that. He is a Congressman from Tulsa, OK. Let me give just a little bit of background so you will have some perspective on him.

JIM BRIDENSTINE began his naval career flying the E–2C Hawkeye off the USS *Abraham Lincoln*. As a naval aviator, he had 333 carrier-arrested landings. He has had 1,900 flight hours in total. While on Active Duty, he transitioned to the F/A–18 Hornet and flew at the Naval Strike. He flew for TOPGUN. He served in Afghanistan. He served in Iraq. He served in our drug interdiction work in Central and South America, flying there. He has had a pretty remarkable naval career.

He graduated from Rice University, which is no simple thing to do. He graduated with a triple major when he finished at Rice University. He has an MBA from Cornell University. He is extremely smart, and he is extremely engaged.

He has been very attentive to the issues of space. Serving in the House of Representatives, he has made his focus space and research and trying to realign NASA into being mission-focused. Some have said that NASA in some ways has lost its focus of what it exist for. JIM BRIDENSTINE has been very, very passionate in trying to get NASA back on focus with a big vision and a big mission. He has done that with multiple different bills that he has worked through, but he has also done that in trying to articulate to the space community why it is extremely important that we have a good, solid, and functioning NASA in all of its areas of operation.

He has the support of our delegation. He has the support of many in the space industry. He has the support of former NASA Administrators. He has the support of former astronauts. And he should have the support of this body today.

We will vote on him at 1:45. NASA's Acting Administrator is in the process of retiring right now. Not only should JIM be here, but we should not have taken this long to actually get to this spot. It has taken 8 months to get to a vote on a NASA Administrator. Let's get him on this task, and let's get him going. We need him in this spot, and I think he will do a fine job. That is not just my opinion; folks from all over the country have risen up and looked at him clearly and have said he is the right person for the job.

NOMINATION OF MIKE POMPEO

Mr. President, I do want to make one additional statement as well. We are in the process of talking about the Secretary of State. It has been very interesting that there has been all this debate about Mike Pompeo.

Mike Pompeo is a friend. He and I came to the House of Representatives together and served in the House beginning in 2011. I got to know him for who he really is.

I have been amazed at the smears in the press and the attacks on his personal character. Every time I read one of those, I think, this is a person who has never met Mike Pompeo.

The best way to evaluate Mike Pompeo is not just on his background—small things like graduating first in his class from West Point, his military service, his time in professional business, his time serving as a House Member, the excellent work he has done over the last year leading our CIA, the cool hand he has been in the middle of the chaos, trying to deal with all of the issues right now in Washington, DC—when you look at him, those are all good marks.

Quite frankly, one of the things I would want to come back to you and say is, meet him. For those of you in this body who doubt, who are willing to read a media story that has taken one thing he said at some point out of context, I would encourage you to meet him and actually have that conversation. You are going to find a fine leader who is dedicated to helping our Nation, who has done it on the battlefield, who has done it as a Representative, who has done it as the Director of the CIA, and who will do an incredible job helping us diplomatically and worldwide in the State Department.

I am looking forward to supporting his nomination—not because I am a Republican and it is a Republican nomination but because he is a quality individual who genuinely wants to help the country and who I think will uphold extremely well the history of diplomacy we have had in the United States.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, let me wholeheartedly agree with the Senator from Oklahoma on Mike Pompeo, as well as the comments he has made about JIM BRIDENSTINE.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING

I would like to deviate just a little bit, though, and remind people that this is April 19, the anniversary of what could be characterized as the greatest domestic terrorist attack in history. It was in our State of Oklahoma at the Alfred P. Murrah office building, and 168 people were killed—many of those were very close personal friends of mine—and 850 others were wounded. I remember so well being there at the time.

Second Corinthians reminds us not to lose heart in times of struggle and tragedy. Instead, through our inherent strength and selflessness, Oklahomans united together to support our neighbors and rebuild our city—''Oklahoma Standard.''

Today, we remember the victims, thank the first responders, and continue to pray for Oklahoma and the families and friends who lost loved ones.

I agree wholeheartedly with the comments that have been made about JIM BRIDENSTINE. I was on the committee that went through his confirmation. I have never heard so many things. The one thing they all had in common was that none of them knew JIM BRIDENSTINE. My colleague talked about a smear campaign. I have never seen a smear campaign like that. I have never seen so much hatred, and for no reason at all. The two of us know JIM BRIDENSTINE well. In fact, he holds the 1st Congressional District seat in the State of Oklahoma. That was my seat. I held that seat for 8 years. Of course, I have gotten to know him very well since that time, and the things that have been said about him—again, the one thing they have in common is they just don't know him and didn't want to know him.

So we will have an Administrator who I think is going to do a good job.

The best thing I can do now, because I think Senator LANKFORD said it better than I could, is just mention two quotes, one of which is from the 2015 SpaceNews. They named him as one of five space leaders making a difference.

Mention was made of Buzz Aldrin. There is no one who is better known in that community than Buzz Aldrin. So I want to use his statement. This is Buzz Aldrin speaking:

> We heartedly support the president's nomination of Mr. Bridenstine as the next NASA administrator, wish him Godspeed during the Senate confirmation process. We encourage you to join us in uniting the space community and our nation behind this nominee so NASA can return to its job of boldly exploring the final frontier.

I couldn't have said it better than that.

So I leave my colleagues with that recommendation from Buzz Aldrin, and I look forward to his confirmation and the vote today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

REMEMBERING PRINCE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor today to remember a Minnesota icon, and that would be Prince, whom we lost 2 years ago. Prince was a one-of-a-kind artist, fiercely independent, and uniquely talented. I grew up with his music.

For Minnesotans, Prince was our superstar next door. He made ''Purple Rain'' a household name, First Avenue a landmark, and brought international fame to Minnesota's music scene.

Minnesota loves Prince, and Prince loved Minnesota. He was born in Minneapolis in 1958 and developed an interest in music at an early age. He wrote his first song at just 7 years old and recorded his early demo tapes at Sound 80 Studios in Minneapolis.

With seven Grammy Awards, an Academy Award, and a Golden Globe Award, he pioneered that ''Minneapolis sound,'' that mix of funk, rock, and pop that emerged in the late 1970s and 1980s and influenced music for decades to come. From Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis to Janet Jackson and Bruno Mars—even Beyonce—so many artists have been influenced by Prince's music and his heart.

Over his career, Prince sold more than 100 million records worldwide, released 39 studio albums, had 5 No. 1 billboard hits, and 40 singles in the top 100 songs.

In 2004, Prince was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame the very first year he was eligible. And 6 years later, he received a Black Entertainment Television Lifetime Achievement Award.

Despite all of his success, Prince never stopped calling the State of Minnesota home. He lived in our State, and he never lost the sense that he was a beloved son, neighbor, and Minnesotan.

He wrote songs about Minnesota sports teams, including ''Purple and Gold'' during the Minnesota Viking's run to the 2010 National Football Conference Championship. When the Minnesota Lynx won their third Women's National Basketball Association Championship, Prince held a concert in their honor.

When Prince passed away on April 21, 2016, he left behind millions of fans and a legacy of music that touched hearts, opened minds, and made people all over the world want to dance. I am proud to honor Prince's life and his achievements as a musician, a composer, an innovator, and a cultural icon, and I am proud to call his home, Minnesota, my home as well.

Prince reminded us all that there's a world waiting for us after this life:

> A world of never-ending happiness
> You can always see the sun, day or night.

I am sure that is where Prince is today. On Saturday, the anniversary, purple will reign again.

ALLOWING SENATORS' YOUNG CHILDREN ON THE SENATE FLOOR

Mr. President, I also rise today to discuss S. Res. 463, a resolution adopted by the Senate yesterday that will allow Senators to bring their infant children to the Senate floor.

Several of my colleagues will be joining me on the floor shortly to discuss the importance of passing this resolution, and I would like to take a moment to thank some of them because without their hard work and support, this resolution would not have been adopted.

Of course, there is Senator DUCKWORTH herself—the person who did all the work in more than one way. This is her second child. She is 50 years old, and she is a pillar of strength. She paved the way for future women Senators who will have children while in office. She may be the first, but she will not be the last.

I would also like to thank Senator DURBIN, her colleague from Illinois, for his work in getting this done. Women may be leading the charge on making workplaces more family friendly, but there are a lot of men, like Senator DURBIN, who have our backs.

I would like to thank Senator MURRAY, who also worked on this with me—a mom in tennis shoes who has long been a true champion for women.

Finally, thanks to Chairman BLUNT and Leaders SCHUMER and MCCONNELL, who helped ensure that this got to the floor and adopted quickly. Chairman BLUNT and I lead the Rules Committee, and we have worked together well for a very long time. I welcome him back to the committee.

I came to the floor earlier this week to discuss the importance of this historic resolution. It is historic for a number of reasons. First, it is very rare for the Senate to expand floor privileges to new groups of people. In fact, it has been decades since we did that. We have to go back to the late 1970s. In fact, there has not been any expansion of who is allowed on the floor since 1997, when a service dog was allowed. That was a long time ago.

I have had a lot of interesting questions about this, including: Would Senator DUCKWORTH's daughter have to abide by the Senate dress code? She will not. She will not have to wear pants or a skirt. She will not wear a Senate pin because that would be dangerous. She can wear a cap if she wants.

Another question: Well, what happens if one day we have 10 babies on the floor? I actually think it would be quite delightful if we had 10 babies on the floor. I don't think there is any imminent concern that will happen, but I do think it would be exciting if we had 10 new moms and dads.

The other reason this is historic is that Senator DUCKWORTH, of course, was the first U.S. Senator to give birth while in office. More women than ever are running for public office, so it is inevitable in the future that more women Senators will have children while in office, and, of course, this new rule applies to men and women.

I think one of the exciting things about this is that Senator DUCKWORTH was very clear that she didn't want this just to be about her and an exception for her; she thought to the future and saw that we would have more women Senators.

Sticking together means recognizing that we have a lot of work to do outside the Halls of Congress, and the women Senators across party lines have stuck together, but we know this fight doesn't end here. We are just an example for the country, but there are so many bigger things to do.

The truth is, too many American moms are not in positions of power to change the rules, which is why it is so important for those of us who are in positions of power to be champions of change—to be able to look at archaic rules that were in place 100 years ago. By adopting this resolution, we set an example. But if we really want to do

something for the rest of America, we have to pass some work- and family-friendly policies, like paid maternity leave and making it easier for workers to get childcare. Those are the kinds of things that will matter to all of America.

But today we set an example for one mom and one baby, and we look forward to meeting her on the floor.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I rise today to express my concern about the nomination of Congressman JIM BRIDENSTINE to be the NASA Administrator. I will oppose his confirmation when the Senate votes this afternoon.

While the nomination is problematic due to Congressman BRIDENSTINE's lack of relevant qualifications and the importance of this position to our Nation, I am deeply concerned about this nomination because it is further evidence of a much deeper problem. I am concerned that this administration does not respect science—especially science in government institutions.

So now let's look at the data.

The Office of Science and Technology Policy, or OSTP, has four positions requiring political appointment, including the Director, who also serves as the President's Chief Science Adviser. The President has made zero—zero—nominations to OSTP and has now taken significantly longer than any other modern President to name a science adviser.

Let's look at how the President's delay compares to past administrations on both sides of the aisle. Presidents Kennedy, Nixon, and Clinton all named a science adviser before they even took office. Presidents Reagan, Carter, and George H.W. Bush all named their science adviser within 4 months of taking office. President George W. Bush waited the longest, but he still chose to pick a physicist to fill the role by June of his first year in the Presidency.

When it comes to prioritizing science in the executive branch, President Trump is not normal. You could say this administration is an outlier or an anomaly. This is the same President who flirted with anti-vaccine conspiracy theories as a candidate and regularly suggested that climate change is a hoax. I am not saying that his lack of a science adviser is causing the President's ill-informed views, but I am saying there is, indeed, a very clear correlation.

It is not just the top science positions that are empty or filled by unqualified nominees either. A talk radio host and a political science professor was nominated to be the Chief Scientist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Political science may be interesting to all of us here in the Senate, but it doesn't have much to do with agricultural science.

Of the 43 nominations the administration has actually made to science-related positions, almost 60 percent do not have advanced degrees in science or health-related fields.

A White House that does not respect science will hold our Nation back. We have historically been a leader in science, and it has unleashed trillions of dollars of economic growth and created millions of jobs. Investment in research and development has been the seed corn for growth in our country and for its economy.

This administration's blatant disregard for science risks ceding that leadership to our competitors, like China, who are making unprecedented commitments in this area.

I do not believe that the Chinese Government is pouring money into scientific research just out of intellectual curiosity; it is because they know it will be the biggest driver of competitiveness and economic growth in the 21st century.

In addition to strong funding for basic research, we need smart, qualified individuals providing leadership across the American scientific enterprise to make sure this money is being well-spent. We need qualified leaders and scientific experts at OSTP, at NOAA, at NSF, at NIH, and we need them at NASA.

NASA has upward of 18,000 employees, 80,000 contractors, and a budget of $20 billion. NASA also is in charge of keeping our astronauts safe and inspiring a generation of young minds as we face a significant shortage of STEM professionals.

NASA's research, science, and technology missions need a champion who understands and promotes nuances of the work being done by scientists on their team. In short, NASA needs an Administrator who will be driven by science and not by politics.

Looking at all of the data—from NASA to OSTP to the USDA—I can't help but reach the conclusion that this administration does not prioritize science, and this needs to change.

I urge my colleagues to vote against Mr. BRIDENSTINE's confirmation today.

I also urge the administration to wake up, make science a priority in the White House and across the executive branch, and start nominating respected scientists to the remaining vacant positions.

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

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

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, the Senate is expected to vote this afternoon to confirm JIM BRIDENSTINE of Oklahoma to be the Administrator of NASA, or the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. For more than 15 months, our national space agency has been without permanent leadership. This is far too long, especially considering the incredibly important work that NASA is undertaking on a daily basis.

The agency is currently working with the commercial space industry, for example, to resume launches of American astronauts to the International Space Station, rather than have to rely on the Russians to transport American astronauts into space. Additionally, teams at NASA are developing the Space Launch System, or SLS, and the Orion capsule. These are components of a rocket system that is the most powerful one built since the Saturn V that sent Neil Armstrong to the Moon. It will pave the way, hopefully, to one day landing astronauts on Mars.

Having a permanent Administrator in place is important not just so the agency itself can function but so NASA can have an impact on our entire country. Having appropriate leadership means NASA can continue to benefit Texans who work there, with jobs and opportunities to research, collaborate, and innovate across disciplines.

The Administrator is charged with selecting the Directors of each of the agency's space centers around the country. This, too, is important. One reason is because at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Dr. Ellen Ochoa, the current director, is stepping down next month, after years of distinguished service. It is critical that we have a competent replacement for her and ensure seamless transition after she leaves. Part of the way we do that is by making sure that this nominee is confirmed today.

We in Texas are, I believe, justifiably proud of the Johnson Space Center. The JSC heads the manned spaceflight program for NASA, which manages the U.S. presence at the International Space Station, among other operations. JSC employs roughly 10,000 people, and virtually all U.S. astronauts pass through it, at one time or another, to receive training. Currently, JSC is involved in developing the Orion capsule, which I spoke of a moment ago. One hundred sixty-nine companies are collaborating with NASA on its launch, creating nearly 800 jobs—not all of them in the Houston region. In fact, in multiple locations around the country, the commercial space industry is growing rapidly. In 2014, the Midland International Air and Space Port became the first federally licensed facility by the FAA for both airline flights and commercial space flights. That is just one of several examples.

Meanwhile, in Washington, we have to continue to do our part supporting U.S. space exploration. Last year, I was proud to have my legislation, called the MANIFEST Act, signed into law as part of the NASA reauthorization, and I hope to collaborate on similar legislation in the future with colleagues.

If we want to keep pushing toward the final frontier, our first step is to

ensure that we have a strong Administrator at the helm, and that is why I intend to vote to support the nomination this afternoon.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT RISK REVIEW MODERNIZATION ACT

Madam President, I wish to switch gears to another issue. I have spoken quite a few times recently about U.S. relations with China, both the opportunities and the concerns that we should have. Last week, I held a hearing in the Finance Subcommittee on International Trade, Customs, and Global Competitiveness to examine the challenges that U.S. businesses, manufacturers, and service providers face when they are trying to access the Chinese market.

The President spoke about this issue in his State of the Union when he called for reciprocity. In other words, we expect to be treated as well as we treat Chinese investment in the United States when we and our companies invest in China, but that is not happening.

I have also been spending a lot of time looking at the long-term national security implications that China poses to our country, which is why I was proud to join our colleague, the senior Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, to recently introduce legislation that will strengthen the process by which the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, otherwise known as CFIUS, weighs national security risks. The CFIUS process was not originally designed, and is now insufficient, to address rapidly evolving technology, as well as the threats to our technological edge, particularly when it comes to dual-use technology that is important for national security reasons. The committee's current jurisdiction and the staffing is both too narrow and inadequate in order to address these evolving threats.

China, in particular, has proven adept at circumventing the current CFIUS process. It exploits gaps and creatively structures business arrangements within the United States to evade scrutiny. That can mean that there would be no scrutiny of those transactions on national security grounds, which is a troubling situation that our bill, the Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act, or FIRRMA, is meant to address. The weaponization of trade and the use of coercive industrial policies are tools that China has been using for some time, and it is imperative that we give CFIUS the full authority it needs to ensure that our advantage in the U.S. military know-how and technology are not stolen from us and used against us.

It is important to note, in the wake of some critics' flawed objections, that my bill does not try to address all, or even most, outbound investments. Rather, it addresses a narrow subset—joint ventures where tech-related intellectual property and know-how are transferred. This is a threat to our industrialized base, or jobs, here in America. If somebody can acquire both the intellectual property and the know-how to make that technology in China, obviously, those are jobs we will not have in the United States.

It is true that these technology transfers are already sometimes covered under current export controls, but the problem is that the harm to our national security is occurring despite those current export controls. So we need to do more. We need to step up to the challenge.

Export controls are not an adequate solution to the situation we are now dealing with because of their inherent limitations. For example, the intellectual property that is at the heart of many of these joint ventures implicates technology that the Commerce Department has, in fact, decontrolled; that is, removed from the relevant export control list.

One last point I need to emphasize is that currently joint ventures are often carefully structured, as I suggested a moment ago, to circumvent this review process. These joint ventures are essentially acquisitions by another name, which is why CFIUS should be able to review them for national securities risks.

Let me be clear, though. Foreign investment is a good thing. These joint ventures are not inherently bad, but we do know that China has used them strategically as a vessel for its activities to try to undermine both our national security edge and jobs in America. Foreign actors know that CFIUS, under normal circumstances, would block their attempt to acquire certain business units outright. So they have been very creative in structuring transactions to obtain the very same industrial capabilities by other means.

To address the national security risks, what we need is an upfront U.S. governmental review, informed by our intelligence assessments, of the foreign partners that are involved. We need to ask whether these foreign partners are affiliated with the Chinese military, for example, or some other potential adversary.

In China, there is no separation between public and private sectors because the Communist Party sits atop the entire Government of China and is basically embedded within all of these Chinese companies. They have an ''all of government'' strategy focused at beating the United States, economically and militarily.

I believe the opponents of the reforms that I have just talked about are trying to perpetuate the status quo as long as possible—not to protect our national security interests but just the opposite—so they can bolster their bottom line, regardless of its potential negative effects on the rest of our country and on our national security.

We simply cannot afford to wait while China whittles away at our technological advantages. The time to act is now. Our national security demands that CFIUS and export controls be made to be interlocking and mutually reinforcing, rather than simply relying on export controls to address these national security risks, which would be foolhardy.

If we want our country to retain its technological advantage and remain the top military superpower in the world, enacting this bill is an essential piece of that. After all, if China supplants the United States—it is not only the top economic but military superpower in the world—the repercussions there will be enormous. We simply have not faced that situation where the U.S. Armed Forces were not the most powerful military in the world since before World War II. It is dangerous, as that war pointed out, when you have countries building their military, acting more belligerently, and inviting retaliation. Let's not start now.

The bipartisan bill that Senator FEINSTEIN and I have filed has been endorsed by the White House and is supported by the current Secretaries of Defense, Treasury, and Commerce, as well as the Attorney General of the United States. Let's not hold it up any longer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

MAJOR STEPHEN DEL BAGNO

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, today, I rise to honor Maj. Stephen Del Bagno, a U.S. Thunderbird pilot who was killed on April 4, 2018, when his F–16 Fighting Falcon crashed at the Nevada Test and Training Range, which is north of Nellis Air Face Base. At just 34, Major Del Bagno's life was cut too short, but his legacy of leadership, commitment to excellence, and service to our country will be preserved by all those who had the privilege of knowing him.

I wish to begin by saying that my wife Lynne and I offer our deepest condolences to Major Del Bagno's family and loved ones. We join the Thunderbirds, Nellis Air Force Base, and the Nevada community in mourning this heavy loss.

Major Del Bagno grew up in Valencia, CA, and he graduated from Utah Valley State University. He received his commission when he graduated from Officer Training School at Maxwell Air Force Base in 2007.

Called ''Cajun'' by his team, he was in his first season with the Thunderbirds. The Thunderbirds are also known as America's Ambassadors in Blue. They are an elite team of highly experienced fighter pilots. In fact, only 325 officers have had the honor of wearing the distinguished Thunderbird patch. They are the best of the best.

In June of 2017, Nellis Air Force Base announced that Major Del Bagno was the first F–35 pilot to serve with the Thunderbirds. He served as the team's slot pilot and flew Thunderbird 4. Brigadier General Leavitt, commander of the 57th Nellis Air Force Base, called Major Del Bagno an integral part of that team.

Prior to joining the Thunderbirds, Major Del Bagno was a civilian flight instructor, he was a corporate pilot, he was a skywriter, and he was a banner tow pilot. According to the Thunderbirds, he logged more than 3,500 flight hours in more than 30 different aircraft. That included 1,400 hours as an Air Force pilot.

In his free time, he enjoyed snowboarding, he enjoyed water sports, and he enjoyed spending time with his family.

Major Del Bagno was laid to rest on April 15, 2018, at a memorial service at his alma mater, Saugus High School, in Santa Clarita, CA. More than 1,000 people attended the memorial and joined together to commemorate his life—a true testament to his impact on the community. During the service, his friends, his family, and fellow wingmen offered loving tributes about his skill, his passion for aviation, and pride in being a member of the Air Force.

Ilene Block, a former guidance counselor for the school, told a local television affiliate that Stephen was ''always giving back'' and said that he often visited the high school to talk to students about his love for flying. His name will soon be added to a wall of heroes at Saugus High School.

Lt. Col. Kevin Walsh, the Thunderbirds' commander, said that Major Del Bagno ''lived to fly and inspire the next generation.'' He also said that he will be remembered ''as a talented fighter pilot and a great friend.''

Selfless, driven, caring, mentor, an inspiration, a big dude with an even bigger heart, brother—those are the words that Major Del Bagno's fellow Thunderbirds used to describe him.

In a video tribute from the Thunderbirds, one said:

> Cajun—you had this way of immediately making people feel special, interesting, and included. The world needs more of that. And now, your memory is going to inspire all of us to be a little bit more like you. And hopefully we'll make you proud. We miss you and love you.

The loss of Major Del Bagno is an enormous tragedy that has struck the heart of the Thunderbirds, Nellis Air Force Base, and every life that he touched.

Major Del Bagno's death is a reminder that we are all forever indebted to the men and women who answer the call to serve this country and stand guard, training and preparing each day for when duty calls.

It is a reminder of what they give up and what they risk when they bravely step up to the plate so that we can remain an extraordinary and free nation.

It is also a reminder of the families, like the Del Bagnos, who have lost a loved one and paid a price beyond measure. They deserve our lasting support.

I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the life of Major Del Bagno and his unbounded determination that set him apart. These are the people whose characters embody the American spirit, the people who truly humble us and inspire us through their unwavering commitment, the people who represent the very best that this country has to offer.

I close with this. In a video honoring Major Del Bagno's memory, the Thunderbirds talked about how he would spend time teaching kids about flying as a Thunderbird. They said he chose to share his passion with kids. In that same video, there was footage of Major Del Bagno responding to a question about advice for kids who want to be pilots in the Air Force. He talked about the five P's of success. This is what he said:

> Find your passion. Find your purpose. Be persistent in your pursuit. Be personable . . . so humble, credible, and approachable. And then it'll pay off. People are going to tell you ''no'' along the way—it's just a test of your resolve. If you really want it, go out and make that known.

I am confident that Major Del Bagno's legacy will inspire the next generation of fighter pilots, as well as Nevadans and Americans around the country, for decades to come.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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

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

CONGRATULATING SENATOR DUCKWORTH

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I was on the floor today to first and foremost congratulate Senator DUCKWORTH on the new addition to her family. We were anticipating seeing a new baby, and now we will be able to meet that child right here on the Senate floor.

We do want to commend and salute Senator DUCKWORTH, of course—long before today—on her life of service and remarkable courage and sacrifice, and our Nation owes her a debt of gratitude, not just for this recent news about her resolution but also for her great service to the country.

This resolution is an important step forward for the U.S. Senate in terms of the people who are permitted to be on the floor, and we are glad that we have such consensus to make it possible for the youngest among us to get to the floor.

It is also one way to demonstrate our Nation's commitment to families and policies that allow children to get off to a strong and smart start to their lives. So many of us have worked on those policies for many years, whether it is making childcare more affordable, paid family leave, flexible work arrangements, or so many other priorities. I hope we can use this opportunity to continue to work together to benefit our Nation's children, and we are grateful to be part of that effort.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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

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

SYRIA

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to talk about Syria and all of the horrors we have been seeing over not just months but years.

Many people around this Nation, as well as people in the international community—whether they are in refugee camps in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon, or in bombed-out neighborhoods in Damascus, Aleppo, and Homs—so many people across the country and across the world are wondering, what will President Trump do next in Syria? Are we any closer to a resolution of this terrible conflict that will allow the Syrian people to rebuild their lives?

More than 7 years have passed since the Syrian people first began protesting the Assad regime's brutal rule, and that may be a terrible understatement. The ongoing conflict continues to have an impact on U.S. national security interests. In these 7 years, almost 500,000 Syrians have been killed—half a million Syrians killed—and more than 12 million have been displaced from their homes. Sometimes that means they leave their homes and go to another community or another place within Syria, but of course many—maybe even most—have gone to another country. It is hard to comprehend that because that is a little more than half of the population of Syria. Imagine if half of more than 300 million Americans were forced to leave their homes because of a war, because of bombings, because of the brutality of a regime. That is what has happened in Syria. Half the population has been displaced, and half a million have been killed.

This is a conflict that began rather modestly but courageously. A group of young people scrawled graffiti on the walls of local buildings in protest of their own government's repressive policies. This was in the context of a movement of young people across the region—meaning the Middle East—standing up against autocratic governance. The Syrian regime cracked down brutally, and of course we all know that the conflict escalated from there.

I remind my colleagues of the genesis of this conflict because so much has happened over the last 7 years, and the

path toward a resolution remains unclear. I have said before and will say again today that I believe, as most analysts do, that there is no purely military solution to the conflict in Syria.

Although the Russian and Iranian influence has always been present in Damascus, it has grown exponentially as the United States has ceded its leadership role on this issue. Beginning with the Obama administration, I have urged the executive branch to articulate a clear policy toward Syria, to empower our diplomatic and defense officials to demonstrate U.S. leadership on this issue, and to resist ceding our regional influence to adversaries like Russia and Iran.

We cannot afford to ignore the carnage in Syria at the hands of the Assad regime and their backers—namely, of course, the Iranians and the Russians. U.S. vision and leadership are needed.

Following the illegal, immoral, and appalling gas attack that killed more than 80 civilians in April 2017, the U.S. military executed standoff airstrikes against Syrian regime military targets. That was a proportional response to a heinous attack on civilians, but I also encouraged the administration at the time to develop a comprehensive plan to address the Syria conflict. Then nothing happened—well, I guess not nothing. In the year since then, the President has disempowered and now replaced Secretary of State Tillerson, failed to take decisive action in implementing sanctions on Russian entities enacted by overwhelming majorities in the House and Senate, and he has continued to confuse our allies with his policymaking-by-tweet.

This week, I attended a briefing on this issue conducted by a number of administration officials, principally by Secretary Mattis. I was impressed with his goal of developing a cohesive Syria strategy; however, I remain concerned that no clear strategy has yet emerged to promote U.S. national security interests in the region, to advance the national security of our allies, such as Israel, or to protect the innocent Syrians being targeted by their own government. This lack of a consistent and considered strategy has given Bashar al-Assad the political space to continue to commit war crimes—and that is what they are, war crimes.

Just one day after President Trump announced—again on Twitter—that the United States would soon be withdrawing from Syria, Assad's forces committed another heinous chemical weapons attack on a town that had already been suffering under siege by the Russian-backed Syrian Army. At least 56 civilians were killed in 24 hours.

Now, of course, we all know that last week, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France responded with missile strikes against three Syrian chemical weapons development and storage facilities. But we have not heard what the administration plans to do next to work with our allies and partners on the humanitarian and political aspects of this conflict.

Over the last several years, Russian, Iranian, and Turkish leaders have met to discuss the future of Syria. We all saw that picture of Mr. Ruhani, Mr. Erdogan, and Mr. Putin—three of our government's adversaries. Sometimes we work with them, but on most days, at least two of the three—the Russian and Iranian leaders—are adversaries. Certainly Mr. Erdogan has been back and forth between being an adversary and having an alliance with us on some issues. That picture was very disturbing. Are we going to allow those three to dictate policy not just in Syria but in the Middle East? Those three? I don't think so. I don't think that is what American policy should be.

By failing to engage in these negotiations, the United States has ceded control of the outcomes to states with national interests often in direct conflict with our own. The Russian Government has made clear that they believe that all Syrian territory must return to the Assad regime's control before political reforms can be considered. The Iranian regime has made clear that their objective is to remain in control of territory—either directly or through proxies—from Tehran to Beirut.

This is unacceptable. Assad's continued presence in Damascus is and will remain a recruiting tool for terrorists in the region. His regime allowed organizations like ISIS to grow and metastasize while Iranian forces have supplied tens of millions of arms to Hezbollah fighters who pose a clear threat to Israel.

At different points during the last 15 months, we have heard many conflicting reports of this administration's Syria policy. At one point, the administration said it would endorse a transition plan that would leave Bashar al-Assad in power for at least another 4 years. At another point, Secretary Tillerson said the United States would retain a long-term military presence in Syria for combat operations, surge ''stabilization'' assistance to opposition-controlled areas, and ''rally the Syrian people and individuals within the regime to compel Assad to step down.'' We have also seen the President say that we are withdrawing from Syria and, most recently, conflicting reports on whether the United States will levy new sanctions on the Russian entities that enable and support the murderous Assad regime. So there have been a lot of mixed signals by different officials over the course of these 15 months since the administration started.

Meanwhile, our Russian and Iranian adversaries have been clear and consistent in their policies: Protect their Syrian puppet, Bashar al-Assad, as long as it is politically expedient. The Russians and Iranians don't give a damn about the Syrian people or regional stability. In fact, instability serves their interest. They fuel and feed the regime. They advise and equip Assad's army and security forces and, in the case of Russia, block the United Nations from holding the regime accountable.

The continued political turmoil in Damascus coupled with continued besiegement of the Syrian people will lead to long-term instability in Syria. The U.S. military should be commended for its leadership in the international coalition fight against ISIS and for supporting local and regional forces in retaking Iraqi and Syrian territory from terrorist control.

CENTCOM commander General Votel testified in March of 2017, and these are important words that he spoke:

> We will defeat ISIS militarily; however, a lasting defeat of this enemy will not be achieved unless similar progress is made on the political front. Instability all but guarantees a resurgence of ISIS or the emergence of other terrorist groups seeking to exploit conditions to advance their own aims.

So said the CENTCOM commander, and we should listen to his words and take action in accordance with those words.

The administration must continue to lead the international community in humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people and accelerate support for programs that promote good governance, rule of law, and basic service provision in communities liberated from ISIS control. While we believe partners in the region should also contribute more generously, we should lead by example by robustly funding relevant accounts in the fiscal 2019 budget.

I am also thankful for the brave Americans who have volunteered their skills and their time to help the people of Syria survive—literally survive. I thank, in particular, the Syrian American Medical Society, doctors and aid workers who deliver assistance to displaced Syrians and to those who have remained within their borders. These courageous volunteers have stepped in to fill the gaps left by the international community and—I have to say—risking their own lives virtually every minute they are on the ground.

More than 7 years since the conflict began, the situation in Syria remains critical and U.S. leadership is needed more than ever. Although I, too, expressed concern with President Obama's Syrian strategy, a year and a half into the Trump Presidency, it is no longer sufficient to blame the previous administration. I urge President Trump to present a strategy for Syria that protects American national security interests in the region, pushes back against Iranian and Russian influence and aggression, and, finally, empowers the Syrian people in their pursuit of a stable, secure, and prosperous future for their country.

Thank you.

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. BURR. 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 MIKE POMPEO

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I rise today because of what is on our schedule for next week. Next week, the Senate will consider the nomination by the President for his Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo.

This is one of those times that I want to compliment the administration on a great pick. Mike Pompeo is a great leader. Mike, as a teenager, decided he wanted to go to West Point. Not only did he graduate from West Point, he graduated from West Point at the top of his class. He went into one of the least likely places, the Cavalry. He was a magnificent leader within the U.S. Army Cavalry.

He went on to Harvard Law School, and he earned his law degree, but he didn't stop there. He was invited to be part of the Harvard Law Review, which is a very special cadre of individuals.

He left and started an aerospace company, as many know—a very successful business. After that, because he believed community service was important, he ran for the U.S. House of Representatives, State of Kansas, where he served three terms with great distinction.

He was tapped, all of a sudden, to the Director of the CIA in one of the most challenging times to be involved in intelligence, much less to be the Director of the CIA.

By all accounts, those of us who serve on the Intelligence Committee and those people within the intelligence community but, more importantly, our partners around the world, after a very short period of time, have gained unbelievable respect for Mike Pompeo.

It is tough for me to believe that this is not a nomination we are passing like the last two Secretaries of State, John Kerry and Senator Hillary Clinton. The vote was 94 to 2 for both of them. I was here. I am pretty sure that I supported both of them, and it is not because I aligned with them politically. It is because I inherently believe that a President has the right to pick his nominees and for those nominees to serve, and short of something that is a disqualifier that the Senate finds in their background, the President should have the authority to have that person serve.

I just described to you the background of Mike Pompeo. Somebody is going to be hard-pressed to show me anything that is a disqualifier—other than politics. This institution has shown that politics never plays a part in nominations, whether we are in charge or whether the other side is in charge, regardless of who is at the White House.

This institution has been bogged down because nominations take weeks. We pass nobody under unanimous consent. Everybody is a challenge. It makes you wonder why people like Mike Pompeo would, in fact, go through the process to be confirmed.

Let me remind my colleagues, we just confirmed him for his post, so he has already been confirmed to serve in the administration in one of the most challenging jobs—the CIA Director. For some reason, people now find that he is not qualified to be Secretary of State. What could it be, other than politics, that comes into play?

I am here to attest to my colleagues that Mike Pompeo is a good man. He is a good husband. He is a good father. He has been a great leader. As a Member of the Senate with the charge of confirming nominees, I would say that this is the type of person we pray will be sent to us by the executive branch to confirm in a role.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—you may have differences with positions he has taken in the past, but for God's sake, do not question his qualifications to be a great leader. He has proved it. Do not question his background from a standpoint of education or his commitment to the country. He has passed the hardest tests in education, and, more importantly, he has passed the most important test of patriotism. He has served his country with distinction. My hope, my plea with my fellow colleagues is that they will allow Mike Pompeo to continue to serve his country, this time in the role of Secretary of State. I urge my colleagues to support him.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be allowed to speak for one minute.

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

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise today to recommend and urge my colleagues to vote for JIM BRIDENSTINE as Administrator of NASA. We will be voting on his nomination momentarily.

JIM BRIDENSTINE has incredible experience, an incredible resume, and an incredible understanding of the mission before NASA. We need somebody with a vision. We need somebody who actually has an idea of where we should take our great space mission—somebody who has commercial experience, somebody who has government experience, somebody who has management experience, and, yes, somebody who has experience within the industry itself, and that person is JIM BRIDENSTINE.

JIM has bipartisan support and support from the House. My fellow colleague, Democratic Congressman ED PERLMUTTER from Colorado, along with a dozen other Democratic Members from the House of Representatives, said that JIM BRIDENSTINE will be an excellent NASA Administrator. He has the understanding, background, capability, and, more importantly, the drive and desire to do an excellent and outstanding job at NASA. I urge my colleagues to vote yes.

You just heard our colleague RICHARD BURR talk about Director Pompeo's nomination as Secretary of State. Blind bipartisanship cannot be the only reason that drives votes in this Chamber. Whether it is for the Secretary of State or the Director of NASA, I urge my colleagues to vote yes, put partisanship aside, and start moving these nominations and doing what is right for this country. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on JIM BRIDENSTINE.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Bridenstine nomination?

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

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

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 80 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—49

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

NOT VOTING—1

McCain

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.

The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 624.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Stuart Kyle Duncan, of Louisiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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

The 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 Stuart Kyle Duncan, of Louisiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Thom Tillis, John Cornyn, John Kennedy, Richard Burr, Mike Lee, David Perdue, Steve Daines, James Lankford, Pat Roberts, Johnny Isakson, Jeff Flake, Lindsey Graham, Patrick J. Toomey, Marco Rubio, Tom Cotton, James E. Risch.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WELCOMING MAILE PEARL BOWLSBEY TO THE SENATE FLOOR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, it was very exciting to have Maile Pearl with us on the floor just moments ago. It was certainly the first time I have seen a little baby on the floor of the Senate and may be a good symbol for the work the Senate will be doing in the future for the children of the United States of America.

Congratulations to Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH and her husband, Bryan Bowlsbey, for this miraculous addition to American citizenry. We are looking forward to seeing little Maile as she grows and prospers in all of the chapters of her life ahead.

ROHINGYA HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Mr. President, while accepting his Nobel Peace Prize, the great humanitarian and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel said: ''Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe.''

As we look around the world today, there are far too many places where men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, but a place that really stands out is the nation of Burma.

The Rohingya people have endured unimaginable pain and suffering. Since August of last year, with assaults by the military and nearby groups in Burma, 350 villages have been burned; women and girls of all ages have been raped; and over 700,000 Rohingya have fled their nation for neighboring Bangladesh to escape this horrific assault. In just the first month of this crisis, Doctors Without Borders said well over 6,000 Rohingya were killed, including hundreds of children under the age of 5. One U.N. adviser on genocide prevention said: ''The Rohingya have endured what no human beings should ever have to endure.''

Now we are seeing the brutality of the Burmese military, followed by a deliberate strategy of isolation and starvation.

Several times in recent years, Nicholas Kristof of the New York Times has traveled to Burma to report on the Rohingya. Earlier this year, he entered the country on a tourist visa. He was warned by the Burmese Government not to do any reporting, but he did. He traveled to a total of five Rohingya villages and worked hard to be able to see these places to which everyone was banned from going.

Back in November, a group of five Members of Congress went to visit these same villages—two Senators and three House Members. We were told by the Government of Burma that we would be allowed to visit the villages, but at the very last moment, the government rescinded its invitation. Two months earlier, in September of last year, the leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, had said to the United Nations that Burma had nothing to hide and that the international community was welcome to come and see for themselves. So five Members of Congress went to see for themselves and for their constituents and to be able to report back to the entire Nation, but we were not allowed to see these camps, these villages, that had been burned.

Nicholas Kristof did succeed in going. Here is what he wrote:

What I found was a slow-motion genocide. The massacres and machete attacks of last August are over for now, but Rohingya remain confined in their villages—and to a huge concentration camp—and are systematically denied most education and medical care. So they die. No one counts the deaths accurately, but my sense is that the Myanmar Government kills more Rohingya by denying them health care and sometimes food than by wielding machetes or firing bullets.

Matthew Smith, from the human rights group Fortify Rights, said: ''These tactics are right out of the genocidaires' playbook . . . underfeeding and systematically weakening a population has been characteristic of other genocides.''

We in the congressional delegation were not allowed to go to those villages to see for ourselves. We were allowed to go to Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State, where the Rohingya live. In the capital, we were told we could visit Aung Mingalar. It is also called the Muslim Quarter. When I took this picture, I was standing in the Muslim Quarter, looking down the street. What you see is a police station at the end of the street and a barrier. This neighborhood is cut off from the rest of the capital.

If you think of the early stage of the Warsaw Ghetto, when people were not allowed to leave the neighborhood, that is what is happening right at this moment in the capital of Rakhine State in Sittwe. It is illegal for them to leave. In fact, the folks who live there have stores that have been locked up and shut for years because they are not allowed to leave this neighborhood and open their stores. There is a hospital right around the corner, and they are not allowed to go to it. Instead, they have to get safe passage to an internally displaced person's camp outside of Sittwe, get a referral slip, and come back to Sittwe to go to the hospital. There are incredibly difficult logistical challenges placed between this neighborhood and the hospital that is right next door.

This happens to be in the capital, where folks can stand along these fences and make trades for food, and they can receive on their smartphones international support. Yet imagine if you took this neighborhood and lifted it out of the city and placed it out in the countryside where there is no supporting community around the outside—maybe no cell service, so you can't receive money on your cell phone. There are 120,000 people who are living in these camps, IDP camps, in Rakhine State—120,000.

Then think of those folks who fled those 350 villages that were burned—who fled and saw their family members shot, their family members raped, their family members burned inside of the huts that were torched in those villages.

Nicholas Kristof writes: ''The folks who remain are being subjected to slow-motion genocide through starvation and deprivation of medical resources.''

This is beyond acceptable. That condition is a form of ethnic cleansing, a form of genocide, and the United States should be absolutely vigilant in leading the world to respond.

Those folks who fled to safety in Bangladesh are also continuing to experience extreme hardship. This is a picture from the hillside, which is where we were. There are still a few trees standing, but the trees have been coming down to provide firewood and

to provide various, little supports to keep the houses upright. Mostly, these little houses—these little shelters—are being built on split bamboo that is split into very tiny pieces, tied up into a frame, and then plastic is draped over it. It is hard to imagine what this camp is going to look like when the monsoons hit. The monsoons were supposed to hit a few weeks ago. They have not yet, but they could hit any day now, and these camps are going to become a devastated mess when that occurs.

There are now 900,000 Rohingya—700,000 from this last horrific year—and several hundred thousand from previous episodes in which they were attacked by the military. Terrible sanitation makes these camps a breeding ground for cholera, diphtheria, and measles. There is a lot of concern that when the flooding comes with the monsoons, that will be when the sanitation systems will overflow and contaminate the water, and the cholera epidemic will follow.

Save the Children and other organizations have said: ''The Rohingya refugee crisis is a children's emergency.''

Camps are full of young men and women. This little boy here had built a little, tiny kite and was flying it around—just a scrap of plastic and two little scraps of wood. When I first saw it fluttering in the air, I asked: What is that? He brought it down and showed us here. You can see the shadow on the ground. They are children who are just trying to be children, making a little toy.

This young man and the other children are the lucky ones who got out alive. The survivors tell us about infants being ripped from their mothers' arms, thrown alive into the burning fires, toddlers murdered in front of their families, countless teenage girls and even younger raped. Infants and young children in both the IDP camps and the refugee camps are still dying of disease and malnutrition. Those who are surviving now have to grow up in camps like this. Where will they go? How will they thrive? They have to figure out right now just how to survive day-to-day.

When I was in Bangladesh and at this camp, there was an international group who had set up a tent and was enabling the kids to come and play games, to draw pictures, to sing songs. This young man here—by the way, here is Congressman CICILLINE from the House side—was showing me the drawing that he had made that shows helicopters shooting at the villages. This is a piece of what these children had experienced. Many of them have drawings of helicopters and trucks that are shooting at the villagers as their families flee. I hope that the children have many joys like making and flying kites, but they are carrying scars we cannot even begin to imagine.

Now these children—homeless, without a school or access to minimal healthcare—have to figure out how to go forward. In one of Nicholas Kristof's articles, he writes that he spoke to a 12-year-old child in a camp and asked him what he hoped to do when he grew up. That is a question we often ask children. What do you hope to be? What do you hope to do? The child responded: ''I don't have any dreams.'' That is a fairly heartbreaking response—young age, dreams crushed, just the challenge of surviving day-to-day. Every child in the world deserves to be able to dream.

The Rohingya in Bangladesh today are facing an impossible challenge. They are in a refugee camp that is full of hundreds of thousands of people and that has inadequate infrastructure. They would like to be able to reclaim their villages and return home. Quite frankly, Bangladesh, which is hosting them, would like them to be able to reclaim their villages and return home, but they can't do so without enormous effort on the behalf of the very government that sent its military to annihilate them. They need international protection. They need a change of heart of the leaders of Burma.

Aung San Suu Kyi is a Nobel Peace Prize laureate because she stood up for the democratic process and suffered years of home detention as she pushed to have democracy restored. We in the world have expected her to stand up for this community and say it is unacceptable for these Rohingya families to be persecuted, this community to be persecuted in this fashion, but she has not stood up. I know many Members here have encouraged her to reverse course and stand up and not be part of this ethnic cleansing and part of this genocide. Only with her change of heart, only with her championship, only with her determination to have Burma respected on the international stage and to have human rights respected in that nation will the return be able to happen.

Right now there is no expectation that this can occur. However, there was an interesting story this past week. Earlier this week, a Facebook post on the official page of Burma's Information Committee showed a family being repatriated back—a family of five being repatriated. They were being checked out medically. They received packages of rice, mosquito nets, and blankets, according to this post. But do you know what? No one really believes this story. There is no international agency involved in protecting this family. Were they even refugees to begin with? We don't know.

What we do know is that the story itself said they are not going to be able to return to their village. They are going to be sent to an IDP camp—an internally displaced persons camp. There are already 120,000 people in camps just like this. Those are prison camps. While this is meant as a public gesture to the world that Burma is going to protect this family, Burma is sending them to a prison camp. Let no one in the international community be fooled.

The publicity campaign also showed them receiving national verification cards, but not citizenship cards. They are not being welcomed back as citizens. They are still being stripped of their citizenship. Even in their best effort to pretend that they are doing something positive, this family is being denied citizenship and being sent to a prison camp.

The international world must respond. How are we to do so?

Let us all encourage the President of the United States—our President of the United States—to speak about this horrific international case of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Since August, we have not had one word from the leader of our country about this horrific crime. We need to hear from our President. The world needs to hear from our President.

Second, we need to pass the repatriation resolution that has passed the Foreign Relations Committee unanimously, calling for the safe and dignified, voluntary and sustainable return of the Rohingya people. It demands that the United Nations must be part of any formal agreement. It has the unanimous support of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Let's put it on the floor and have the unanimous support of the Senate as well.

Third, let's have on the floor and pass the sanctions bill called the Burma Human Rights and Freedom Act. This, too, has passed committee. This targets the military, which perpetuated this genocide. It doesn't allow those military leaders to travel to the United States. It doesn't allow military weapons sales to Burma. It cuts off military cooperation, except for humanitarian cooperation and training, to target the military that perpetuated this crime and to send a signal that this is unacceptable. Who else in the world—what dictator in the world—is looking at what has occurred in Burma and saying: We, too, can drive out a minority community we have gotten tired of.

The United States must respond in force. We need to invest in the education of children who are in those refugee camps. They are there with no schools. If it takes several years for them to find a permanent home, if ever, we can't afford to then go years without education, without schools. Let the international community invest in their education and let the United States lead in that effort.

Let's give strong international support to Bangladesh. Bangladesh didn't have to open their borders to this flow of 700,000 refugees from across the river in Burma, but they did. In a humanitarian way, they did. They said: We will not let you be shot down on the banks across on the other side. Come and find refuge.

But now, the Government of Bangladesh needs international support. They are a poor country—poor in a way we can't even imagine. That nation is half the size of Oregon. When it floods,

it is a quarter of the size of Oregon. In my home State of Oregon, we have 4 million citizens. Bangladesh already has 160 million citizens. There is no space. That is why these camps are crowded onto hillsides and carved into the dirt, because there is no place for people to be set up on flat land where it is easy to establish facilities.

These five things are what we must do: first, for our President to be a vocal international leader and bring the international community together; second, to pass the repatriation resolution; third, to bring to the floor and to pass the sanctions bill, the Burma Human Rights and Freedom Act; fourth, to send a message to Burma and the rest of the world to invest in the education of the children; and fifth, to give strong international support to Bangladesh, which is doing all it can but is in a very difficult spot to receive so many in an overcrowded and impoverished nation.

Elie Wiesel said: ''Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe.'' Let us then make Burma and the refugee camps in Bangladesh the center of the universe and come to their assistance.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The Senator from Rhode Island.

RUSSIAN ELECTION INTERFERENCE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I come to the floor to continue my series of speeches about Russia's actions in the 2016 election and the threat that Russia poses for the 2018 midterm elections and our national security.

Free, fair, and open elections are the foundation of our country. The Framers created a unique system that has stood for over 200 years and served as a beacon around the world.

Regrettably, the Russian hybrid operations and malign influence against the 2016 election has put the sanctity and security of our democracy in question.

Our duty as citizens and as legislators is to recognize this crisis and take concrete steps to protect our democracy. We must foster a climate of vigilance and Federal-State cooperation when it comes to elections integrity. So today, I wanted to take a moment to review what happened and offer some steps that we should take immediately.

Some may say that there was no interference and that talking about Russia's meddling against our democratic institutions is ''fake news.'' I wish it were ''fake news'', but the facts are very clear and are acknowledged by experts of every political viewpoint. Let me take a moment to review what happened before I discuss the threat and what we should do.

Fifteen months have now passed since the intelligence community released its assessment, which concluded that the Kremlin attacked the heart of our democracy by interfering with our elections process. This operation sought to weaken our democratic institutions, amplify and exacerbate societal tensions, and generally sow chaos.

There is clear evidence that the Kremlin sought to influence the 2016 Presidential election. The key findings of the intelligence community's assessment were these:

> We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. presidential election. Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency.
>
> Moscow's influence campaign followed a Russian messaging strategy that blends covert intelligence operations—such as cyber activity—with overt efforts by Russian government agencies, state-funded media, third-party intermediaries, and paid social media users or ''trolls.''
>
> Russia's state-run propaganda machine contributed to the influence campaign by serving as a platform for Kremlin messaging to Russian and international audiences.

In February of this year, leaders of the intelligence community appeared before the Senate Intelligence Committee and reaffirmed these findings. In a related action, in February, the special counsel's office issued indictments against 13 Kremlin-linked trolls for conducting ''information warfare against the United States'' with the purpose of interfering with U.S. political and electoral processes, including the 2016 U.S. Presidential election.

These tactics are aspects of a larger coordinated operation of hybrid aggression conducted by the Kremlin, using the broad spectrum of military and nonmilitary tools at its disposal. The main tenets of the Kremlin's hybrid operations are these: information operations with cyber tools, which people commonly think of as hacking; propaganda and disinformation; manipulation of social media; and malign influence, which can be deployed through political and financial channels.

Furthermore, throughout this hybrid campaign, Russia has denied its involvement and engaged in deception to hide its fingerprints.

Russia recognizes that, for now, its military capabilities are limited relative to the United States and NATO, and it will seek to avoid a direct military conflict with the West. Instead, Russian tactics leverage their strengths and exploit our open society and free markets in ways that they hope will have a strategic impact without leading to conventional war.

As laid out in the ''Russian National Security Strategy'' in 2015, the Kremlin's approach to how they respond to conflict includes weaponizing tools and resources from across their government and society.

The Russian strategy states:

> Interrelated political, military, military-technical, diplomatic, economic, informational, and other measures are being developed and implemented in order to ensure strategic deterrence and the prevention of armed conflicts.

This strategy describes the conventional and nonconventional use of warfare as the Kremlin sees it and how Russia has utilized all the tools of statecraft to engage an adversary without, in many cases, actually firing actual shots. These different disciplines together can be called a Russian hybrid approach to confrontation below the threshold of direct armed conflict, which has been developing and escalating since the earliest days of Putin's rise to power.

Russia's attacks have not ceased since the 2016 election. As former FBI Director James Comey so presciently stated about the Russians, ''They'll be back.''

Former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper assessed that the Kremlin has ''been emboldened'' by the success of their operations to date and warned that hybrid operations ''will continue.'' At a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing in February, CIA Director Pompeo confirmed that the intelligence community has seen ''Russian activity and intentions'' to affect the 2018 midterm elections.

Director of National Intelligence Coats stated at this same hearing that our intelligence experts expect that Russia will conduct bolder and more disruptive cyber operations in the coming year. The agency heads from across our intelligence community agreed with this assessment.

The warnings from our current and former intelligence officials appear to be spot-on. There has been a steady pace of Russian hybrid operations deployed against us, our allies, and partners, with varying degrees of intensity and mixes of tools and methods. The techniques unleashed against us in the 2016 elections as laid out by our intelligence community were deployed with maximum intensity during last year's French Presidential elections. There was also evidence of hybrid operations against the German Federal elections held in September of 2017. Kremlin-linked trolls targeted the people of Spain, exacerbating divisions during the referendum on Catalonian independence. Outgoing National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster said we have seen ''initial signs'' that the Kremlin is using tools from its hybrid arsenal against the upcoming Mexican elections. After last month's poisoning of the former Russian spy and his daughter on British soil, an estimated 2,800 Kremlin-linked bots were unleashed to cast doubt on Prime Minister May's assessment that Russia was responsible and to amplify divisions among the British people. While the majority of the interference appears to have come from Russia, others are catching on and deploying these tools as well.

As highlighted in the Economist last week, a coalition of Indonesian religious extremist groups used propaganda and disinformation to affect a local election in Jakarta last year. The frontrunner, a Christian, was falsely accused of insulting Islam and huge rallies were organized against him. In the end, he lost to a candidate that

held the support of Muslim groups. This more overt interference has been coupled with covert information operations, using social media to smear candidates they deem ''not Muslim enough.''

A second Christian candidate in upcoming Indonesian regional elections has been portrayed as a front for Christian domination in a country that has an estimated 90-percent Muslim population and has been featured in a video that falsely claimed that he was part of a massive church building campaign.

With voters in this area spending an average of 4 to 5 hours a day looking at social media on their phones, videos and messages have quickly gone viral. As this example highlights, these campaigns don't even have to be sophisticated. They use tactics out of the Kremlin's playbook and they indicate how ubiquitous this type of activity is becoming across the world.

We also continue to see evidence of the Kremlin and Kremlin-linked agents deploy hybrid tools to sow division, exacerbate racial and religious divides, and amplify social tensions here at home. We don't have to look far for examples.

Kremlin-linked trolls flooded Twitter with messages intended to sow division and disinformation in the wake of the tragic shootings in Las Vegas and Parkland, FL.

During the special election to fill the Alabama Senate seat vacated by now-Attorney General Jeff Sessions, one candidate gained 1,100 Russian-origin Twitter followers over a 3-day period, with many of the accounts appearing to be artificial.

January press reports indicate that Fancy Bear—the Russian military-linked hackers who perpetrated attacks on the Democratic National Committee in the 2016 election—have been attempting to penetrate the emails of Senate offices in the run-up to the 2018 midterm elections.

Kremlin propaganda outlets RT and Sputnik continue to try to capitalize on our open press and public debates to spread disinformation and amplify division.

In sum, Kremlin and Kremlin-linked agents are still trying to hack us, our allies, and partners to fuel their information operations. They are still using trolls and bots to manipulate social media and targeting us with disinformation campaigns and still deploying propaganda.

In the absence of strategic action to deter these kinds of attacks, Russia sees our 2018 midterm elections as another prime target.

Despite this threat and multiple warnings from across our intelligence community, Trump administration officials have testified to Congress dating back to last spring that the President has not directed his Cabinet or senior staff to work on a strategy to protect our democratic institutions. When I asked Defense Secretary Mattis on June 13, 2017, whether the President had directed him to begin intensive planning to protect our electoral system against the next Russian cyber attack, he was not able to point to any guidance indicating that the President recognizes the urgency of the Russian threat or the necessity of preparing to counter it during midterm elections.

On June 21, 2017, I asked officials from the Department of Homeland Security, who are in charge of election security, whether the President had directed them to come up with a plan to protect our critical election infrastructure. They responded no.

On October 19, 2017, I asked leading officials from the Pentagon, the FBI, and the Department of Homeland Security, who are in charge of protecting critical cyber infrastructure, including our electoral infrastructure, if the President had directed them to counter the Russian threat. They could not point to any specific direction coming from the White House to do so.

On February 13, 2018, I asked the top directors of our intelligence community whether the President had directed them to take specific action to blunt or disrupt ongoing Russian influence activities. I received no affirmative responses. FBI Director Wray said he had not been ''specifically directed by the President.'' Admiral Rogers, who serves as head of both the National Security Agency and Cyber Command, responded: ''I can't say that I have been explicitly directed to 'blunt or actively stop.' '' The other witnesses could not point to any directives from the President to confront or blunt Russian influence operations either.

On February 27, 2018, I asked Admiral Rogers whether he has the authority and the capability to disrupt hacking operations where they originate. He responded that he does not have the authority from the President to go after these perpetrators and stated that the government as a whole has so far, in his words, ''opted not to engage.''

The bottom line is that the President has not directed anyone in the intelligence community, his Cabinet, or elsewhere in his administration to develop or implement a strategy to disrupt, blunt, or retaliate against Russia for its hybrid aggression against our democracy. This threat is clear, and it only grows as we move closer to our midterm elections in November. It is past time for the President to step up and provide strategic leadership against Russian interference.

Russia has gone to school on our social and political divisions and our democratic institutions and will continue to adapt. They have learned how to exploit our vulnerabilities and are planning future operations to hit our blind spots. We are fooling ourselves if we are only looking to protect against the threats from the last Russian operation. We need to be prepared to blunt what comes next.

February testimony from the Armed Services Cybersecurity Subcommittee highlights this evolving threat. Professor Richard Harknett, a cyber security expert from the University of Cincinnati, warned that Russia's 2016 campaign against our elections was the ''stone age'' relative to the sophistication of cyber activities we are likely to see in the coming elections. Similarly, Russia expert Heather Conley from the Center for Strategic and International Studies testified at the same hearing. She said:

> If we're preparing for what Russia did in 2016, it will be very different in November. It will be very different in 2020. It will look more American. It will look less Russian. And so this is adaptation. We are already fighting the last war.

As an article from the May issue of ''Atlantic'' portrayed, we may soon find ourselves in an era where doctored images are used to further aspects of hybrid operations. New technology exists that can superimpose a person onto video of an activity they did not participate in. Franklin Foer, the author, wrote of this phenomenon:

> The genre is one of the cruelest, most invasive forms of identity theft invented in the internet era. . . . A casual observer can't easily detect the hoax.

As was highlighted recently on a ''60 Minutes'' show, we know the Russians targeted election systems in 21 States in the 2016 election and that Kremlin or Kremlin-linked actors compromised websites or voter registration systems in 7 States. The fact we have not yet taken steps to correct all the vulnerabilities does not inspire confidence for the 2018 midterm elections. Former FBI agent and expert on Russian information operations, Clint Watts, said recently on ''Meet the Press,'' ''at this point we can't ensure the vote is accurate or not changed'' and that his number one priority would be protecting the elections and the vote ahead of the 2018 elections. We cannot continue to have a wait-and-see attitude with regard to the Kremlin's hybrid operations because, next time, it could and likely will be worse. They might actually be able to change ballots or tamper with voter rolls or carry out another operation entirely that we haven't even thought of.

We are behind the curve in preparing our defenses against Russian interference in 2018—these elections that are coming. Even by the administration's own admission, we are not doing enough. At an October 18, 2017, hearing, Senator SASSE asked Attorney General Sessions whether the administration had prepared to counter future interference by Russia and other foreign adversaries in the information space. Attorney General Sessions responded:

> Probably not. We're not. And the matter is so complex that for most of us, we are not able to fully grasp the technical dangers that are out there.

This is not an acceptable response to such a pressing problem. Russia attacked the heart of our democracy, and if we do not try to find solutions and guard our infrastructure, we are derelict in our duties.

One of the last acts of the Obama administration was to deem election infrastructure critical, which put it in a priority category for assistance to guard against election interference. While appropriate and important, that is the mere beginning of a solution, and we have hardly progressed in the last 14 months.

I recently asked General Curt Scaparrotti, the head of European Command, who is on the frontline of blunting Russian aggression in Europe, whether we had a sufficient whole-of-government to combat such hybrid operations. He responded that we did not have an ''effective unification'' across the government and affirmed that additional focus was needed immediately because of the nature of the threat.

We need a whole-of-government approach with the weight of the White House behind it. We need an approach that will enable coordination across the different agencies of our government and support effective outreach and collaboration with State and local officials and the private sector, including the media. Given the nature of Russia's asymmetric aggression, conducted below the level of direct military conflict, we must deploy a range of tools, including cyber; diplomacy; economic sanctions; financial investigations to counter foreign corruption, money laundering, and malign political influence; and strategic communications.

This administration has not effectively employed the nonmilitary tools in its arsenal, and it has been slow to respond in any meaningful way. The administration's dithering is exemplified in its foot-dragging in utilizing the State Department's Global Engagement Center to counter Russian propaganda and its delay in implementing sanctions to punish Russia. While recent actions to expel Russian diplomats after the poisoning of the Russian spy and his daughter on British soil and the decision to finally implement sanctions targeted against Putin's base of power are encouraging, they do not add up to a policy of effective deterrence.

In this regard, I would note that a former senior Defense Department cyber policymaker recently testified to the Armed Services Committee that a standing joint interagency task force is required to bring to bear the right capabilities and resources spread across the government to respond effectively to Russian aggression. Such a task force would utilize expertise from across our government, including the intelligence community, the Department of Defense, the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Treasury Department, and would allow effective coordination and collaboration on policy to counter Russia. The minority staff report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Russian asymmetric operations in Europe recommended a similar mechanism. I think this is a good way forward, and I intend to continue to work with my colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committees and other committees of jurisdiction on how best to stand up such a capability.

The Senate Intelligence Committee, of which I am a member, has recently issued recommendations to improve election security. The committee urges retaining States' primacy in running elections and providing them with necessary assistance; creating effective deterrence; improving information sharing on threats; and securing election-related systems. All of these are important steps and should be implemented without delay.

Several of my Senate colleagues have thoughtfully incorporated these recommendations into legislation, the Secure Elections Act, and I strongly support this effort. This bill would improve information sharing between Federal Government and local election agencies, assist States with cyber security preparedness, and support them in replacing outdated and insecure electronic voting machines. I thank Senators KLOBUCHAR, LANKFORD, GRAHAM, COLLINS, and HEINRICH for their work on this bill, and I look forward to working with them on further legislation to protect the institutions that are essential to our democracy.

As I laid out, these operations against our elections are part of a broad pattern of Russian hybrid attacks against us and our allies and partners. As Vice President Biden and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Carpenter reminded us in a recent article in Foreign Affairs:

> More than a decade has passed since Estonia became the first NATO country to see its government institutions and media organizations attacked by hackers based in Russia. In the intervening period, the risk of a far more debilitating attack has increased, but planning for how to defend against it has lagged.

There are countries, such as those in the Baltics, that have been dealing with these Russian threats for far longer than we have and have developed effective approaches for countering them.

Department of Defense National Guard units, which regularly deploy to Eastern Europe and the Baltics, may be uniquely positioned to share information on Russian hybrid attacks with State and local officials and explain procedures they learn from our European partners.

With regard to building credible deterrence—one of the Intelligence Committee's key recommendations—it does not appear that we have mounted an effective policy against Russia. As DNI Coats testified earlier this year, Russian influence operations in cyber space are intended to achieve ''strategic objectives'' and will continue unless and until there are clear repercussions for Russia. In February, Lieutenant General Nakasone testified to the Armed Services Committee that the Russians, amongst several other adversaries, don't fear us and have calculated that, in his words, ''not much will happen to them'' in retaliation for cyber attacks on America. Cyber Commander Admiral Rogers also testified in February to the Armed Services Committee that Vladimir Putin has concluded there is little price to pay for Russian aggression against the United States, and he has no incentive to stop these hybrid attacks. In outgoing National Security Advisor McMaster's last remarks, he even admitted ''we have failed to impose sufficient costs'' on Russia.

In the absence of Presidential leadership to set a policy to blunt Russian aggression and send the message to our foreign adversaries that we will not stand for attacks of this nature, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 requires a comprehensive plan from the administration to counter Russian malign influence. That plan is overdue. The Act also requires that the President develop a national cyber policy, including any capabilities that be used to impose costs on adversaries in response to a cyber attack or malicious cyber activity. There is no time to waste, and I urge the administration to deliver these strategies and actually implement them, which would work toward imposing costs on our foreign adversaries.

I intend to return to speak further on these issues, as I believe the American people deserve a comprehensive explanation of the threats that face our democracy. I also intend to work with my colleagues on additional measures to secure our political system and election infrastructure against malign foreign influence.

None of this is to say that States will lose their traditional primacy over elections. Rhode Island is one of the States that is taking this issue very seriously by adopting new technologies to streamline voting and guard voter information.

My State is also working with the Department of Homeland Security to shore up election security, but election security must be a national priority, and the Federal Government must be a reliable partner. I must commend our Secretary of State, Nellie Gorbea, for her great efforts.

One thing remains clear. The Russians attacked our elections process—the heart of our democracy—and are primed to do it again unless the administration provides effective deterrence. This is not a Democratic issue or a Republican issue; it is an issue of national security. As the old saying goes, ''Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.'' We have no time to waste.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO DIMITRI PHILEMONOF

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, today I rise, as I like to do at the end of the week, to talk about somebody in my State who has made a real big difference to Alaska and, in many ways,

to the country. It is a good opportunity for me to come down on the floor and brag a little bit about Alaska, although my State does a really good job of selling itself anyway. It is what we refer to in my office as the Alaskan of the Week.

It is a great opportunity to talk about not just the wonderful things we have in Alaska—the wonderful mountains, oceans, and how beautiful the State is. Right now, the Sun is out again and shining high. The snow is melting. The buds are coming out and birds are coming back. It is a good opportunity for me to talk not just about the natural wonders but the people who make Alaska such a great place.

While it doesn't get as much attention as it deserves, there is an incredibly fascinating and sometimes tragic history of my State. It is a good opportunity for me to talk to my colleagues about that and the people who have worked hard and have been part of that history and have helped to heal some of the scars that have been left from that history.

Along with talking about the beauty of Alaska every week, we talk about someone who has made a difference. This week, I would like to recognize Dimitri Philemonof and all the work he has done over the decades for his community, for his State, and really for his country.

Dimitri was born in 1944 to Erena and Isaac Philemonof on the breathtaking, beautiful St. George Island, one of the two principal islands of the Pribilof Islands in Alaska. Surrounded by the Bering Sea, the Pribilofs are about 750 miles from Anchorage and about 500 miles from the Siberian Coast. The Pribilofs are really one of the Wonders of the World, particularly with the nature that is there—Steller sea lions, walruses, sea otters, and tens of thousands of fur seals. Depending on the season, more than 2.5 million seabirds call the Pribilof Islands their home. The ''Galapagos of the North,'' it is sometimes called because of this teeming wildlife.

You will also find in the Pribilofs the warmest, most resilient people anywhere in the world. The Pribilofs, as well as the entire Aleutian Island chain, has a storied and, to be honest, sometimes painful history in our country—a history that has shaped Dimitri's life.

First, when Alaska was a colonial possession of Russia, Russian fur seekers decimated the Aleut Native populations on these islands through warfare, disease, and, yes, even slavery. Then, 75 years after the United States purchased Alaska during World War II, Japan invaded and occupied Kiska and Attu, the westernmost islands of Alaska's Aleutian Island chain. A lot of Americans don't know that American territory was invaded and occupied by the Japanese during World War II. It was the first time since the War of 1812 that American soil had been occupied by an enemy. The Japanese dug in and held these two islands in Alaska until mid-1943, when American forces recaptured Kiska and Attu in a brutal campaign in the cold of Alaska.

That campaign to retake Kiska and Attu resulted in the deaths of about 1,500 American servicemen. More than 600 were missing, and almost 3,500 were wounded in action. It was a major battle of World War II. Less well known is the impact this conflict had on the Aleut peoples of Alaska. As a result of the invasion, nearly 900 Aleut civilian residents of the Pribilof Islands and the Aleutian Islands in Alaska were relocated to temporary internment camps in Southeast Alaska. Among those interned were Dimitri's parents, two of his brothers, and a sister who was born in the camp. Dimitri himself jokes and laughs that, in his words, he was actually ''conceived'' in the camp.

The treatment of our American citizens—and these are great American citizens. They are patriotic. They serve in the military at higher rates than any other ethnic group in the country. The treatment of these American citizens in these camps is a dark spot in American history that not many Americans are aware of. Camps were basically abandoned buildings. The conditions were awful—crowded, unheated, and unsanitary. Some even died in the camps as a result of these horrendous conditions. These were our citizens in our country.

Yet, like so many Alaskan Natives who were not treated well by our government during this time, Dimitri, nevertheless, signed up when he was of age to serve his country in the military. In the 1960s, he joined the Army and served in the Pathfinder Detachment at Fort Rucker in Alabama. He was an Airborne soldier.

Eventually, Dimitri made his way back to Alaska. He met his wife Victoria and started a family. He is the proud father of five, and he began to work at the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association. He is now the President and CEO of the Association.

The association has had numerous accomplishments under his leadership. Since 1985, it has greatly expanded its programs for the people of the Pribilofs and the Aleutians, and its budget has grown from about $2.5 million to more than $18 million to fund these important service programs under his leadership.

For years, he did something that was so important that this body was involved here in the Senate. He worked closely with Alaska's congressional delegation at the time—Senator Ted Stevens, Senator Frank Murkowski, and Congressman DON YOUNG—to work on educating the Congress and the Senate about this difficult history during World War II and to help pass legislation entitled the ''Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Restitution Act,'' which compensated surviving Aleut victims of the internment camps. Again, American citizens were sent by their government during the war to internment camps in Alaska. Not many people know that history.

Dimitri not only knew it, he lived it. His family lived it, but what he did was so powerful. He helped heal it. He helped heal it right here on the floor of the Senate.

He then helped pass the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Restitution Trust to oversee money allocated to rebuild some of the buildings and houses in this part of Alaska that were destroyed during the war—in the fierce battles that raged in my State during World War II that not many Americans are aware of.

That is a great life and service. Dimitri is also an artist helping to preserve Alaska Native culture through his beautiful drawings—particularly of Russian Orthodox Churches in the region—churches he has worked tirelessly to maintain throughout Alaska. These are beautiful churches. He also does an incredible Elvis Presley impersonation.

He is a man of faith, of perseverance, and kindness. As I have mentioned here, and tried to highlight just a little bit of his life, he has devoted his whole life to his people, to my State, and to this great Nation. In May, he will be recognized by his colleagues for 40 years of humanitarian service and for helping heal the wounds of this country that came about during World War II. We thank him for all he has done in his beloved Pribilofs, in Alaska, in America, and on the floor of the Senate.

Dimitri, I want to thank you, once again, and congratulate you on being our Alaskan of the Week.

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. President, I want to give a little bit of an update on what has been happening on the Senate floor in the last few days because there is a lot going on. I think sometimes it is important to explain to people watching in the Gallery, people watching on TV, and the people watching back home in Alaska what is happening here.

We had a big vote yesterday. It was a big vote particularly for my State but also for the Presiding Officer's State of Louisiana—any coastal State. It was a vote on the Coast Guard bill yesterday. It was a strong bipartisan vote, but we just missed getting 60 Senators.

To be perfectly honest, it was a disappointment. It was certainly a disappointment to the men and women in the Coast Guard who are serving our country all over not only America but the world—exceptional service.

This body was unable to get the authorization bill that sets the policies and funding and spending for the Coast Guard. That was sad, in my view—a big disappointment. We have principled differences here in the Senate, but we have been working hard on this. We have been working very hard across the aisle.

I chair the Subcommittee on the Coast Guard. We tried to make sure we had plenty of Senators who would support this, so my team and I worked for

months on accommodating my colleagues' concerns about the bill. In certain ways, we pretty much accommodated every request for an amendment and every request for fixing the bill. So I really thought we were going to get to the point where we had way more than 60 Senators to pass this bill for the men and women of the Coast Guard, to make our waterway economic opportunities more efficient, and to put more maritime workers to work, but at the end of the day, we couldn't get to that magic number of 60, which is so critical here in the Senate. It is disappointing to say that politics got in the way. There were some people who had previously committed to make sure this got over the goal line who weren't there at the end. But we will keep working on it. It is too important for my State and too important for the country to leave the men and women of the Coast Guard and so many other important issues that were taken up in that bill not completed. That is what we call the legislative calendar—that is legislation on the Senate floor we are trying to move, and we will keep working in a bipartisan way there.

NOMINATION OF MIKE POMPEO

Now, Mr. President, I want to talk a little bit about an issue as it relates to the Executive Calendar. What do I mean when I am talking about the Executive Calendar? Well, in the Senate, under the U.S. Constitution, we are in the personnel business in addition to being in the legislative business. Under the Constitution, we have a role—the advice and consent power of the Senate to confirm the nominees who run the government. That comes from the executive branch. The White House—the President puts forward nominations, and we hold hearings and we confirm them.

I have been speaking on the floor a lot about this lately because, by any historical measure, unfortunately the Senate has slowed down, delayed, and obstructed the confirmation of individuals from the Trump administration whom we are trying to get confirmed to serve in the government. That is also sad. That is also disappointing. The statistics are very obvious.

A lot of us have tried to get the press who usually sits up there in the Gallery to write about this. They don't seem to care, but they should care. The American people should care.

Whether or not you voted for this President, once somebody wins an election and they start putting people forward—good Americans—to serve in the government, what we should be doing here is holding hearings, seeing if they are qualified, and then voting on whether to confirm them. Unfortunately, what is happening—and it is all out there—by any historical measure, my colleagues on the other side have filibustered and obstructed this administration's nominees to serve their country at a higher rate than has ever happened in U.S. history.

I have come down here and talked about this a lot. I keep coming down to ask the Senate minority leader and some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Why are you doing this? Why are you doing this?

I will give just one example. In the first not even 18 months of the Trump administration, the filibuster—that is a procedure used here in the Senate that could require much extended debate—the filibuster has been used more in the first 18 months than it was in the previous four administrations combined.

Why? I have been asking the question, why are you doing this? They don't really have an answer. I haven't heard anyone explain it. I know part of their base is very upset about the election a year and a half ago, but it is time to govern now. We have to get people in place and just vote on them. If you don't like them, if you don't think they are qualified, vote no. But time and again, we have qualified people who are being held up for 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 months for no reason, and it just doesn't make any sense.

The reason I am mentioning this is that there is now talk that it is not just in terms of a filibuster, but there is a possibility that my colleagues on the other side, as a total group, all of them, might come together and all vote against the President's most recent nominee to be the Secretary of State. That is the current CIA Director, Mike Pompeo.

I certainly didn't agree with everything the Obama administration did, but if you look at the history of the United States, particularly as it relates to nominees to head government agencies, to run national security agencies—the Department of Defense, the Secretary of State—these have typically been given a lot of leeway from the Senate.

For example, just in my relatively short career here—I sit on the Armed Services Committee—President Obama put forward a number of candidates to serve in the government at high levels in the Department of Defense to help run our national security. One was the Secretary of Defense. I didn't agree with Secretary Ash Carter on everything, but what I did was I sat down with him, had discussions with him, and we brought him up for a floor vote, and I voted to support him.

Let me give another example—Secretary of the Army Eric Fanning, put forward by President Obama. I didn't agree with everything Secretary Fanning was focused on. I sat down with him and had good discussions with him. He was actually being held up by some Republicans, and I worked to try to get him freed and confirmed.

They were well-qualified individuals.

Again, even if you don't agree with everything that an administration is doing in terms of foreign policy—there were elements of the Obama foreign policy that I supported, and there were a lot of elements that I didn't like. When they put forward well-qualified individuals, I thought it was the duty of the Senate to sit down with them, meet with them, discuss your issues with them, and then vote on them.

Typically, in that realm, the individual had been supported, whether they are a Democrat or a Republican. Let me give a couple of examples. Secretary of State Tillerson had 55 Senators vote for him. Secretary of State John Kerry—94 Senators voted for him. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton—94 Senators voted for her. Condoleezza Rice—I worked for Condoleezza Rice for a number of years. She was a phenomenal Secretary of State. Eighty-five Senators voted for her. Secretary Colin Powell—voice vote. That means essentially 100 Senators voted for Secretary Powell. Secretary Madeleine Albright—I have gotten to know Madeleine Albright over a number of years. I have a deep respect for her, a Democrat. That vote was 99 to 0. Warren Christopher, another Democrat—a voice vote. That means 100, essentially. James Baker—another Secretary of State I have gotten to know over the years—99 to 0.

You see, this is deep history where, in this body, you are not going to agree with everything with regard to a President's foreign policy, but on these kinds of nominations, the history of this body and our Nation has typically been to be supportive.

Mike Pompeo is the current Director of the CIA. My friend from Tennessee, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, BOB CORKER, gave a speech earlier today. He talked about Mike Pompeo's qualifications. They are very impressive qualifications.

He went to West Point. By the way, he graduated No. 1 in his class at West Point. He went to Harvard Law School. By the way, he was the editor of the Harvard Law Review. This is a smart guy at the top institutions in America. He served in the Army. He served in Congress. He was very involved in foreign policy when he was a Member of Congress. He was a businessman and now is the Director of the CIA. Probably in terms of an individual in Washington, DC, who has insights on what is going on around the world in terms of our national security challenges, there is probably no one who has more insights on this than Mike Pompeo right now.

There is no doubt, by any measure, by any standard, historical standard, that when you look at our previous Secretaries of State, Mike Pompeo is well qualified. He is well qualified.

There is talk—and I hope it is only talk—that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are going to, en masse, vote against him. This would be getting into some dangerous territory for the United States as a country. As I mentioned, the tradition of this body is to vote to support the President's Secretary of State, particularly if he or she is a well-qualified individual.

The other side has been criticizing the Trump administration for not having enough nominees at, for example, the State Department. To be honest, I think some of that criticism is fair. We need to get out more nominees. The White House needs to get out more Ambassadors, more Assistant Secretaries, and more Under Secretaries. But, as I have mentioned to my colleagues a couple of times, they can't have it both ways. They can't have it both ways. What do I mean by that? You can't say to the administration ''Hey, you need more Ambassadors. You need more Assistant Secretaries. You need a Secretary of State to run our foreign policy'' and then, when those people are nominated by the President, delay, delay, delay. That is having it both ways, particularly if it is a candidate like Mike Pompeo, who is very well qualified.

Another criticism from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle is that there is just too much chaos in the administration right now, too much chaos in foreign policy, domestically and internationally. There is some truth to that, also, I am not going to deny that. But part of the reason there have been challenges at the State Department is that this body has been slow-rolling confirmation of the nominations.

Again, you can't say ''We don't want the chaos'' and then talk about voting along party lines to derail the nomination of Mike Pompeo, because that will actually continue and create the kind of chaos that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are railing against and say they don't want.

Chaos in the national security and foreign policy personnel world—that is not what we need. Nobody should be for that. Nobody should be for that.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a Washington Post editorial from just a couple of days ago that simply reads ''Confirm Mike Pompeo.''

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

[From The Washington Post, Apr. 12, 2018]

CONFIRM MIKE POMPEO

(By Editorial Board)

Mike Pompeo's confirmation hearing to become secretary of state arrived at a moment when the Trump administration is grappling with a chaotic confluence of actual and looming foreign crises—including some of its own making. President Trump is contemplating military strikes against Syria while also pushing for a U.S. pullout; he has committed to attempting to negotiate a nuclear deal with North Korea while threatening to repudiate the nuclear pact with Iran. He is waging a trade war against China and Japan while counting on their strategic cooperation against the regime of Kim Jong Un. And he is doing all this with a badly depleted national security apparatus: Dozens of senior positions are vacant at the State Department, and the newly arrived national security adviser, John Bolton, has started with a purge of senior staff at the White House.

Mr. Pompeo, who has a reputation as a hawk and who in Congress relentlessly pursued groundless attacks against Hillary Clinton's State Department, did his best on Thursday to be reassuring. He stressed that he favored diplomatic solutions with Iran and North Korea; he played down the likely consequences of a decision by Mr. Trump to scrap the Iran deal next month. Importantly, he promised to defend the State Department's budget and to quickly seek to fill its many vacant positions, which would be a welcome departure from the odd management style of the departed Rex Tillerson.

As has frequently been the case during the past year, it was not always clear if Mr. Trump and his nominee are in agreement on major issues. Mr. Pompeo was tough on Russia, saying conflicts with it were caused by ''Russia's bad behavior''; Mr. Trump tweeted Wednesday that ''much of the bad blood with Russia is caused by the Fake & Corrupt Russia Investigation.'' Mr. Pompeo acknowledged that sanctions against Vladimir Putin's regime had been inadequate and promised to ''reset . . . deterrence.'' But Mr. Trump tweeted that there was ''no reason'' for poor relations and suggested the United States should aid the Russian economy and ''stop the arms race.''

In this, Mr. Pompeo sounded much like his predecessor Mr. Tillerson, who often pushed Mr. Trump to be tougher on Mr. Putin and to resist reflexive impulses to pull U.S. forces out of Afghanistan and Syria. On human rights, as in support for the State Department, Mr. Pompeo sounded like an improvement, saying ''we should defend American values every place we go,'' including to allies such as Egypt. Democracy promotion, he said, ''is an important tool of foreign policy''—an idea that neither Mr. Tillerson nor Mr. Trump has supported. Though he reiterated his opposition to gay marriage, Mr. Pompeo said he would defend the rights of LGBT people both in the State Department and abroad.

Democrats who pressed Mr. Pompeo on his record, including his questionable statements about Muslims, have legitimate concerns. But rejecting or delaying his nomination, as Mr. Trump juggles multiple crises without adequate counsel, probably would make an already parlous situation worse. Mr. Pompeo should be deployed to Foggy Bottom in the hope that he will fulfill his promise to revive and reassert U.S. diplomacy.

Mr. SULLIVAN. The Washington Post has not necessarily been a strong supporter of the Trump administration, but right here in their editorial, they are saying that the Senate needs to confirm Mike Pompeo.

They make the point that I am trying to make here in my remarks, which is that rejecting or delaying Pompeo's nomination as Mr. Trump juggles multiple crises around the world without adequate counsel would probably make an already parlous situation worse.

''Mike Pompeo should be deployed to Foggy Bottom''—that is the State Department—''in the hope that he will fulfill his promise to revive and reassert U.S. diplomacy.'' That is from the Washington Post article, and I think it is wise counsel for everybody here—Republicans, Democrats, all of us.

Bipartisanship is important to move things along in the Senate, whether it is the Coast Guard bill or well-qualified nominees in the national security world, and it has certainly been a U.S. tradition with regard to the Secretary of State that not only goes back decades but centuries.

I am hoping that my colleagues sit down and talk to Mike Pompeo if they have issues with him, and raise them, but let's get to the floor, and let's confirm him as the Secretary of State because the State Department needs a well-qualified individual to run that important agency, and so does our country.

I yield the floor.

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

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

THE NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a milestone that happened about 3 weeks ago.

We have a couple of interesting dates. April 15 just passed. We call it tax day. But it was another day. It was also the date we were supposed to complete the Senate budget for fiscal year 2019, which starts on October 1 of this year. Well, April 15 came, and the IRS deadline did indeed hit, but there was no budget completed. This is part of the dysfunction that people back home are so upset about. I want to talk about that today, but first I want to talk about the derivative of that broken process.

In my office, we have a debt clock. A few weeks ago, that debt clock passed a milestone: $21 trillion. If that weren't bad enough, the commitments of this Federal Government over the last 50 years—actually, indeed, over the last 100 years—the commitments that have been made in the structural programs of this big government bureaucracy have committed us to some $130 trillion over just the next 30 years.

That means that every household in America owes the equivalent of $1 million per household. These are not theoretic numbers. These are mathematical realities derived from commitments made by a lot of our programs that we have passed over the last 100 years in this country.

In my opinion, we are well past the tipping point with this debt. Last week, the CBO came out with their new forecast for fiscal year 2018 and beyond. I want to talk about that today because there are some dramatic revelations in there. At $21 trillion, we are already well past the tipping point of this crisis.

In my opinion, the CBO forecasts don't do a very good job of forecasting revenue. For example, they take very little account of foreign direct investment. They underestimate the impact of the change to the repatriation tax law we just made. I believe the revenue forecast is out of line, but I do agree with their forecast of expenses, and I

think therein lies a great learning, if we will pay attention to it.

In their forecast, on top of the $21 trillion we just crossed over, their projection is that we will add another $10 trillion or more to this debt. Whether I might quibble with that a little bit or not, it is directionally correct. Because of that, I am on the floor of the Senate tonight talking about the crisis and the tipping point we are well past, because we are out of time to deal with this.

In just the next 5 years, the interest on this debt alone, in the year 2023, will be greater than the amount of money we spend on the defense of this country, and that assumes a very low forecast for interest rates. One of the reasons for that is that the last administration, instead of buying bonds or putting out bonds that were longer in duration, put out bonds that were shorter in duration because they had a little lower interest rate—interest rates were fundamentally zero—and the rest of the world put out longer duration bonds. So what happens is that these shorter duration bonds are maturing, and when they mature they have to go out at more and more expensive rates.

In just the last 18 months, the Fed fund rate has been increased six times, one-quarter point each. That 150 basis points on our size debt is more than $300 billion a year. As a matter of fact—and this is not a forecast—this year, the interest on our debt, the interest that we pay, is $50 billion more than just last year—$50 billion more than we spent last year. Fifty billion dollars—this is a train wreck coming at us, and Congress has been reluctant to deal with it straight-up.

Every year, we go through a budget process. I have been in the budget process now for 3 years, since I got here. The first year we did a budget, it took $7.5 trillion out of the expense plan for the next 10 years—but it lasted 4 months. It was waived by this body in order to get to a grand bargain so the other side would vote for funding the government by the end of that fiscal year and so we wouldn't have a shutdown.

Last year, there was no budget done. It was basically deemed so Republicans could do reconciliation. Then, again, the budget for this year was not done. It was deemed so Republicans could again get to reconciliation. I believe reconciliation is being used improperly. We used reconciliation to try to fix healthcare and try to fix the Tax Code.

Our country is at a point where this debt now has to be our No. 1 priority. We have two crises in our country today. One is this debt crisis. The other, I would argue, is the global security crisis. The world hasn't been more dangerous than this in my lifetime, and I believe the two are interrelated.

The last Congress allowed the last administration to disinvest in the military to a point where we are now in jeopardy of being able to defend our country. It is time for action.

In business, if you get into a crisis like this, it is all hands on deck because it is about survival. I would argue that it is about that time here. The problem is that we really haven't talked about the problem in its entirety and what we can still do about it. I want to talk tonight about what is driving this.

When we look at the numbers, it is very clear. We raise about $2.2 trillion in taxes. That is income taxes on individuals, income taxes on corporations, and other sources of revenue—about $2.2 trillion. We use the first dollars to pay for mandatory expenses.

We have two types of expenses: mandatory and discretionary. Mandatory expenses are those like your home mortgage, your car payment, your insurance payment, things that get deducted automatically out of your paycheck. We have that. It is called mandatory expenses.

What is mandatory expenses? Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, pension benefits for Federal employees, Federal retirement, veterans' benefits, and so forth. Those are mandatory expenses, and we subsidize those today. Even though there are trust funds, the Social Security and Medicare trust funds are not able to meet the needs of the citizens who are drawing benefits today. We are subsidizing out of that general account almost half a trillion dollars a year. If you include Medicaid and ObamaCare, the healthcare costs, it is almost $1 trillion, today. Out of the $2 trillion that we collect in taxes, about 25 percent of it automatically goes to those three line items. Then, about another $1.7 trillion are then taken out. Debt service is $316 billion—almost half of what we spend on our military today.

After you take all of that out, there is only about a half trillion dollars left. Yet we still have all of the other discretionary expenses that we fuss about when we do the budget. The budget only deals with discretionary spending. I believe that is one of our problems. What is in discretionary spending? Defense, veterans, and all other domestic discretionary spending.

So it is $1.2 trillion. Ten years ago, it was $1.5 trillion. Because of the Budget Control Act and because of sequestration, discretionary expenses have declined in America over the last decade, partly because of the good work of our appropriators and because of the laws that were put in place.

Fundamentally, about half of what we spend this year on discretionary spending, which includes the military, VA, and all the other domestic discretionary spending—that is the State Department, foreign aid, education, health, welfare, the whole bit—comes out of that. Half of it is borrowed money. Over the last decade, 100 percent of what we spent in our discretionary expenses was borrowed money. When we allocated money in this body for hurricane victims—and we all know we want to do that—every dollar we allocated was borrowed money. We had to go to China or to some other country and hope they are going to buy another issue of our government bonds in order for us to then subsidize our standard of living.

I have been arguing for 5 years that our standard of living is somewhat artificial because of the amount of Federal debt and the amount of household debt in America today.

The other thing I am so distraught about is that this would be fine if it were just this year. But we have a system where we have commitments over the next 30 years that are out of control.

This chart shows discretionary spending historically over the last 18 years, back to 2000. The red line is discretionary spending. The blue line in the last 18 years is mandatory spending. They both went up about the same—mandatory spending, a little more.

But look at what happens from here forward. This is not my number. This is CBO's number. This is CBO on expenses behind mandatory expenses. Again, that is Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, pension and benefits for Federal employees, and healthcare expense obligations of the Federal Government. This is a 20-year schedule. Again, the blue line is mandatory expenses and the red line is discretionary expenses. It goes from about $2.5 trillion this year on mandatory expenses, and in the 10-year period it goes to over $8 trillion.

That is in line with what happened just in the last 16 years. In 2000, the size of our government was $2.4 trillion. The size of our government in 2016, the last year of President Obama, was $4.2 trillion. So we went from $2.4 trillion to $4.2 trillion in that 16-year period of time, one Republican President, one Democratic President.

But this is what we face. You can't tax enough, you can't grow enough, and you can't cut enough. There is no way we can deal with this without failing to meet the obligations that this country has made to its senior citizens and to its people in need for the last 50 years.

What are you going to tell people when you have to tell them that the Social Security trust fund went to zero this year? The Medicare and Social Security trust funds go to zero in 14 years, and there is no answer for that. Today, we subsidize over a half trillion dollars into just Social Security and Medicare out of the taxes we raise. We never intended to do that. It was never supposed to happen. But past generations liberalized those programs to such a degree that the income coming in doesn't cover the outgo of those programs.

My mother is a great example. She lived until she was 93. She passed away last year. She worked for 30 years; she was retired for 30 years. There is no way the math works when that happens.

In the 1930s, when they put Social Security in, it was intended to be a last-resort insurance supplement, not a primary go-to retirement plan. The life expectancy at that time was about 59; this program started at 62. So the math was on their side. Today, life expectancy is in the 80s, and we have a retirement age of 67. So we know the math doesn't work. This cannot happen.

But the good news is there are five areas of work I believe that Congress and the administration need to begin to focus on—and now.

First, I believe our budget process is broken. I have been on the Budget Committee now for 3 years, and I know it doesn't work. It hasn't worked but four times in 44 years to fund the Federal Government. We are supposed to appropriate 12 bills a year; we have averaged 2.5 over the last 44 years.

Let me say that again. In any business, in any enterprise—a medical office, or it doesn't matter—if you were charged to do 12 items and you did 2.5, you would fix something. You would have to fix it, or you would be out of business.

We have used continuing resolutions over 180 times. Actually, Congress has shut the Federal Government down, has not funded the government, 20 times in that 44-year history—20 times. I had no idea that was the case, and I bet most Americans don't either. That is unconscionable.

We don't even deal with every dollar we spend in the budget. We deal only with 25 percent of what we spend. That is the discretionary. That is what we did on the budget here. This is never covered in the budget by law. We don't talk about it. We can no longer do this.

The first thing you have to do is fix the budget process. Second of all, I believe you have to get after redundant agencies and extraneous expenses of the Federal Government. The GAO, the General Accountability Office, thinks we have somewhere around $700 billion or $800 billion of wasted spending every year in a $4 trillion budget. That is about 20 percent. I believe that.

The third thing you have to do is grow the economy. Last year, President Trump said job one is growing the economy. We focused on regulations, energy, and taxes. The economy started growing. In the last 12 months, we have had 3 percent GDP growth. That is 120 basis points above the 1.8 percent we enjoyed for 8 years—the lowest economic performance in our U.S. history.

We believe, with future work on these things, that the economy will continue to grow. We need to work on immigration, trade, and infrastructure to continue this work.

The good news is that the biggest item—the fourth item we need to work on is that we can solve these items; that is, we have to save Social Security and Medicare. When I say ''save,'' I mean we have to plan for the time and fix it now before the trust fund goes to zero. When the trust fund goes to zero, there is no way benefits can be paid in full. If we don't do that today, there will be a crisis of a magnitude that I don't want to even imagine if we let this get to that point. That is the fourth one.

The fifth area of work is, we have to get at the spiraling driver of our healthcare costs, not the insurance that we have been fussing about for the last 8 years. We now really need to make a serious, concerted attempt in America to get after the drivers of healthcare costs.

Those are the five areas. I am convinced that when faced with a crisis, Americans are always the best in history at dealing with a crisis. We are not always the first to recognize we are in one.

My role tonight, as it has been for the last 3 years, is to call this crisis out. The CBO has all the numbers. Whether you believe them or not, they are correct. I would argue with their revenue numbers a little bit. Some might argue with their expense numbers. Bottom line, no matter what, you know that with a $21 trillion debt, the interest expense is going to grow to almost $1 trillion over the next 10 years.

If we don't do something within this planning period of 10 years, the CBO says that our interest expense alone will go to $1 trillion. There is no way this can happen.

We have to change the broken system. I think there has been no other time—I think the realization is getting there. The CBO has given us the numbers. The GAO has given us the opportunities and measured some of those opportunities.

I think the political will in this country is now such that they realize we have a debt crisis, and they have more courage, I think, to face it than elected officials do. What drives this town is the next cycle. In the House, it is 2 years; in the Senate, it is 6 years: Oh, my goodness, we can't do anything to hurt that next cycle. We have to have more on our side than they have on their side.

It is time to put that behind us. This cannot be solved with a partisan solution. My good friend from Rhode Island, Senator WHITEHOUSE, and I have cosponsored a bill that goes after and deals with parts of the solution for the budget problem. There is a select committee right now that was formed by the leadership—Democratic and Republican, House and Senate. There are 16 members. I am privileged to be on it. I believe there are things we can do in that select committee to fix our budget process that would help us deal with the additional things we are adding to this debt crisis.

Make no mistake, that will not solve this debt crisis. You will not solve the debt crisis by fixing the budget process alone, but you will not solve the debt crisis unless and until you do fix the budget process. The same thing applies to growing the economy. The same thing is involved with the other items we can look at in terms of redundant agencies and the healthcare costs in this country.

America has come too far to fail now. We owe it to our kids, our grandkids, and the kids and grandkids of our kids and grandkids to deal with this right now.

I met with Chairman Greenspan last year. I had the privilege to sit with him and talk about this very issue. He reminded me that in 1983, they had a solution. If we had done it in 1983, it wouldn't have been nearly as onerous as it is going to be when we try to fix this.

Again, in the late nineties, Newt Gingrich and Bill Clinton together—two different parties—had an agreement. They got very close to signing it, but then it fell apart because of the political nonsense in this town.

I believe the time has come right now for both sides to put our differences aside, live with an 80-percent solution and deal with this problem right now. If we don't, we will not be able to hand this to our kids. That is the last thing I want to close with. People say: Well, we are leaving our kids and grandkids a problem.

Yes, we are. Look, in this planning period, the next 10 years, when interest rates are higher than what we are spending on national defense, that crisis is right here. It is now. We are going to see it in the next decade, in my opinion. It will make 2008 and 2009 pale in comparison.

I have never seen a time when a crisis would pull us together any more ardently than this one would be right now. The question is, will we recognize that we are in a moment of crisis?

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. 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.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for 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.

SYRIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the magnitude of atrocities and devastation in Syria caused by ISIS and the Assad regime, with support from Russia and Iran, is appalling. When this calamity began in 2011, I doubt anyone predicted it would come to this: hundreds of

thousands of people killed; half the population of the country displaced, many living as refugees in neighboring countries; whole cities reduced to rubble riddled with landmines and booby-traps.

For years, I, like others here, have called for a comprehensive U.S. strategy for responding to the Syrian crisis that is grounded in cooperation with the international community, to be presented to Congress. I have also supported hundreds of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid to desperate Syrian civilians. We must at least do what is within our power to address the needs of those affected while efforts are made to bring the violence to an end.

I have also defended Congress's sole authority to declare war, which should always be based on a clear strategy. I opposed the Obama administration's proposal for the authorization for the use of force in Syria in 2013 because it was overly broad and would have ceded to the White House power reserved to Congress under the Constitution. I have also opposed the manner in which President Trump has twice launched attacks against Syria without approval from Congress.

While I recognize and appreciate the considerable precautions that were taken in the early hours of April 15 by the U.S. military to prevent civilian casualties and avoid targeting Russian assets in Syria, whenever military operations are conducted the outcome is never certain. Things can go terribly wrong. In this instance, instead of demolishing two or three Syrian chemical weapons facilities, we could have triggered a shooting war with Russia, and Israel and Iran might have quickly followed suit. What began as a missile attack lasting a few minutes could have ignited a regional war. That is a risk that Congress must be given the opportunity to weigh.

The use of chemical weapons is a crime against humanity and a violation of international law that cannot be tolerated, but it is also a fact that conventional attacks by the Assad regime have caused far more deaths of innocent men, women, and children. The Assad regime has been slaughtering its own people for more than 7 years by dropping barrel bombs, laying siege to cities to prevent access to food, water, and medicine, and using poison gas. While we all want to act decisively in the face of such atrocities, the United States cannot solve this crisis using Tomahawk missiles. All such attacks can do, it appears, is degrade, most likely only temporarily, Assad's ability to use chemical weapons. This was demonstrated in the aftermath of President Trump's first military response to Assad's use of chemical weapons in April 2017. It was conducted with great fanfare, without congressional authorization, and it failed to prevent future attacks. President Trump has now launched a second attack without the approval of Congress, and he has proclaimed ''mission accomplished.''

Why didn't the President seek Congress's approval? And what is the mission? How would we have responded if the attacks had triggered an escalation of violence, potentially spinning out of control? Those critical questions need answers.

Perhaps the most fundamental question for this administration is what does President Trump seek to achieve in Syria? Is it limited to defeating ISIS and punishing Assad for using chemical weapons? Are we willing to accept Russia and Iran determining Syria's future? If not, what is the strategy for ending the war, if Russia continues to block diplomatic efforts in the U.N. Security Council? How does the White House explain cutting aid for refugees overseas, withdrawing the United States from the Global Compact on Migration, limiting the resettlement of Syrian refugees here to only 11 people so far in 2018, compared to 790 last year during the same period, and suspending $200 million in U.S. aid for civilians in Syria? Those funds are intended to help improve the livelihoods of Syrians impacted by the war, including to provide access to basic services.

Does the White House believe that it is in the national interest to conduct attacks against Syria, at the risk of triggering a wider war and after failing to produce the intended results in the past, but that it is not in our national interest to provide aid to Syrian civilians in areas controlled by our partners?

I am also concerned about what these attacks against Syria may reveal about President Trump's willingness to direct a military attack elsewhere without obtaining the consent of Congress, for example, against North Korea or Iran.

The conflict in Syria obviously has no easy solution, and it is apparent that it has no military solution. It is the President's job to explain what our strategy is, including how we can overcome Russia's intransigence at the United Nations amidst mounting concerns that we will abandon the Syrian people, before he fires off another volley of missiles that do not get us any closer to a solution and which may have the opposite effect.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID MOATS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in this week when new Pulitzer Prizes were awarded to outstanding reporters and courageous news organizations, I want to take a moment, on behalf of all Vermonters, to recognize and thank an earlier Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, Vermont's own David Moats. Until earlier this year, David has been the editorial page editor and the editorial page voice of the Rutland Herald.

David Moats is a Green Mountain treasure. John Walters of the newspaper Seven Days called David ''a beacon of quality'' in Vermont journalism. He represents and gave voice to ideals, the aspirations, and the decency that characterize Vermont's vibrant, outward-looking, and engaged citizens.

On July 1, 2000, our brave, small State again stepped up to tackle a difficult and momentous issue. That is when Vermont became the first State to offer to same-sex couples the same legal rights and responsibilities of traditional marriage. Vermont's law was written, debated, and approved by the Vermont Legislature.

David Moats documented and illuminated the debate that led to that breakthrough. He won a Pulitzer Prize for his series of 20 editorials that were published throughout that difficult and groundbreaking debate.

The Pulitzer Committee honored David Moats, in their words, ''For his even-handed and influential series of editorials commenting on the divisive issues arising from civil unions for same-sex couples.''

In 2004, he wrote a book about this debate, ''Civil Wars: A Battle For Gay Marriage.'' Ted Widmer, writing in the New York Times Book Review, said this in his review: ''Near the end of 'Mr. Deeds Goes to Town,' the Vermonter played by Gary Cooper dishes out a series of homespun metaphors for how government is supposed to treat people, from helping to push a car up a hill to saving a swimmer who's drowning. Obviously, life isn't quite that simple. This will take time. But in the long run, the question will be answered in the vast middle where most Americans live, and where they privately decide what is right and wrong.''

David Moats served as editorial page editor of the Rutland Herald since 1992. Previously, he had worked as the newspaper's wire editor, State editor, assistant managing editor, and city editor. Earlier in life, he served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Afghanistan.

He is also the author of 11 plays, has made his home in Middlebury, VT, and is the father of three children, Jared, Thatcher, and Nina Moats.

David, we thank you, and we wish you and your family all the best as you write your next chapter.

I ask unanimous consent that these excerpts from an editorial titled, ''Legacy,'' in the Rutland Herald last month, be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From ''Legacy,'' an editorial in The Rutland Herald, March 3, 2018]

A consistently reasoned voice is difficult to find. It's challenging to hear in these polarizing times, and it's even harder to find it on the everyday occasion of an editorial page. The distillation of issues into comprehensible, authentic points is a skill few writers can pull off, certainly not with any regularity.

We all know a man who has come to make the blend of opinion and language an art form.

Vermont has been blessed for decades by David Moats' compassionate approach to measured debate and thoughtful provocation. In this very space, David has wrestled to submission some of the most gut-

wrenching issues of our times, insisting upon a more controlled, solution-based dialogue. He has celebrated our triumphs. He has challenged the parties in power (much to their chagrin), and he has endeavored to teach us—as readers and participants in our communities—a bit about ourselves by shining truths on flawed thinking or highlighting the arrogance made against a public trust. He has broken our hearts in tribute, and he has—time and again—called us to action, whether it was spurring us to vote, raise our own voices, or simply by being engaged and showing up.

David has won scores of accolades for swinging his mighty pen, including the coveted Pulitzer Prize in 2001 for his body of work on civil unions. In that case, David not only informed, he shaped policy and rewrote history.

For Vermont, he has been advocate, champion, instigator—and friend. His editorials (and commentaries on Vermont Public Radio) have generated a loyal following. Liberals and moderates have come to quote from his editorials, while conservatives regularly condemn his words as out of step. But David has more friends then enemies, conservatives among them. That's how the deepest respect works.

(The editorial continues:)

David Moats has graced these pages with deliberate conscience, pouring his heart into the collective of Vermont. His insights and opinions have—and will—continue to underscore what defines us as Vermonters, and what passions and principles drive us to stand up for that better life for our best selves.

We are all indebted to David Moats for being our mentor, our leader, and our voice. We have needed him, probably more than we even know.

Vermont is a better place because of the man and his words.

TRIBAL LABOR SOVEREIGNTY BILL

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, today I would like to express my support for S. 140, an act to amend the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010 to clarify the use of amounts in the WMAT Settlement Fund.

The Senate initially passed this legislation on May 8, 2017, by unanimous consent. The House of Representatives passed this legislation on January 10, 2018, with an amendment. That amendment adds an important provision safeguarding the sovereignty of Native American tribes.

This new provision was the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act, introduced by Senator MORAN. The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs voted to favorably report the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act by voice vote, with only three committee members requesting to be recorded as voting against the bill, on February 17, 2017.

Private sector labor relations in the United States are regulated by the National Labor Relations Act, NLRA. Created in 1935, the National Labor Relations Board, NLRB, administers the NLRA. The five members of the NLRB have 5-year, staggered terms. I am pleased the Senate recently confirmed Mr. John Ring, a well-qualified nominee, to a position on the NLRB.

The NLRA seeks to mitigate and eliminate labor-related impediments to the free flow of commerce. The law exempts ''the United States or any Federal Reserve Bank, or any State or political subdivision thereof . . .'' from NLRB jurisdiction. However, the NLRA is silent about the application of the law to Native American Tribes.

In its 1976 Fort Apache Timber Co. case, the NLRB held ''individual Indians and Indian tribal governments, at least on reservation lands, are generally free from state or even in most instances Federal intervention, unless Congress specifically provided to the contrary.''

However, in a 2004 decision, San Manuel Indian Bingo and Casino, the NLRB reversed Fort Apache Timber Co. The NLRB held that the NLRA could be applied to commercial activity on tribal lands.

Under San Manuel Indian Bingo and Casino, the NLRB applies a subjective test to determine whether it will assert jurisdiction. If the activity is commercial, it asserts jurisdiction; if the NLRB determines the activity is a traditional tribal or government function, the board does not assert jurisdiction.

Native American Tribes are sovereign and, as such, should be treated the same as State and local governments under the NLRA. S. 140, as amended by the House of Representatives, would amend the NLRA to include ''any Indian tribe, or any enterprise or institution owned and operated by an Indian tribe and located on its Indian lands,'' to the list of other exempted entities, such as State and local governments.

Under the bill, an ''Indian tribe'' would be defined as ''any Indian tribe, band, nation, pueblo, or other organized group or community which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.''

I commend Senator MORAN for his leadership on Tribal labor sovereignty, and I hope the Senate will pass the legislation so it can be signed into law.

ISRAEL'S DAY OF INDEPENDENCE

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I wish to extend my support for the State of Israel in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of its founding.

Since its independence in 1948, Israel's promotion of democratic values has helped forge a thriving society and represents freedom in a region where that value is all too scarce. From its outset, Israel has faced a myriad of challenges, which it has navigated successfully and against all odds. Israel continues to remain America's strongest ally in the Middle East, as well as a central pillar of our strategy to achieve peace and stability in the region.

Once again, I want to extend my warmest congratulations to the State of Israel on its 70th anniversary.

AUTISM AFTER 21 DAY

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, April is National Autism Awareness Month. Although much of our focus is on the challenges that children with autism face, today I wish to recognize April 21 as Autism After 21 Day, representing the age when Federal services for children end and adulthood begins.

In declaring this day, we draw attention to the fact that there are millions of Americans with exceptional gifts who need our help in overcoming the unique challenges that they face. In Maryland, approximately 1 in 55 8-year-old children have autism, and I am committed to ensuring that these kids are empowered to live independent and fulfilling lives. As someone who has personally employed individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ASD, I can attest to the outstanding talents that this population brings to the workforce.

I am so proud of the organizations in my State that are working tirelessly to address these needs. To celebrate their work and advocate for adults all over this Nation with ASD, I call on the Senate to recognize Autism After 21 Day and acknowledge the millions of people who are navigating an uncertain adulthood to reach their full potential.

We all must work together to ensure that this journey is not lonely and isolated. Rather, these individuals must be recognized as an important part of our communities. Twenty-eight years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, adults with ASD deserve access to the goals set by the ADA: equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.

Thank you.

REMEMBERING MARILYN WARE

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, Ambassador Ware was a true light of poise and patriotism, strength and dignity, her presence firm and her personality embracing, warm, and loving. Her politics she did well, but the policy achievements delivered through her politics and philanthropy will be her lasting legacy.

Starting at the grassroots, she began her political career in Pennsylvania serving as a county chairperson eventually rising to chair Governor Tom Ridge's two successful gubernatorial campaigns. In 2002, President George Bush asked her to serve on the National Critical Infrastructure Advisory Council, a position she held until she was named the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Finland in 2005. She was an outstanding diplomat and a great representative of the United States.

I recall telling Ambassador Ware about one of my favorite duties as a Member of Congress—the opportunity to call students to tell them they had received an appointment to a service academy. She smiled fondly as I told

my story, and then she told me her own. As ambassador, she was deeply impressed with an officer in the U.S. military with whom she had been working. She asked if she could call the officer's parents to express, as ambassador, her gratitude and that of the Nation, for the outstanding work the officer had been doing. Ambassador Ware reached the officer's father. During the discussion, the father asked again what the ambassador's name was and if Marilyn was the daughter of Congressman John Ware. Ambassador Ware replied yes. The father went on to explain how it was Congressman Ware who had given his son his academy nomination many years before. Her story highlighted the full circle of a family committed to public service—a cherished trait that continues in her family today.

There are so many causes that Ambassador Ware championed, so many to talk about: AEI, her work with sustainable clean water, caring for children with learning disabilities at the Janus School, and the Clinic for Special Children, and of course, The Phoenix, which you can't think about without seeing that twinkle in her eye, along with countless others.

She made our country a better, stronger place. Ambassador Ware will not only be remembered by her friends and family but by those whose lives she bettered along the way. I will miss her leadership and guidance and will always remember the amazing work Ambassador Ware did for our community and our country.

Ambassador Ware, and to her family, we are forever grateful.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE 1868 TREATY OF FORT LARAMIE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the passage of time and a particularly significant event in this Nation's history. In a few short days, Tribal leadership, historians, community leaders, and the public will gather at the Fort Laramie National Historic Site in Wyoming to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the signing of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. As it did in the years preceding the signing of the treaty, the area around Fort Laramie, WY, will again serve as a place where cultures, minds, and governments meet.

Over its history, the Fort Laramie area was home to Tribes of the Great Plains, represented a waypoint for emigrants as they traveled West, and became an economic center as trade routes were established. As conflict among Indian and non-Indian groups grew, Fort Laramie became a military post to quell disputes.

History is marred by the years-long conflicts with Tribal communities. The 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie and others like it were intended to bring peace to whole regions of peoples. It took nearly 7 months to negotiate the contents of the treaty and gather signatories. Among the more than 200 signatories were Tribal leaders, U.S. Government officials, and military leaders. It is important to recognize and remember those who signed in the hope that the treaty would bring resolution to ongoing conflicts. Equally, we should reflect on those who did not sign, as that omission is an important part of this history.

Despite the signing of the treaty, conflict persisted. Today we must continue to work to address the inequities that remain across Indian Country. As those signatories of the treaty knew in 1868, treaties and the trust responsibilities to which the U.S. Government committed continue to shape modern relationships with the sovereign Tribes. True government-to-government relationships and respect for Tribal sovereignty are at the heart of Congress's responsibilities in helping to ensure a brighter future for Tribal communities.

As they gather at Fort Laramie at the end of April, Tribes will share their histories and cultures. Among the exchange of traditional prayers, songs, and dances, Tribes will also lead discussions about the future of Tribal sovereignty and treaty rights.

In the joint resolution passed during this year's session, the Wyoming State Legislature appropriately recognized that " . . . the legacy of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie has had an impact in numerous ways on the lives of Tribal members of Tribes party to the Treaty from generation to generation since the signing. . . ."

Recognizing the 150th anniversary of the signing of the treaty requires reflection and introspection, but should also inspire hope for the future. The upcoming events at Fort Laramie National Historic Site offer a unique educational opportunity to highlight the vibrant Tribal cultures that have also endured for generations.

I am proud to recognize this important anniversary and reflect on the 150 years since the signing of the Treaty of Fort Laramie. Historic places and the documents inspired by a confluence of values and ideas should not be forgotten. We must remember the events that led to the signing of the treaty, and those that followed, and continue the important work to develop strong relationships and be good partners with sovereign Tribal nations.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING EDWARD J. CERNIC, SR.

• Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to Edward J. Cernic, Sr., a beloved father, grandfather, husband, politician, and member of his community in Johnstown, Cambria County, PA. Affectionately known as "Pap," Ed dedicated his life to his family and community. Ed passed away on March 21, 2018, at the age of 85.

Ed believed in the importance of civic duty and touched countless lives in his hometown of Tanneryville, near Johnstown. He cared deeply about his community and was a powerful advocate for his region, especially in times of turmoil. In the aftermath of the 1977 Johnstown Flood, a disaster which took 84 lives in Cambria County, Ed headed the Tanneryville Flood Recovery Association and raised more than $100,000 in recovery funds. He was a leader in an effort that took 17 busloads of people to Washington, DC to advocate for Federal flood relief funding. He even maneuvered a meeting with President Jimmy Carter after slipping a note to first lady Rosalyn Carter during a campaign stop in Johnstown. Their brief sit-down resulted in Federal support for the entire city. That was the kind of leader that Ed was: an honorable man with a big heart, who always put his community first.

Ed was a natural and successful businessman, founding several businesses that made Cernic a brand name throughout the region. He was proud to be able to create jobs in his community.

He was a major force in local and State politics and a dedicated champion for transportation and infrastructure projects in Cambria County. In a region that has faced many challenges, he was a man of action who courageously fought to push the community forward. Though well-known for his friendships with Democratic public officials and political candidates, Ed never hesitated to reach across the aisle to help the community and was highly respected by members of both parties. Ed served as chairman of the Greater Johnstown Water Authority and commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Transportation Commission. He participated in many other local nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Ed's impact on his community is most evident at his famous, annual summer picnic at Cernic's Picnic Grove. Ed had a unique ability to gather people from far and wide—elected officials, political candidates, business leaders, and community leaders—to celebrate and show their support for the people of Cambria County. This yearly gathering exemplifies Ed's contributions to the State and local community, as well as what he valued most: family, friends, and his beloved hometown.

Ed's legacy will endure in the jobs he created, the communities he supported, and the people he served. Johnstown and Cambria County had no stronger champion. As a Pennsylvanian and as a friend of Ed and his family, I will miss his generous spirit and his passion for helping the people of his home county. We extend our condolences to Ed Cernic, Jr., and the Cernic family.•

TRIBUTE TO PENNY REDLI

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week, I have the honor of recognizing

the Museum of the Beartooths director, Penny Redli, for receiving the Museums Association of Montana President's Award.

Penny Redli lives in Columbus where she serves as the director of the Museum of the Beartooths. She has worked at the Museum of the Beartooths for just over 10 years, and under her leadership, the museum community in Montana has grown tremendously. Before her time at the Museum of the Beartooths, she spent 9 years working at the Carbon County Historical Society and Museum.

While her extensive time spent working at museums in Montana is notable, it is her passion and dedication to the community that makes her stand out. Her willingness to provide leadership and engage with other organizations around the State has given other museums the opportunity to thrive. Her passion for history and the community has made her a leader among her peers.

I congratulate Penny Redli on her success with the Museum of the Beartooths and thank her for her contributions to Montana and the greater Stillwater community.●

TRIBUTE TO DAVID FULSTONE

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 95th birthday of Mr. David Fulstone, a friend, neighbor, and a beloved member of our northern Nevada community. It was an honor to have the opportunity to celebrate this momentous occasion with him earlier this month.

Mr. Fulstone was born on April 1, 1923, in San Francisco, CA. He was raised in Smith Valley, NV—a place I am proud to call home—on his family's ranch that sat in the heart of the valley and was the center of his father's sheep ranching operation. Growing up, he enjoyed working on the ranch, attending sheep camp, and playing basketball. In fact, he was Smith Valley High School's star basketball player.

In 1942, Mr. Fulstone was one of just 13 students to graduate from Smith Valley High School. Later that year, he married Angelina Margaroli, and together, they had two children, DeeAnn Fulstone and David Hill Fulstone II. They are the proud grandparents of Mathew Rotchy, KimberLee Rotchy, Josh Fulstone, and Jeffrey Fulstone.

The Fulstones bought their ranch in 1949 and, for more than six decades, grew hay, garlic, and onions. Although he retired in 2010, Mr. Fulstone continues to enjoy gardening and sharing his vegetables with neighbors and friends and still pursues his passion for agriculture by staying informed on policy issues affecting the industry. Mr. Fulstone is the recipient of many awards in our community, including the Farmer of the Year award.

Whether it is serving as grand marshall of the Lyon County Parade, a member of the Nevada Farm Bureau, or on various local boards, Mr. Fulstone has made many contributions to northern Nevada and continues to be an integral part of Lyon County. Even at 95, he remains active as a member of the Yerington Episcopal Church and is the oldest and longest serving member of the Yerington Rotary Club, which recognized him with the Paul Harris award.

As the senior Senator from Nevada, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating David Fulstone on his accomplished 95 years and recognizing his decades of leadership and service to our community. Lynne and I send Mr. Fulstone and his family our best wishes, and I offer my appreciation for all that he has done to make our northern Nevada community an even better place to live.●

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF NORTH CENTRAL STATE COLLEGE

● Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor North Central State College in recognition of its 50th anniversary of providing quality higher education to the citizens of Ohio. Chartered by the Ohio Board of Regents and certified by the Ohio Secretary of State in May 1969, North Central State College moved to its current Mansfield location in 1970. North Central State is a regional economic and innovation leader where the community as a whole benefits from the increased occupational and investment opportunities of students remaining in Ohio after their graduation. More than 4,300 students enroll each year.

North Central State offers more than 70 associate degrees and certificate programs in public services, health sciences, business, and engineering technologies. The mission of North Central State College is to provide individuals with the knowledge, skills, and inspiration to succeed in their chosen path. During this year's commencement ceremony, North Central State will present a degree to its 14,000th graduate.

I am here to honor North Central State College and to congratulate everyone who was involved in making its first 50 years a success.●

TRIBUTE TO DEZMOND WARD

● Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, today I recognize Dezmond Ward, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all the hard work he has done on behalf of myself, my staff, and the State of South Dakota.

Dezmond is a graduate of Milbank High School in Milbank, SD. In August, he will graduate from Concordia College in Moorhead, MN, where he studies political science and history. Dezmond is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience and who has been a true asset to the office.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Dezmond for all of the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. JANET BISOGNO

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Dr. Janet Bisogno, the Osceola County Teacher of the Year from Celebration High School in Celebration, FL.

Janet was named Teacher of the Year in recognition of her accomplishments as an outstanding educator and for her passion and devotion to challenging students towards success. She is considered one of Osceola County's most dynamic and well-respected teachers.

Janet gives students tremendous opportunities to participate in science as an immersed experience, including fun but challenging labs and learning opportunities. In both 2016 and 2017, her students scored higher than the world average on IB biology exams. Her students have had a 100-percent pass rate on the end of course exam since she began teaching Pre-IB biology. Janet's leadership in her science professional learning community has been instrumental in moving all students forward.

Colleagues say Janet creates strong and positive relationships with her students, which contribute to a successful classroom environment. She traveled with students to Peru, where they completed an academic field study on the Amazon. Janet has volunteered on numerous committees, and is an engaged member of the school's department chair committee, which works towards school improvement.

Janet is a graduate of Wright University and received her doctorate from the University of Central Florida. She was previously an educator at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. She has been a teacher at Celebration High School since August 2009.

I extend my best wishes to Janet for her hard work and dedication and look forward to hearing of her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO JESSIE BOYCE

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I am pleased to honor Jessie Boyce, the Pinellas County Teacher of the Year from Tyrone Middle School in St. Petersburg, FL.

Jessie was named Teacher of the Year because she excels at turning kids who hate math into scholars who love going to their math class. She was also recognized for helping colleagues and going beyond to help fellow teachers and students.

She was instrumental in implementing a one-to-one technology initiative as her school transitioned to the center for innovation and digital learning. As part of the Pinellas Innovates initiative, Jessie spearheaded personalized learning in the county. She writes, provides training, speaks at conferences, blogs about education, and discusses other ways to bring innovation into the classroom.

Jessie has been teaching for 10 years, the last 5 serving at Tyrone Middle School. She has taught both math and science, most recently teaching the sixth grade. She received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Grove City College in 2008 and a master's degree in instructional leadership from Robert Morris University in 2013.

I extend my sincere gratitude to Jessie for the commitment she has made to her students. I wish her continued success in her future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO REBECCA CHILDS

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Rebecca Childs, the Levy County Teacher of the Year from Williston Elementary School in Williston, FL.

Rebecca is best described as a hardworking educator who has demonstrated capabilities in curriculum and instruction, data analysis, and assessment. She is committed to improving the quality of instruction and assessment through ongoing professional development and reflective teaching practices.

She serves on the district math and science cadres and facilitates the creation of standards-based curriculum maps and district common assessments. She develops classroom assessments to monitor student learning and provide quality, standards-based instruction to fourth grade students. Becky has also mentored both new teachers and interns at her school.

Rebecca graduated from Saint Leo University with a bachelor of arts in elementary education and graduated from Florida State University with a master of science in educational leadership. She previously was a reading coach, kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teacher at Joyce Bullock Elementary School. Since 2015, she has been a fourth grade teacher at Williston Elementary School.

I express my sincere gratitude to Rebecca for her dedication to her students throughout the years. I look forward to hearing of her continued success in her future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK FARLEY

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Patrick Farley, the Martin County Teacher of the Year from Crystal Lake Elementary School in Stuart, FL.

Patrick received this important recognition as his priorities as an educator are to deepen his student's leadership skills and independence while continuing to inspire and create communities within the classroom. He has the ability to motivate his students and is able to teach them how to problem solve with the resources and people around them.

Beyond his classroom, he chairs the schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports initiative at Crystal Lake, serves as a coach for the robotics team, track team, and as coach and cofounder of the running club. He is also the girls basketball head coach at Anderson Middle School and is an active member of Covenant Fellowship Baptist Church.

According to his peers, their entire community is fortunate to have teachers like Patrick, who is dedicated to improving the lives of young people. They view him as an exceptional educator who exemplifies what it takes to make a true difference in the classroom.

Patrick is a fifth grade teacher at Crystal Lake Elementary and has 4 years of teaching experience, all within the Martin County School District.

I express my best wishes to Patrick for his commitment to educating his students. I look forward to hearing of his continued success in his future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO AMY GRIMM

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I honor Amy Grimm, the St. Johns County Teacher of the Year from Julington Creek Elementary School in St. Johns, FL.

Amy was named Teacher of the Year for the second time, previously winning the award in the 2002–2003 school year. She enjoys teaching first grade students because of the wonder and joy they experience. She always says first grade is a magical year.

According to Amy, first graders are excited about learning. She saw much growth in her students this year as they became readers. They come to her classroom dependent and blossom into confident learners by the end of the year.

Amy is a mentor to other teachers and believes in developing and supporting the whole child and takes a thematic approach in her classroom. It is not uncommon for her to also be seen at her students' extracurricular activities supporting and cheering them on.

Amy graduated from Frostburg State University in Maryland with a bachelor's degree in early childhood and elementary education. She has 22 years of teaching experience, all within the St. Johns County School District. She began her teaching career with the school district in 1995 at Ketterlinus Elementary School as a first grade/title I teacher. She has been with Julington Creek Elementary School since 1998 and is working toward her gifted endorsement.

I offer my best wishes to Amy for her tireless work and dedication to her students. I look forward to hearing of her continued success in the years ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO SAMANTHA LAMORA

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Samantha Lamora, the St. Lucie County Teacher of the Year from Savanna Ridge Elementary School in Port St. Lucie, FL.

Samantha received the Teacher of the Year award for her student's superior performance, her teaching routines, and outstanding classroom practices. Inspired by her students' desire to learn, grow, and celebrate their own successes, Samantha values collaboration and looks for opportunities to extend that beyond the classroom by establishing solid partnerships between home and school. At the start of each year, she writes to the parents of her students a letter detailing her educational philosophy, expectation of success for her students, and pledge to partner with them in their child's academic journey to guarantee achievement.

Her classroom is open to parents on a number of occasions each year in order to celebrate the accomplishments of their children. In the spirit of working collaboratively with her colleagues, Samantha also helps to produce a weekly newsletter to streamline communication. She also is an active member of the school's positive behavior intervention success, parent-teacher organization, and literacy committees that help to plan events after school in an effort to bridge the gap between home and school. She is always seeking to make a positive difference for her students.

Samantha is a first grade teacher at Savanna Ridge Elementary School with 5 years of teaching experience. Stepping into the role of a teacher is an answer to a lifetime career calling she deems magical.

I express my best wishes to Samantha for her commitment and dedication to her students. I look forward to hearing of her continued success in the years ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO TAYLOR MASSEY

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Taylor Massey, the Hendry County Teacher of the Year from Eastside Elementary School in Clewiston, FL.

Taylor's teaching philosophy centers around what she describes as not settling for mediocrity and fostering great citizenship and leadership with her students. Her favorite part about teaching is giving her students a voice and watching their minds grow.

She is the adviser to the county's only National Elementary Honor Society chapter and adviser to the STEP club. Taylor is also part of the new teacher induction team to welcome new teachers to the district. She strives to be a positive role model for her students and loves having close connections with her students' parents.

She is a product of the Hendry County school system, having attended Eastside Elementary School, Clewiston Middle School, and Clewiston High School. She now teaches alongside some of the teachers who taught her in elementary school.

Taylor is a fourth grade teacher, and this is her fifth year teaching in the

district, having previously taught kindergarten, second grade, and sixth grade. She attended Florida Atlantic University while working as a resident assistant and volunteered with the YMCA. Taylor graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in psychology and received her master of education degree from the University of West Florida. She plans to become an administrator in the future.

I extend my best wishes to Taylor and look forward to hearing of her continued success in the years ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO CHASEY NIEBRUGGE

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Chasey Niebrugge, the Lee County Teacher of the Year from River Hall Elementary School in Alva, FL.

Chasey was named Teacher of the Year because she encompasses all the components of a model teacher. Described as talented, innovative, and committed to expanding learning beyond the classroom, she changed the intensive intervention/exceptional student education program at her school from a program that lacked resources and true inclusion practices to a program that is thriving. Students who were struggling are now flourishing.

Her II/ESE students are a huge part of the school's family and are included in all activities they are able to attend. She creates an engaging, differentiated, and safe classroom environment where her students are expected to do their personal best. Chasey believes that continuing her own learning outside of her classroom is extremely important and a large part of her success as a teacher.

Chasey feels that every single day is a new opportunity for a child to learn. As an educator, she believes it is her responsibility to provide the best learning experience for her students. She has always wanted to teach, believing this to be her passion and that she is meant to be with her students.

Chasey is a graduate from Estero High School and is a former basketball and softball athlete. She is the intensive intervention/exceptional student education teacher at River Hall Elementary School.

I express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Chasey and offer my best wishes on her future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO KENNETH NORTH

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Kenneth North, the Union County Teacher of the Year from Union County High School in Lake Butler, FL.

Kenneth is more than a teacher; he is a mentor for today's youth to be tomorrow's successful and productive citizens. He does this by providing opportunities for them through competitions, community service, social functions, and daily activities.

In many instances, he sets up practical exercises for his students to work through by coming up with solutions to problems that work best for them. According to Kenneth, this teaches students the principle of taking ownership of problems and giving the solutions that can be applied throughout life.

Kenneth is a Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps instructor with more than 23 years of life experiences around the world. He has been a JROTC instructor with Union County since 2012.

I extend my appreciation to Kenneth for his hard work and congratulate him on this achievement. I wish him continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER POWELL

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Jennifer Powell, the Leon County Teacher of the Year from Lawton Chiles High School in Tallahassee, FL.

Jennifer received this important recognition because of her innovative lesson plans and tireless work on behalf of her students. Her colleagues consider her an asset to both her students and the school.

After she was named Teacher of the Year, Jennifer's students gave her a standing ovation in their classroom. Jennifer said she loves her students and notes they come to her class every day, prepared to meet any of the challenges she gives them.

Jennifer believes in hard work and thinks that being part of a team is important. Relationships are very important to Jennifer; they are her philosophy for education. If she can form relationships with the students, parents, and the school's administration, she believes anything can happen in and outside of the classroom.

Jennifer has been teaching social studies for the past 11 years. Her first 9 years were spent as a civics teacher at Deerlake Middle School and the past 2 years have been at Lawton Chiles High School. She is a three-time graduate of Florida State University with a bachelor's and master's degree in social science education/curriculum and instruction and a specialist's degree in educational leadership.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Jennifer for all her hard work and dedication she has given to her students. I wish her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO SARAH RAY

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Sarah Ray, the Palm Beach County Teacher of the Year from the Alexander W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts in West Palm Beach, FL.

Sarah professes that everything she does is for her students, and this award is entirely about them. Sarah wants to make sure to help all of her students continue in their educational careers.

Sarah took over the Artists Reaching to Society Club at the school after the passing of its founder. Under her direction, the club organizes an annual arts camp for elementary school students. The camp has grown to include 250 student volunteers and 125 students each summer.

A Google Certified Teacher and District Trailblazer Teacher, Sarah has successfully integrated technology into her classroom. This has helped excite her students about learning while also providing the technological ability to monitor their progress.

Sarah graduated from Dreyfoos School of the Arts in 2000 and earned her bachelor of arts degree from the University of Florida with a major in history and a minor in education. She completed masters-level coursework at Florida Atlantic University. She began teaching at Dreyfoos in 2014 and has served as the school advisory committee chair, senior class adviser, student council adviser, and schoolwide positive behavior.

I extend my best wishes to Sarah and look forward to learning of her continued successes.●

TRIBUTE TO CARLA ROSS

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I am pleased to recognize Carla Ross, the Escambia County Teacher of the Year from Booker T. Washington High School in Pensacola, FL.

Carla was recognized for bringing enthusiasm into the classroom every day. She has a different style of teaching, with her classroom being more of a hands-on experience, which her students find to be more enjoyable and have excelled in this leaning environment.

Carla is an instructor for the marketing and entrepreneurship academy at Booker T. Washington High School. She became a teacher after moving to Pensacola and has been with Escambia County schools for 35 years.

She never envisioned herself becoming a teacher, having hated school when she was in high school and college. Carla fell in love with this career after working with her students and brought her passion for the business world into the schoolhouse.

She immerses her students into the real world of work, teaching every aspect of running a business, production, advertising, sales, and distribution. This provides nonstop activity for her students to stay on task. They know their work is done under the watchful eye of someone they see as more than a teacher.

I extend my best wishes to Carla for all the hard work she has done for her students. I look forward to hearing of her continued success in the years ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER WINGATE

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Jennifer Wingate, the Gilchrist County Teacher of the Year from Trenton High School in Trenton, FL.

In only her second year of teaching in the public school system, Jennifer

was named Teacher of the Year because she earned the respect of her students, peers, and administrators. She began her teaching with private music lessons and has directed church choirs and praise teams.

In order to engage students, Jennifer teaches the historical or emotional context of each piece of music they are learning to play. In her first year as band director, her commitment helped the Trenton High School Band receive a superior rating at the district musical assessment for the first time in more than a decade.

Jennifer's motto when teaching her students is S.U.D.A.: spirit, unity, discipline, and attitude. Each of these traits are valued by Jennifer and were adopted from her own mentor.

Jennifer graduated in 2011 from Newberry College in Newberry, SC, with a bachelor of arts degree in applied music. After relocating to Florida, she was hired as the band director and music appreciation teacher for Trenton High School. She also teaches music appreciation to nonband students.

I extend my best wishes to Jennifer for her dedication to her students and music and congratulate her on this award.●

RECOGNIZING TEAM INVICTUS

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I would like to recognize Team Invictus, the Fort Myers High School robotics team in Fort Myers, FL.

Team Invictus is comprised of Fort Myers High School students and is the first robotics team from Lee County to reach the world competition in Houston, TX. The team built a robot in 6 weeks and won the Rookie All-Star award in Orlando, FL.

The Fort Myers High School robotics program has only existed for 4 months, launching in December 2017, and is helping prepare the students for life after high school. The members of Team Invictus are honored to be a part of this experience as they continue to grow and make history in the Fort Myers community.

I extend my best wishes to Team Invictus and look forward to hearing of their continued success.●

RECOGNIZING VIERA HIGH SCHOOL'S OCEAN SCIENCE ACADEMIC TEAM

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Hannah Howe, Alyssa Hofmann, Maggie Zendehrouh, Zack Chace, and Cameron Shearer for qualifying to the National Ocean Sciences Bowl.

These exceptional students from Viera High School are advancing to the 21st Annual National Ocean Sciences Bowl being held in Boulder, CO. The team previously won the Manatee Bowl, which was hosted by the University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science.

This year, more than 1,500 students from 231 schools in 31 States competed in 23 regional National Oceans Sciences Bowl competitions. These five students demonstrated their knowledge of the ocean and its role in Earth system science during this year's theme, ''Our Ocean Shaping Weather,'' and proving victorious.

I extend my best wishes to Viera High School's Ocean Science Academic Team and look forward to hearing of their continued success.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:11 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2905. An act to require the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury to report to Congress on efforts to combat identity theft, including by persons purporting to be acting on behalf of the Internal Revenue Service, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5444. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modernize and improve the Internal Revenue Service, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance matching grant program, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to establish a program for the issuance of identity protection personal identification numbers, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow officers and employees of the Department of the Treasury to provide to taxpayers information regarding low-income taxpayer clinics, to provide for a single point of contact at the Internal Revenue Service for the taxpayers who are victims of tax-related identity theft, to require notice from the Secretary of the Treasury in the case of any closure of a Taxpayer Assistance Center, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require electronic filing of the annual returns of exempt organizations and provide for making such returns available for public inspection, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve cybersecurity and taxpayer identity protection, and modernize the information technology of the Internal Revenue Service, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to restrict the immediate sale of seized property by the Secretary of the Treasury to perishable goods, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH) reported that he had signed the following enrolled bill, which was previously signed by the Speaker of the House:

S. 167. An act to designate a National Memorial to Fallen Educators at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 2905. An act to require the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury to report to Congress on efforts to combat identity theft, including by persons purporting to be acting on behalf of the Internal Revenue Service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 5444. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modernize and improve the Internal Revenue Service, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance matching grant program, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to establish a program for the issuance of identity protection personal identification numbers, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow officers and employees of the Department of the Treasury to provide to taxpayers information regarding low-income taxpayer clinics, to provide for a single point of contact at the Internal Revenue Service for the taxpayers who are victims of tax-related identity theft, to require notice from the Secretary of the Treasury in the case of any closure of a Taxpayer Assistance Center, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require electronic filing of the annual returns of exempt organizations and provide for making such returns available for public inspection, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve cybersecurity and taxpayer identify protection, and modernize the information technology of the Internal Revenue Service, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to restrict the immediate sale of seized property by the Secretary of the Treasury to perishable goods, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, April 19, 2018, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 167. An act to designate a National Memorial to Fallen Educators at the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

John B. Nalbandian, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

Kari A. Dooley, of Connecticut, to be United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut.

Dominic W. Lanza, of Arizona, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona.

Michael Y. Scudder, of Illinois, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

Amy J. St. Eve, of Illinois, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

Charles J. Williams, of Iowa, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Iowa.

Joseph H. Hunt, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Nicola T. Hanna, of California, to be United States Attorney for the Central District of California for the term of four years.

Steven L. Gladden, of North Carolina, to be United States Marshal for the Middle District of North Carolina for the term of four years.

Brendan O. Heffner, of Illinois, to be United States Marshal for the Central District of Illinois for the term of four years.

Theodor G. Short, of Maine, to be United States Marshal for the District of Maine 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 Mr. McCONNELL (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 2710. A bill to improve treatment and early interventions for pregnant and postpartum women and infants affected by substance use disorder; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 2711. A bill to amend section 303 of the Controlled Substances Act to facilitate waivers of the separate registration requirement for physicians dispensing narcotic drugs to individuals for maintenance treatment or detoxification treatment; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. MORAN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. BENNET, Mr. HOEVEN, and Ms. SMITH):

S. 2712. A bill to amend the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 to establish a farm and ranch stress assistance network, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. FLAKE, and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. 2713. A bill to limit the level of premium subsidy provided by the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation to agricultural producers; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 2714. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Don and Deyon Stephens, Founders of Mercy Ships, in recognition of nearly 40 years of service as the leaders of a humanitarian relief organization that exemplifies the compassionate character of America; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. KING, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2715. A bill to require the President to develop a national strategy to combat the financial networks of transnational organized criminals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 2716. A bill 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; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 2717. A bill to reauthorize provisions relating to the Maritime Administration; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 2718. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow workers an above-the-line deduction for union dues and expenses and to allow a miscellaneous itemized deduction for workers for all unreimbursed expenses incurred in the trade or business of being an employee; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 2719. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a registry to ensure that members of the Armed Forces who may have been exposed to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances on military installations receive information regarding such exposure, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. REED, Mr. NELSON, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HARRIS, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 2720. A bill to codify the outer Continental Shelf blowout preventer systems and well control rule and the Arctic drilling rule; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BENNET:

S. 2721. A bill to designate certain land in San Miguel, Ouray, and San Juan Counties, Colorado, as wilderness, to designate certain special management areas in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. HARRIS:

S. 2722. A bill to establish environmental justice as a consideration in the regulation of pesticides, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. WARREN, and Ms. HARRIS):

S. 2723. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to require that supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits for children be calculated with reference to the cost of the low-cost food plan, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. LEAHY, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2724. A bill to reform the use of solitary confinement and other forms of restrictive housing in the Bureau of Prisons, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 2725. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9801 Apollo Drive in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, as the ''Wayne K. Curry Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. Res. 477. A resolution recognizing and celebrating the National Comedy Center being built at 203–217 West Second Street, Jamestown, New York; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. KING, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. COTTON, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. WARNER, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WICKER, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. CASSIDY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. REED, Mr. GARDNER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BARRASSO, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. Res. 478. A resolution designating the week of April 21, 2018, through April 29, 2018, as ''National Park Week''; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 65

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 65, a bill to address financial conflicts of interest of the President and Vice President.

S. 266

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 266, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Anwar Sadat in recognition of his heroic achievements and courageous contributions to peace in the Middle East.

S. 298

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 298, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 994

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 994, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for the protection of community centers with religious affiliation, and for other purposes.

S. 1008

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1008, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to exclude cannabidiol and cannabidiol-rich plants from the definition of marihuana, and for other purposes.

S. 1050

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1050, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Chinese-American Veterans of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II.

S. 1633

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) were withdrawn as cosponsors of S. 1633, a bill to promote innovative approaches to outdoor recreation on Federal land and to open up opportunities for collaboration with non-Federal partners, and for other purposes.

S. 1640

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1640, a bill to reform the financing of Senate elections, and for other purposes.

S. 1689

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1689, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to provide for a new rule regarding the application of the Act to marihuana, and for other purposes.

S. 1782

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1782, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the definition of full-time employee for purposes of the employer mandate in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 1880

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1880, a bill to reform our government, reduce the grip of special interest, and return our democracy to the American people by increasing transparency and oversight of our elections and government, reforming public financing for Presidential and Congressional elections, and requiring States to conduct Congressional redistricting through independent commissions, and for other purposes.

S. 1989

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1989, a bill to enhance transparency and accountability for online political advertisements by requiring those who purchase and publish such ads to disclose information about the advertisements to the public, and for other purposes.

S. 2076

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2076, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the expansion of activities related to Alzheimer's disease, cognitive decline, and brain health under the Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2176

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2176, a bill to establish an integrated national approach to respond to ongoing and expected efforts of extreme weather and climate change by protecting, managing, and conserving the fish, wildlife, and plants of the United States, and to maximize Government efficiency and reduce costs, in cooperation with State, local, and tribal governments and other entities, and for other purposes.

S. 2334

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2334, a bill to amend title 17, United States Code, to provide clarity with respect to, and to modernize, the licensing system for musical works under section 115 of that title, to ensure fairness in the establishment of certain rates and fees under sections 114 and 115 of that title, and for other purposes.

S. 2335

At the request of Mr. ROUNDS, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2335, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to issue permits for recreation services on lands managed by Federal agencies, and for other purposes.

S. 2488

At the request of Ms. WARREN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2488, a bill to amend title 37, United States Code, to exclude the receipt of basic allowance for housing for members of the Armed Forces in determining eligibility for certain Federal benefits, and for other purposes.

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2488, supra.

S. 2501

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2501, a bill to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to provide for the establishment of a Ski Area Fee Retention Account.

S. 2597

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2597, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the program of payments to children's hospitals that operate graduate medical education programs, and for other purposes.

S. 2598

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2598, a bill to establish State-Federal partnerships to provide students the opportunity to attain higher education as in-State public institutions of higher education without debt, to provide Federal Pell Grant eligibility to DREAMer students, to repeal suspension of eligibility under the Higher Education Act of 1965 for drug-related offenses, and for other purposes.

S. 2630

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2630, a bill to amend section 5707 of title 5, United States Code, to require the General Services Administration to make information regarding travel by the heads of Executive agencies and other individuals in senior positions publicly available.

S. 2667

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) were added as cosponsors of S. 2667, a bill to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to provide for State and Tribal regulation of hemp production, and for other purposes.

S. 2691

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2691, a bill to hold pharmaceutical companies accountable for illegal marketing and distribution of opioid products and for their role in creating and exacerbating the opioid epidemic in the United States.

S. 2702

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2702, a bill to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to clarify the authority of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection with respect to persons regulated by a State insurance regulator, and for other purposes.

S. 2707

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2707, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide educational resources regarding opioid use and pain management as part of the Medicare & You handbook.

S. 2708

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2708, a bill to provide for the establishment of Medicare part E public health plans, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 414

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 414, a resolution condemning the continued undemocratic measures by the Government of Venezuela to undermine the independence of democratic institutions and calling for a free and fair electoral process.

S. RES. 431

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 431, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of ''International Parental Child Abduction Month'' and expressing the sense of the Senate that Congress should raise awareness of the harm caused by international parental child abduction.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. McCONNELL (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 2710. A bill to improve treatment and early interventions for pregnant and postpartum women and infants affected by substance use disorder; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

MR. MCCONNELL. 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. 2710

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 ''Protecting Moms and Infants Act''.

SEC. 2. IMPROVING TREATMENT FOR PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM WOMEN.

(a) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this subsection as the ''Secretary'') shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress and make available to the public on the internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services a report regarding the implementation of the recommendations in the strategy relating to prenatal opioid use, including neonatal abstinence syndrome, developed pursuant to section 2 of the Protecting Our Infants Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–91). Such report shall include—

(A) an update on the implementation of the recommendations in the strategy, including information regarding the agencies involved in the implementation; and

(B) information on additional funding or authority the Secretary requires, if any, to implement the strategy, which may include authorities needed to coordinate implementation of such strategy across the Department of Health and Human Services.

(2) PERIODIC UPDATES.—The Secretary shall periodically update the report under paragraph (1).

(b) RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAMS FOR PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM WOMEN.—Section 508(s) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290bb–1(s)) is amended by striking ''$16,900,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021'' and inserting ''$29,931,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023''.

SEC. 3. EARLY INTERVENTIONS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN AND INFANTS.

(a) DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS BY CENTER FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION.—Section 515(b) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290bb–21(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (13), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (14), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(15) in cooperation with relevant stakeholders and the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, develop educational materials for clinicians to use with pregnant women for shared decisionmaking regarding pain management during pregnancy.''.

(b) GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY CENTER FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT.—Section 507(b) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290bb(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (13), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (14), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(15) in cooperation with the Secretary, implement and disseminate, as appropriate, the recommendations in the report entitled 'Protecting Our Infants Act: Final Strategy' issued by the Department of Health and Human Services in 2017; and''.

(c) SUPPORT OF PARTNERSHIPS BY CENTER FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT.—Section 507(b) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290bb(b)), as amended by subsection (b), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(16) in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, support public-private partnerships to assist with education about, and support with respect to, substance use disorder for pregnant women and health care providers who treat pregnant women and babies.''.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 2714. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Don and Deyon Stephens, Founders of Mercy Ships, in recognition of nearly 40 years of service as the leaders of a humanitarian relief organization that exemplifies the compassionate character of America; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2714

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

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) Mercy Ships was founded in 1978 and has worked in more than 70 countries, providing services valued at more than $1.3 billion, treating more than 2.56 million direct beneficiaries.

(2) Mercy Ships owns and operates the world's largest private hospital ship, the Africa Mercy that has five state-of-the-art operating rooms and ward bed space for 82 patients.

(3) Mercy Ships vessels are staffed by professional volunteer crew including surgeons, nurses, doctors, dentists, cooks, engineers, agriculturalists, teachers, and others.

(4) Mercy Ships has performed more than 82,000 life-changing or life-saving operations such as cleft lip and palate repair, cataract removal, orthopedic procedures, facial reconstruction, obstetric fistula repair, and tumor removal.

(5) Mercy Ships has treated over 147,000 dental patients including over 390,000 dental procedures.

(6) Mercy Ships has trained more than 5,900 local professionals (including surgeons) who have in turn trained many others.

(7) Mercy Ships has trained over 38,100 local professionals in their area of expertise including anesthesiology, midwifery, sterilization, orthopedic and reconstructive surgery, and leadership, thereby increasing medical capacity in the host nation.

(8) Mercy Ships has taught over 198,000 local people in basic health care.

(9) Mercy Ships has completed over 1,100 infrastructure development projects focusing on water and sanitation education, agriculture and construction projects which improve local health care delivery systems.

(10) Annually, Mercy Ships has over 1,600 volunteers who help in locations around the world, 900 of which serve in Africa. At any given time, there are more than 400 crew from 40 nations onboard the Africa Mercy.

(11) The Africa Mercy alone has had over 4,900 crew from 74 countries serve onboard since its inception in 2007. In addition, more than 950 local Day Workers from 12 different countries have served alongside since it first docked in Africa.

(12) Mercy Ships has served some of the world's poorest populations and completed over 589 port visits in 55 developing nations and 18 developed nations for a total of 73 nations including: Australia, Bahamas, Benin, Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Canada, China, Congo Brazzaville, Columbia, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Fiji, France, Gabon, The Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea (West Africa), Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Korea, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malta, Mexico, Montserrat, The Netherlands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, St. Eustatius (NL), St. Kitts, St. Thomas, St. Vincent, Sweden, Tahiti, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vanuatu.

(13) Through the years, Mercy Ships has had four hospital ships that have served in some of the poorest ports in the world. Those include:

(A) The 16,500-ton Africa Mercy is the world's largest nongovernmental hospital ship and is dedicated to the continent of Africa.

(B) The 522-foot Anastasis was the flag ship, and completed her first relief mission in 1982 to Guatemala. Her crew of 400 worked in Africa until she was decommissioned in 2007.

(C) Acquired in 1994, the 265-foot Caribbean Mercy with her crew of 150 focused on the Caribbean basin and Central America with its Eye Surgery Unit. The ship was sold in 2006.

(D) Donated in 1983, the 172-foot Good Samaritan served the Caribbean, Central and South America for 11 years with a crew of 60. Renamed the Island Mercy, she was redeployed to the South Pacific in 1994 and served there until sold in 2001.

(E) Mercy Ships is currently building a new hospital ship to serve Africa's most needy for the next 50 years with delivery expected in 2018. The new vessel, larger than the Africa Mercy, will assume the title of world's largest private hospital ship with increased capacity building and a focus on healthcare training. It will also further the commitment of Mercy Ships to provide and promote through teaching, safe surgery globally as demonstrated by their membership in the G4 Alliance.

(14) Mercy Ships has hosted Presidents and other heads of state from many nations around the world onboard their hospital ships who commended the free health care provided to their people.

(15) Mercy Ships has been endorsed by President Nelson Mandela, President George Bush, Desmund Tutu, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Sir John Major, President Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, Tony Blair, President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Mary Flake de Flores.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the

presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to Don and Deyon Stephens, Founders of Mercy Ships.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the ''Secretary'') shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the Secretary.

SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 2 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses, and the cost of the gold medal.

SEC. 4. STATUS OF MEDALS.

(a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

(b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. REED, Mr. NELSON, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HARRIS, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 2720. A bill to codify the outer Continental Shelf blowout preventer systems and well control rule and the Arctic drilling rule; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, tomorrow marks another somber occasion. Eight years ago, the news ticker came across our televisions saying that an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico, off of Louisiana, was on fire, the Coast Guard was on the scene, and workers were missing.

It was a Tuesday night. It was nearly midnight on April 20, 2010. By morning light, we knew 11 men would not be going home again. For 87 days, the oil gushed into one of the most productive marine environments in the world. The studies show the oil impacted the deepwater corals and fish at the bottom of the food chain, all the way from the bottom up to the dolphins and sea turtles at the top.

Here is one example. This is one in the bayous. You can see the marsh grasses in the distance. You can see the oil as it is coming up, and it is literally covering everything. They did studies on fish that would be in a bayou like this. A little fish, about as big is this, is called a killifish. LSU professors did this study, and they compared them to the bayous where there was not this kind of oil, compared it to similar killifish. What they found over time was the little fish in bayous like this were stunted. They didn't reproduce. They mutated because of this.

Nearly 5 million barrels of oil gushed for 3 months. A lot of it is still there. Some of it is at the bottom where that well was, and that wellhead on the sea floor below the rig was a mile deep. We worked as one gulf community in a bipartisan way. We passed legislation—it was called the RESTORE Act—to send a message that there were going to be fines and penalties under the Clean Water Act. So many barrels of oil, a figure, and then the culpability of the oil company that allowed it to happen. A Federal judge did an extended trial over several years and came up with that fine and that penalty. The RESTORE Act said that money that was going to be assessed against the oil company was going back to the Gulf of Mexico region, and it was going to aid in the economy and in the environment.

There was another impact. The winds caught that oil slick and started sending it east from Louisiana, and it got over to the white sugary sands of Pensacola Beach in Destin and tar balls as far east as Panama City Beach. Those white sands were completely covered in tar and oil. Those photographs of Pensacola Beach went around the world. What was the result? Our guests, our visitors, our tourists, for an entire season, thought all of the Gulf of Mexico beaches along Florida were covered like Pensacola Beach was, and they didn't come for the entire year. Not only did you have an environmental effect like this, you had an economic effect like the loss of tourist revenue in the hotels, motels, the restaurants, the dry cleaners, the little newspapers, and all the ancillary businesses that depend upon a $60 billion-a-year tourist industry in Florida. Still, I am afraid the oil industry hopes we have forgotten all of this.

This month, the media released documents from 2016 in which BP claims that an oilspill can be a welcomed boost to local economies. Can you believe that? This oilspill was in 2010. In 2016, we have just uncovered documents that BP claimed that an oilspill can be ''a welcome boost to local economies.'' How outrageous and how arrogant. I can assure you, the coastal communities of Florida vigorously disagree, and I bet you the coastal communities that had to put up with that in their bayous would disagree vigorously as well.

All that progress, and yet the industry is relentless in wanting to take us backward. They still want to open up Florida's beaches and offshore to drilling, and we have to fight it every day.

The one thing we also have going for us is, the Gulf of Mexico, off of Florida, is the largest testing and training area for the U.S. military in the world. This Senator just climbed into an Air Force jet to fly part of the training profile for young pilots, knowing they have restricted airspace. That was out of Eglin Air Force Base—the testing and training designee for all of the Department of Defense. We have a range that goes from the Panhandle of Florida all the way south in the Gulf of Mexico, off of Key West. In a one-angle shot, they can shoot sophisticated, long-range weapons 600 miles to do the testing.

Big Oil is now trying to roll back some of the basic safety rules that were put in place after the disaster in order to prevent another tragedy. It is happening in front of our eyes. Two years ago, they said that an oilspill could be a welcome boost to the local economies. Yet they are rolling back safety rules today that were put in place in the aftermath of there being 11 people killed on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig. They are rolling that back today in this administration's agencies.

That is why I am joining Senator CANTWELL and other colleagues in introducing legislation to codify these sensible safety measures, like those designed to update the standards for blowout preventers and a requirement for a third party to certify the safety mechanisms.

Let me explain what a blowout preventer is. It didn't work in the Deepwater Horizon oilspill. A mile below the surface, where the well comes out of the Earth, there is a thing called a blowout preventer. If, as happened, there is a blowout in BP's oil well, there is a mechanism that is supposed to safely cut the oil line—pinch it and stop it from flowing. It was faulty. It did not work. So there have been new standards for blowout preventers since 2010. In 2018, 8 years later, the oil industry is trying to roll back those safety requirements that were put in place in the aftermath of their spilling 5 million barrels of oil into the gulf.

Do you see the fight that we have? It is almost every week. We can't allow the Department of the Interior to take us backward in time and expose our beautiful beaches and our tourism-based local economies, as well as our military, to another Deepwater Horizon-type catastrophe if they keep pushing back these safety rules.

That is the purpose of introducing this legislation today with Senator CANTWELL. If we don't watch it, we are going to be right back in the same place we were 8 years ago. It will be 8 years ago to the day tomorrow that we had that awful experience.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. LEAHY, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2724. A bill to reform the use of solitary confinement and other forms of restrictive housing in the Bureau of Prisons, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2724

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 ''Solitary Confinement Reform Act''.

SEC. 2. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT REFORMS.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 303 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 4050. Solitary confinement

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) ADMINISTRATIVE MAXIMUM FACILITY.—The term 'administrative maximum facility' means a maximum-security facility, including the Administrative Maximum facility in Florence, Colorado, designed to house inmates who present an ongoing significant and serious threat to other inmates, staff, and the public.

''(2) ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION.—The term 'administrative segregation' means a non-punitive form of solitary confinement that removes an individual from the general population of a correctional facility for—

''(A) investigative, protective, or preventative reasons resulting in a substantial and immediate threat; or

''(B) transitional reasons, including a pending transfer, pending classification, or other temporary administrative matter.

''(3) APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF CARE.—The term 'appropriate level of care' means the appropriate treatment setting for mental health care that an inmate with mental illness requires, which may include outpatient care, emergency or crisis services, day treatment, supported residential housing, infirmary care, or inpatient psychiatric hospitalization services.

''(4) DIRECTOR.—The term 'Director' means the Director of the Bureau of Prisons.

''(5) DISCIPLINARY HEARING OFFICER.—The term 'disciplinary hearing officer' means an employee of the Bureau of Prisons who is responsible for conducting disciplinary hearings for which solitary confinement may be a sanction, as described in section 541.8 of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor thereto.

''(6) DISCIPLINARY SEGREGATION.—The term 'disciplinary segregation' means a punitive form of solitary confinement imposed only by a Disciplinary Hearing Officer as a sanction for committing a significant and serious disciplinary infraction.

''(7) INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY.—The term 'intellectual disability' means a significant mental impairment characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior.

''(8) MULTIDISCIPLINARY STAFF COMMITTEE.—The term 'multidisciplinary staff committee' means a committee—

''(A) made up of staff at the facility where an inmate resides who are responsible for reviewing the initial placement of the inmate in solitary confinement and any extensions of time in solitary confinement; and

''(B) which shall include—

''(i) not less than 1 licensed mental health professional;

''(ii) not less than 1 medical professional; and

''(iii) not less than 1 member of the leadership of the facility.

''(9) ONGOING SIGNIFICANT AND SERIOUS THREAT.—The term 'ongoing significant and serious threat' means an ongoing set of circumstances that require the highest level of security and staff supervision for an inmate who, by the behavior of the inmate—

''(A) has been identified as assaultive, predacious, riotous, or a serious escape risk; and

''(B) poses a great risk to other inmates, staff, and the public.

''(10) PROTECTION CASE.—The term 'protection case' means an inmate who, by the request of the inmate or through a staff determination, requires protection, as described by section 541.23(c)(3) of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor thereto.

''(11) SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS.—The term 'serious mental illness' means a substantial disorder of thought or mood that significantly impairs judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality, or ability to cope with the ordinary demands of life.

''(12) SIGNIFICANT AND SERIOUS DISCIPLINARY INFRACTION.—The term 'significant and serious disciplinary infraction' means—

''(A) an act of violence that either—

''(i) resulted in or was likely to result in serious injury or death to another; or

''(ii) occurred in connection with any act of non-consensual sex; or

''(B) an escape, attempted escape, or conspiracy to escape from within a security perimeter or custody, or both; or

''(C) possession of weapons, possession of illegal narcotics with intent to distribute, or other similar, severe threats to the safety of the inmate, other inmates, staff, or the public.

''(13) SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.—The term 'solitary confinement' means confinement characterized by substantial isolation in a cell, alone or with other inmates, including administrative segregation, disciplinary segregation, and confinement in any facility designated by the Bureau of Prisons as a special housing unit, special management unit, or administrative maximum facility.

''(14) SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES.—The term 'special administrative measures' means reasonably necessary measures used to—

''(A) prevent disclosure of classified information upon written certification to the Attorney General by the head of an element of the intelligence community (as specified or designated under section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4))) that the unauthorized disclosure of such information would pose a threat to the national security and that there is a danger that the inmate will disclose such information, as described by section 501.2 of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor thereto; or

''(B) protect persons against the risk of death or serious bodily injury, upon written notification to the Director by the Attorney General or, at the Attorney General's direction, by the head of a Federal law enforcement agency, or the head of an element of the intelligence community (as specified or designated under section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4))), that there is a substantial risk that the communications of an inmate or contacts by the inmate with other persons could result in death or serious bodily injury to persons, or substantial damage to property that would entail the risk of death or serious bodily injury to persons, as described by section 501.3 of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor thereto.

''(15) SPECIAL HOUSING UNIT.—The term 'special housing unit' means a housing unit in an institution of the Bureau of Prisons in which inmates are securely separated from the general inmate population for disciplinary or administrative reasons, as described in section 541.21 of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor thereto.

''(16) SPECIAL MANAGEMENT UNIT.—The term 'special management unit' means a non-punitive housing program with multiple, step-down phases for inmates whose history, behavior, or situation requires enhanced management approaches in order to ensure the safety of other inmates, the staff, and the public.

''(17) SUBSTANTIAL AND IMMEDIATE THREAT.—The term 'substantial and immediate threat' means any set of temporary and unforeseen circumstances that require immediate action in order to combat a threat to the safety of an inmate, other inmates, staff, or the public.

''(b) USE OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The placement of a Federal inmate in solitary confinement within the Bureau of Prisons or any facility that contracts with the Bureau of Prisons to provide housing for inmates in Federal custody shall be limited to situations in which such confinement—

''(A) is limited to the briefest term and the least restrictive conditions practicable, including not less than 4 hours of out-of-cell time every day, unless the inmate poses a substantial and immediate threat;

''(B) is consistent with the rationale for placement and with the progress achieved by the inmate;

''(C) allows the inmate to participate in meaningful programming opportunities and privileges as consistent with those available in the general population as practicable, either individually or in a classroom setting;

''(D) allows the inmate to have as much meaningful interaction with others, such as other inmates, visitors, clergy, or licensed mental health professionals, as practicable; and

''(E) complies with the provisions of this section.

''(2) TRANSITIONAL PROCESS FOR INMATES IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.—

''(A) INMATES WITH UPCOMING RELEASE DATES.—The Director shall establish—

''(i) policies to ensure that an inmate with an anticipated release date of 180 days or less is not housed in solitary confinement, unless—

''(I) such confinement is limited to not more than 5 days of administrative segregation relating to the upcoming release of the inmate; or

''(II) the inmate poses a substantial and immediate threat; and

''(ii) a transitional process for each inmate with an anticipated release date of 180 days or less who is held in solitary confinement under clause (i)(II), which shall include—

''(I) substantial re-socialization programming in a group setting;

''(II) regular mental health counseling to assist with the transition; and

''(III) re-entry planning services offered to inmates in a general population setting.

''(B) INMATES IN LONG-TERM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.—The Director shall establish a transitional process for each inmate who has been held in solitary confinement for more than 30 days and who will transition into a general population unit, which shall include—

''(i) substantial re-socialization programming in a group setting; and

''(ii) regular mental health counseling to assist with the transition.

''(3) PROTECTIVE CUSTODY UNITS.—The Director—

''(A) shall establish within the Federal prison system additional general population protective custody units that provide sheltered general population housing to protect inmates from harm that they may otherwise be exposed to in a typical general population housing unit;

''(B) shall establish policies to ensure that an inmate who is considered a protection case shall, upon request of the inmate, be placed in a general population protective custody unit;

''(C) shall create an adequate number of general population protective custody units to—

''(i) accommodate the requests of inmates who are considered to be protection cases; and

''(ii) ensure that inmates who are considered to be protection cases are placed in facilities as close to their homes as practicable; and

''(D) may not place an inmate who is considered to be a protection case in solitary confinement due to the status of the inmate as a protection case unless—

''(i) the inmate requests to be placed in solitary confinement, in which case, at the request of the inmate the inmate shall be transferred to a general population protective custody unit or, if appropriate, a different general population unit; or

''(ii) such confinement is limited to—

''(I) not more than 5 days of administrative segregation; and

''(II) is necessary to protect the inmate during preparation for transfer to a general population protective custody unit or a different general population unit.

''(4) VULNERABLE POPULATIONS.—The Bureau of Prisons or any facility that contracts with the Bureau of Prisons shall not place an inmate in solitary confinement if—

''(A) the inmate is younger than 18 years of age, unless—

''(i) such confinement is a temporary response to the behavior of the inmate, which poses a substantial and immediate threat;

''(ii) all other options to de-escalate the situation have been exhausted, including less restrictive techniques such as—

''(I) penalizing the inmate through loss of privileges;

''(II) speaking with the inmate in an attempt to de-escalate the situation; and

''(III) a licensed mental health professional providing an appropriate level of care;

''(iii) such confinement is limited to—

''(I) 3 hours after the inmate is placed in solitary confinement, if the inmate poses a substantial and immediate threat to others; or

''(II) 30 minutes after the inmate is placed in solitary confinement, if the inmate poses a substantial and immediate threat only to himself or herself; and

''(iv) if, after the applicable maximum period of confinement under subclause (I) or (II) of clause (iii) has expired, the inmate continues to pose a substantial and immediate threat described in that subclause—

''(I) the inmate shall be transferred to another facility or internal location where services can be provided to the inmate without relying on solitary confinement; or

''(II) if a qualified mental health professional believes the level of crisis service needed is not currently available, a staff member of the facility shall initiate a referral to a location that can meet the needs of the inmate;

''(B) the inmate has a serious mental illness, has an intellectual disability, has a physical disability that a licensed medical professional finds is likely to be exacerbated by placement in solitary confinement, is pregnant or in the first 8 weeks of the postpartum recovery period after giving birth, or has been determined by a licensed mental health professional to likely be significantly adversely affected by placement in solitary confinement, unless—

''(i) the inmate poses a substantial and immediate threat;

''(ii) all other options to de-escalate the situation have been exhausted, including less restrictive techniques such as—

''(I) penalizing the inmate through loss of privileges;

''(II) speaking with the inmate in an attempt to de-escalate the situation; and

''(III) a licensed mental health professional providing an appropriate level of care;

''(iii) such confinement is limited to the briefest term and the least restrictive conditions practicable, including access to medical and mental health treatment;

''(iv) such confinement is reviewed by a multidisciplinary staff committee for appropriateness every 24 hours; and

''(v) as soon as practicable, but not later than 5 days after such confinement begins, the inmate is diverted, upon release from solitary confinement, to—

''(I) a general population unit;

''(II) a protective custody unit described in paragraph (3); or

''(III) a mental health treatment program as described in subsection (c)(2);

''(C) the inmate is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (as defined in section 115.5 of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor thereto), intersex (as defined in section 115.5 of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor thereto), or gender nonconforming (as defined in section 115.5 of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor thereto), when such placement is solely on the basis of such identification or status; or

''(D) the inmate is HIV positive, if the placement is solely on the basis of the HIV positive status of the inmate.

''(5) SPECIAL HOUSING UNITS.—The Director shall—

''(A) limit administrative segregation—

''(i) to situations in which such segregation is necessary to—

''(I) control a substantial and immediate threat that cannot be addressed through alternative housing; or

''(II) temporarily house an inmate pending transfer, pending classification, or pending resolution of another temporary administrative matter; and

''(ii) to a duration of not more than 15 consecutive days, and not more than 20 days in a 60-day period, unless—

''(I) the inmate requests to remain in administrative segregation under paragraph (3)(D)(i); or

''(II) in order to address the continued existence of a substantial and immediate threat, a multidisciplinary staff committee approves a temporary extension, which—

''(aa) may not be longer than 15 days; and

''(bb) shall be reviewed by the multidisciplinary staff committee every 3 days during the period of the extension, in order to confirm the continued existence of the substantial and immediate threat;

''(B) limit disciplinary segregation—

''(i) to situations in which such segregation is necessary to punish an inmate who has been found to have committed a significant and serious disciplinary infraction by a Disciplinary Hearing Officer and alternative sanctions would not adequately regulate the behavior of the inmate; and

''(ii) to a duration of not more than 30 consecutive days, and not more than 40 days in a 60-day period, unless a multidisciplinary staff committee, in consultation with the Disciplinary Hearing Officer who presided over the inmate's disciplinary hearing, determines that the significant and serious disciplinary infraction of which the inmate was found guilty is of such an egregious and violent nature that a longer sanction is appropriate and approves a longer sanction, which—

''(I) may be not more than 60 days in a special housing unit if the inmate has never before been found guilty of a similar significant and serious disciplinary infraction; or

''(II) may be not more than 90 days in a special housing unit if the inmate has previously been found guilty of a similar significant and serious disciplinary infraction;

''(C) ensure that any time spent in administrative segregation during an investigation into an alleged offense is credited as time served for a disciplinary segregation sentence;

''(D) ensure that concurrent sentences are imposed for disciplinary violations arising from the same episode; and

''(E) ensure that an inmate may be released from disciplinary segregation for good behavior before completing the term of the inmate, unless the inmate poses a substantial and immediate threat to the safety of other inmates, staff, or the public.

''(6) SPECIAL MANAGEMENT UNITS.—The Director shall—

''(A) limit segregation in a special management unit to situations in which such segregation is necessary to temporarily house an inmate whose history, behavior, or circumstances require enhanced management approaches that cannot be addressed through alternative housing;

''(B) evaluate whether further reductions to the minimum and maximum number of months an inmate may spend in a special management unit are appropriate on an annual basis;

''(C) ensure that each inmate understands the status of the inmate in the special management unit program and how the inmate may progress through the program; and

''(D) further reduce the minimum and maximum number of months an inmate may spend in a special management unit if the Director determines such reductions are appropriate after evaluations are performed under subparagraph (B).

''(7) ADMINISTRATIVE MAXIMUM FACILITIES.—The Director shall—

''(A) limit segregation in an administrative maximum facility to situations in which such segregation is necessary to—

''(i) implement special administrative measures, as directed by the Attorney General; or

''(ii) house an inmate who poses an ongoing significant and serious threat to the safety of other inmates, staff, or the public that cannot be addressed through alternative housing; and

''(B) issue final approval of referral of any inmate who poses an ongoing significant and serious threat for placement in an Administrative Maximum facility, including the United States Penitentiary Administrative Maximum in Florence, Colorado.

''(8) RIGHT TO REVIEW PLACEMENT IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.—The Director shall ensure that each inmate placed in solitary confinement has access to—

''(A) written notice thoroughly detailing the basis for placement or continued placement in solitary confinement not later than 6 hours after the beginning of such placement, including—

''(i) thorough documentation explaining why such confinement is permissible and necessary under paragraph (1); and

''(ii) if an exception under paragraph (2)(A), (3)(D), (4)(A), (4)(B), (4)(C), (5)(A), or (5)(B) is used to justify placement in solitary confinement or under paragraph (1) to justify increased restrictive conditions in solitary confinement, thorough documentation explaining why such an exception applied;

''(B) a timely, thorough, and continuous review process that—

''(i) occurs within not less than 3 days of placement in solitary confinement, and thereafter at least—

''(I) on a weekly basis for inmates in special housing units;

''(II) on a monthly basis for inmates in special management units; and

''(III) on a monthly basis for inmates at an administrative maximum facility;

''(ii) includes private, face-to-face interviews with a multidisciplinary staff committee; and

''(iii) examines whether—

''(I) placement in solitary confinement was and remains necessary;

''(II) the conditions of confinement comply with this section; and

''(III) whether any exception under paragraph (2)(A), (3)(D), (4)(A), (4)(B), (4)(C), (5)(A), or (5)(B) used to justify placement in solitary confinement or under paragraph (1) used to justify increased restrictive conditions in solitary confinement was and remains warranted;

''(C) a process to appeal the initial placement or continued placement of the inmate in solitary confinement;

''(D) prompt and timely written notice of the appeal procedures; and

''(E) copies of all documents, files, and records relating to the inmate's placement in solitary confinement, unless such documents contain contraband, classified information, or sensitive security-related information.

''(c) MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR INMATES IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.—

''(1) MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING.—Not later than 6 hours after an inmate in the custody of the Bureau of Prisons or any facility that contracts with the Bureau of Prisons to provide housing for inmates in Federal custody is placed in solitary confinement, the inmate shall receive a comprehensive, face-to-face mental health evaluation by a licensed mental health professional in a confidential setting.

''(2) MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT PROGRAM.—An inmate diagnosed with a serious mental illness after an evaluation required under paragraph (1)—

''(A) shall not be placed in solitary confinement in accordance with subsection (b)(4); and

''(B) may be diverted to a mental health treatment program within the Bureau of Prisons that provides an appropriate level of care to address the inmate's mental health needs.

''(3) CONTINUING EVALUATIONS.—After each 14-calendar-day period an inmate is held in continuous placement in solitary confinement—

''(A) a licensed mental health professional shall conduct a comprehensive, face-to-face, out-of-cell mental health evaluation of the inmate in a confidential setting; and

''(B) the Director shall adjust the placement of the inmate in accordance with this subsection.

''(4) REQUIREMENT.—The Director shall operate mental health treatment programs in order to ensure that inmates of all security levels with serious mental illness have access to an appropriate level of care.

''(d) TRAINING FOR BUREAU OF PRISONS STAFF.—

''(1) TRAINING.—All employees of the Bureau of Prisons or any facility that contracts with the Bureau of Prisons to provide housing for inmates in Federal custody who interact with inmates on a regular basis shall be required to complete training in—

''(A) the recognition of symptoms of mental illness;

''(B) the potential risks and side effects of psychiatric medications;

''(C) de-escalation techniques for safely managing individuals with mental illness;

''(D) consequences of untreated mental illness;

''(E) the long- and short-term psychological effects of solitary confinement; and

''(F) de-escalation and communication techniques to divert inmates from situations that may lead to the inmate being placed in solitary confinement.

''(2) NOTIFICATION TO MEDICAL STAFF.—An employee of the Bureau of Prisons shall immediately notify a member of the medical or mental health staff if the employee—

''(A) observes an inmate with signs of mental illness, unless such employee has knowledge that the inmate's signs of mental illness have previously been reported; or

''(B) observes an inmate with signs of mental health crisis.

''(e) CIVIL RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Within the Bureau of Prisons, there shall be a position of the Civil Rights Ombudsman (referred to in this subsection as the 'Ombudsman') and an Office of the Civil Rights Ombudsman.

''(2) APPOINTMENT.—The Ombudsman shall be appointed by the Attorney General and shall report directly to the Director. The Ombudsman shall have a background in corrections and civil rights and shall have expertise on the effects of prolonged solitary confinement.

''(3) REPORTING.—The Director shall ensure that each Bureau of Prisons facility or any facility that contracts with the Bureau of Prisons provides multiple internal ways for inmates and others to promptly report civil rights violations and violations of this section to the Ombudsman, including—

''(A) not less than 2 procedures for inmates and others to report civil rights violations and violations of this section to an entity or office that is not part of the facility, and that is able to receive and immediately forward inmate reports to the Ombudsman, allowing the inmate to remain anonymous upon request; and

''(B) not less than 2 procedures for inmates and others to report civil rights abuses and violations of this section to the Ombudsman in a confidential manner, allowing the inmate to remain anonymous upon request.

''(4) NOTICE.—The Director shall ensure that each Bureau of Prisons facility or any facility that contracts with the Bureau of Prisons provides inmates with—

''(A) notice of how to report civil rights violations and violations of this section in accordance with paragraph (3), including—

''(i) notice prominently posted in the living and common areas of each such facility;

''(ii) individual notice to inmates at initial intake into the Bureau of Prisons, when transferred to a new facility, and when placed in solitary confinement;

''(iii) notice to inmates with disabilities in accessible formats; and

''(iv) written or verbal notice in a language the inmate understands; and

''(B) notice of permissible practices related to solitary confinement in the Bureau of Prisons, including the requirements of this section.

''(5) FUNCTIONS.—The Ombudsman shall—

''(A) review all complaints the Ombudsman receives;

''(B) investigate all complaints that allege a civil rights violation or violation of this section;

''(C) refer all possible violations of law to the Department of Justice;

''(D) refer to the Director allegations of misconduct involving Bureau of Prisons staff;

''(E) identify areas in which the Bureau of Prisons can improve the Bureau's policies and practices to ensure that the civil rights of inmates are protected;

''(F) identify areas in which the Bureau of Prisons can improve the solitary confinement policies and practices of the Bureau and reduce the use of solitary confinement; and

''(G) propose changes to the policies and practices of the Bureau of Prisons to mitigate problems and address issues the Ombudsman identifies.

''(6) ACCESS.—The Ombudsman shall have unrestricted access to Bureau of Prisons facilities and any facility that contracts with the Bureau of Prisons and shall be able to speak privately with inmates and staff.

''(7) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

''(A) OBJECTIVES.—Not later than December 31 of each year, the Ombudsman shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report on the activities of the Office of the Ombudsman for the fiscal year ending in such calendar year.

''(B) CONTENTS.—Each report submitted under subparagraph (A)—

''(i) contain full and substantive analysis, in addition to statistical information;

''(ii) identify the recommendations the Office of the Ombudsman has made on addressing reported civil rights violations and violations of this section and reducing the use and improving the practices of solitary confinement in the Bureau of Prisons;

''(iii) contain a summary of problems relating to reported civil rights violations and violations of this section, including a detailed description of the nature of such problems and a breakdown of where the problems occur among Bureau of Prisons facilities and facilities that contract with the Bureau of Prisons;

''(iv) contain an inventory of the items described in clauses (ii) and (iii) for which action has been taken and the result of such action;

''(v) contain an inventory of the items described in clauses (ii) and (iii) for which action remains to be completed and the period during which each item has remained on such inventory;

''(vi) contain an inventory of the items described in clauses (ii) and (iii) for which no action has been taken, the period during which each item has remained on such inventory, the reasons for the inaction, and shall identify any official of the Bureau of Prisons who is responsible for such inaction;

''(vii) contain recommendations for such legislative or administrative action as may be appropriate to resolve problems identified in clause (iii); and

''(viii) include such other information as the Ombudsman determines necessary.

''(C) SUBMISSION OF REPORTS.—Each report required under this paragraph shall be provided directly to the Committees described in subparagraph (A) without any prior review, comment, or amendment from the Director or any other officer or employee of the Department of Justice or Bureau of Prisons.

''(8) REGULAR MEETINGS WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUREAU OF PRISONS.—The Ombudsman shall meet regularly with the Director to identify problems with reported civil rights violations and the solitary confinement policies and practices of the Bureau of Prisons, including overuse of solitary confinement, and to present recommendations for such administrative action as may be appropriate to resolve problems relating to reported civil rights violations and the solitary confinement policies and practices of the Bureau of Prisons.

''(9) RESPONSIBILITIES OF BUREAU OF PRISONS.—The Director shall establish procedures requiring that, not later than 3 months after the date on which a recommendation is submitted to the Director by the Ombudsman, the Director or other appropriate employee of the Bureau of Prisons issue a formal response to the recommendation.

''(10) NON-APPLICATION OF THE PRISON LITIGATION REFORM ACT.—Inmate reports sent to the Ombudsman shall not be considered an administrative remedy under section 7(a) of the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (42 U.S.C. 1997e(a)).''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 303

of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 4049 the following:

''4050. Solitary confinement.''.

SEC. 3. REASSESSMENT OF INMATE MENTAL HEALTH.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Bureau of Prisons shall—

(1) assemble a team of licensed mental health professionals, which may include licensed mental health professionals who are not employed by the Bureau of Prisons, to conduct a comprehensive mental health reevaluation for each inmate held in solitary confinement for more than 30 days as of the date of enactment of this Act, including a confidential, face-to-face, out-of-cell interview by a licensed mental health professional; and

(2) adjust the placement of each inmate in accordance with section 4050(c) of title 18, United States Code, as added by section 2.

SEC. 4. DIRECTOR OF BUREAU OF PRISONS.

Section 4041 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(a) IN GENERAL.—'' before the ''The Bureau of Prisons shall be''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) OMBUDSMAN.—The Director of the Bureau of Prisons shall—

''(1) meet regularly with the Ombudsman appointed under section 4050(e) to identify how the Bureau of Prisons can address reported civil rights violations and reduce the use of solitary confinement and correct problems in the solitary confinement policies and practices of the Bureau;

''(2) conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of each referral from the Ombudsman under section 4050(e)(5)(D), after each such investigation take appropriate disciplinary action against any Bureau of Prisons employee who is found to have engaged in misconduct or to have violated Bureau of Prisons policy, and notify the Ombudsman of the outcome of each such investigation; and

''(3) establish procedures requiring a formal response by the Bureau of Prisons to any recommendation of the Ombudsman in the annual report submitted under section 4050(e)(6) not later than 90 days after the date on which the report is submitted to Congress.''.

SEC. 5. DATA TRACKING OF USE OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.

Section 4047 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) PRISON SOLITARY CONFINEMENT ASSESSMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than March 31 of each year, the Director of the Bureau of Prisons shall prepare and transmit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives an annual assessment of the use of solitary confinement by the Bureau of Prisons, as defined in section 4050(a).

''(2) CONTENTS.—Each assessment submitted under paragraph (1) shall include—

''(A) the policies and regulations of the Bureau of Prisons, including any changes in policies and regulations, for determining which inmates are placed in each form of solitary confinement, or housing in which an inmate is separated from the general population in use during the reporting period, and a detailed description of each form of solitary confinement in use, including all maximum and high security facilities, all special housing units, all special management units, all Administrative Maximum facilities, including the United States Penitentiary Administrative Maximum in Florence, Colorado, and all Communication Management Units;

''(B) the number of inmates in the custody of the Bureau of Prisons who are housed in each type of solitary confinement for any period and the percentage of all inmates who have spent at least some time in each form of solitary confinement during the reporting period;

''(C) the demographics of all inmates housed in each type of solitary confinement described in subparagraph (A), including race, ethnicity, religion, age, and gender;

''(D) the policies and regulations of the Bureau of Prisons, including any updates in policies and regulations, for subsequent reviews or appeals of the placement of an inmate into or out of solitary confinement;

''(E) the number of reviews of and challenges to each type of solitary confinement placement described in subparagraph (A) conducted during the reporting period and the number of reviews or appeals that directly resulted in a change of placement;

''(F) the general conditions and restrictions for each type of solitary confinement described in subparagraph (A), including the number of hours spent in 'isolation,' or restraint, for each, and the percentage of time these conditions involve single-inmate housing;

''(G) the mean and median length of stay in each form of solitary confinement described in subparagraph (A), based on all individuals released from solitary confinement during the reporting period, including maximum and high security facilities, special housing units, special management units, the Administrative Maximum facilities, including the United States Penitentiary Administrative Maximum in Florence, Colorado, Communication Management Units, and any maximum length of stay during the reporting period;

''(H) the number of inmates who, after a stay of 5 or more days in solitary confinement, were released directly from solitary confinement to the public during the reporting period;

''(I) the cost for each form of solitary confinement described in subparagraph (A) in use during the reporting period, including as compared with the average daily cost of housing an inmate in the general population;

''(J) statistics for inmate assaults on correctional officers and staff of the Bureau of Prisons, inmate-on-inmate assaults, and staff-on-inmate use of force incidents in the various forms of solitary confinement described in subparagraph (A) and statistics for such assaults in the general population;

''(K) the policies for mental health screening, mental health treatment, and subsequent mental health reviews for all inmates, including any update to the policies, and any additional screening, treatment, and monitoring for inmates in solitary confinement;

''(L) a statement of the types of mental health staff that conducted mental health assessments for the Bureau of Prisons during the reporting period, a description of the different positions in the mental health staff of the Bureau of Prisons, and the number of part- and full-time psychologists and psychiatrists employed by the Bureau of Prisons during the reporting period;

''(M) data on mental health and medical indicators for all inmates in solitary confinement, including—

''(i) the number of inmates requiring medication for mental health conditions;

''(ii) the number diagnosed with an intellectual disability;

''(iii) the number diagnosed with serious mental illness;

''(iv) the number of suicides;

''(v) the number of attempted suicides and number of inmates placed on suicide watch;

''(vi) the number of instances of self-harm committed by inmates;

''(vii) the number of inmates with physical disabilities, including blind, deaf, and mobility-impaired inmates; and

''(viii) the number of instances of forced feeding of inmates; and

''(N) any other relevant data.''.

SEC. 6. NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER ON SOLITARY CONFINEMENT REDUCTION AND REFORM.

(a) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—In this section, the term ''eligible entity'' means an entity, or a partnership of entities, that has demonstrated expertise in the fields of—

(1) solitary confinement, including the reduction and reform of its use; and

(2) providing technical assistance to corrections agencies on how to reduce and reform solitary confinement.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Bureau of Justice Assistance shall enter into a cooperative agreement, on a competitive basis, with an eligible entity for the purpose of establishing a coordinating center for State, local, and Federal corrections systems, which shall conduct activities such as—

(1) provide on-site technical assistance and consultation to Federal, State, and local corrections agencies to safely reduce the use of solitary confinement;

(2) act as a clearinghouse for research, data, and information on the safe reduction of solitary confinement in prisons and other custodial settings, including facilitating the exchange of information between Federal, State, and local practitioners, national experts, and researchers;

(3) create a minimum of 10 learning sites in Federal, State, and local jurisdictions that have already reduced their use of solitary confinement and work with other Federal, State, and local agencies to participate in training, consultation, and other forms of assistance and partnership with these learning sites;

(4) conduct evaluations of jurisdictions that have decreased their use of solitary confinement to determine best practices;

(5) conduct research on the effectiveness of alternatives to solitary confinement, such as step-down or transitional programs, strategies to reintegrate inmates into general population, the role of officers and staff culture in reform efforts, and other research relevant to the safe reduction of solitary confinement;

(6) develop and disseminate a toolkit for systems to reduce the excessive use of solitary confinement;

(7) develop and disseminate an online self-assessment tool for State and local jurisdictions to assess their own use of solitary confinement and identify strategies to reduce its use; and

(8) conduct public webinars to highlight new and promising practices.

(c) ADMINISTRATION.—The program under this section shall be administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

(d) REPORT.—On an annual basis, the coordinating center shall report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives on its activities and any changes in solitary confinement policy at the Federal, State, or local level that have resulted from its activities.

(e) DURATION.—The Bureau of Justice Assistance shall enter into a cooperative agreement under this section for 5 years.

SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated—

(1) to the Director of the Bureau of Prisons such sums as may be necessary to carry out sections 2, 3, 4, and 5, and the amendments made by such sections; and

(2) to the Bureau of Justice Assistance such sums as may be necessary to carry out section 6.

SEC. 8. NOTICE AND COMMENT REQUIREMENT.

The Director of the Bureau of Prisons shall prescribe rules, in accordance with section 553 of title 5, United States Code, to carry out this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

SEC. 9. EFFECTIVE DATE.

Except as otherwise provided, this Act and the amendments made by this Act shall take effect 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 477—RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING THE NATIONAL COMEDY CENTER BEING BUILT AT 203–217 WEST SECOND STREET, JAMESTOWN, NEW YORK

Mr. SCHUMER submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.:

S. RES. 477

Whereas the National Comedy Center is a civic landmark and cultural institution being built at 203-217 West Second Street, Jamestown, New York, and is inspired by the legacy of Jamestown native Lucille Ball;

Whereas the mission of the National Comedy Center is to connect, inspire, educate and entertain all people of the United States;

Whereas the National Comedy Center seeks to preserve, protect, and showcase the art of comedy in the United States in such a manner that it will fulfill its mission;

Whereas the National Comedy Center will be the only museum of its kind that exists for the exclusive purpose of paying tribute to the art of comedy in the United States through all eras, mediums, and genres;

Whereas the National Comedy Center will provide education of iconic comedy artists in the United States and their heritage, history and culture;

Whereas the National Comedy Center will serve as—

(1) a constant reminder that comedy is an integral part of the rich heritage of the United States; and

(2) a beacon of the healing power of laughter;

Whereas the National Comedy Center seeks to inspire the people of the United States to appreciate comedy as an art form and ensure that the important legacy of comedy is preserved forever;

Whereas the National Comedy Center has received public and private funds to further aid the completion of its mission;

Whereas the National Comedy Center will play a crucial role in the redevelopment and sustainability of the surrounding communities and economies by generating tourism and employment; and

Whereas it is fitting and proper to recognize and celebrate the National Comedy Center: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes and celebrates the National Comedy Center being built at 203-217 West Second Street, Jamestown, New York.

SENATE RESOLUTION 478—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF APRIL 21, 2018, THROUGH APRIL 29, 2018, AS ''NATIONAL PARK WEEK''

Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. KING, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. COTTON, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. WARNER, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WICKER, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. CASSIDY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. REED, Mr. GARDNER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BARRASSO, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. HOEVEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the Senate Resolution, ''Designating the week of April 21, 2018, through April 29, 2018, as ''National Park Week'' introduced for myself, Senator KING, and others be printed in the RECORD.

S. RES. 478

Whereas, on March 1, 1872, Congress established Yellowstone National Park as the first national park for the enjoyment of the people of the United States;

Whereas, on August 25, 1916, Congress established the National Park Service with the mission to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of current and future generations;

Whereas the National Park Service continues to protect and manage the majestic landscapes, hallowed battlefields, and iconic cultural and historical sites of the United States;

Whereas the units of the National Park System can be found in every State and many territories of the United States and many of the units embody the rich natural and cultural heritage of the United States, reflect a unique national story through people and places, and offer countless opportunities for recreation, volunteerism, cultural exchange, education, civic engagement, and exploration;

Whereas the national parks of the United States attracted record-breaking visitation during the National Park Service Centennial, with over 330,000,000 recreational visits to these incredible places both in 2016 and 2017;

Whereas visits and visitors to our national parks are important economic drivers for the economy responsible for $18,400,000,000 in spending in 2016;

Whereas the dedicated employees of the National Park Service carry out their mission to protect the national parks of the United States so that the vibrant culture, diverse wildlife, and priceless resources of the parks will endure for perpetuity; and

Whereas the people of the United States have inherited the remarkable legacy of the National Park System and are entrusted with the preservation of the National Park System throughout its second century: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Congress—

(1) designates the week of April 21, 2018, through April 29, 2018, as ''National Park Week''; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States and the world to visit and experience the treasured national parks of the United States.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, as a fifth generation Montanan who grew up just a short drive from our Nation's first National Park, Yellowstone National Park, and as Chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, I am excited to introduce this resolution to reassure the public that Congress recognizes the remarkable value that our National Parks bring to our national heritage. I am happy to be joined by Ranking Member ANGUS KING and Senator HIRONO and nearly 30 of our bipartisan colleagues in introducing this resolution. The support of this resolution is a reflection that our National Parks bridge political divides and make our Nation uniquely American. I am hopeful that Congress, the Trump Administration and future Administrations will continue to invest in our National Parks to ensure their legacy endures for our children and generations to come.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. CORNYN. 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 ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, April 19, 2018, at 9:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing.

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, April 19, 2018, at 9:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Semiannual Testimony on the Federal Reserve's Supervision and Regulation of the Financial System.''

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, April 19, 2018, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, April 19, 2018, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Tackling Opioid and Substance Use Disorders in Medicare, Medicaid, and Human Services Programs.''

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, April 19, 2018, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing on bills S. 994 and S. 2644, then on the following nominations: John B. Nalbandian, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, Kari A. Dooley, to be United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut, Dominic W. Lanza, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona, Michael Y. Scudder, of Illinois, and Amy J. St. Eve, of Illinois, both to be a United

States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit, Charles J. Williams, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Iowa, and Joseph H. Hunt, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Steven L. Gladden, to be United States Marshal for the Middle District of North Carolina, Nicola T. Hanna, to be United States Attorney for the Central District of California, Brendan O. Heffner, to be United States Marshal for the Central District of Illinois, and Theodor G. Short, to be United States Marshal for the District of Maine, all of the Department of Justice.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, April 19, 2018, at 2 p.m. to conduct a closed hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Shawn Moylan, a fellow on my staff, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of this session.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Quinn Nouguier, an intern on my team, be granted privileges of the floor for the remainder of the day.

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

NOTICE: REGISTRATION OF MASS MAILINGS

The filing date for the 2018 first quarter Mass Mailing report is Wednesday, April 25, 2018. An electronic option is available on Webster that will allow forms to be submitted via a fillable pdf document. If your office did no mass mailings during this period, please submit a form that states ''none.''

Mass mailing registrations or negative reports can be submitted electronically or delivered to the Senate Office of Public Records, 232 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510–7116.

The Senate Office of Public Records is open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For further information, please contact the Senate Office of Public Records at (202) 224–0322.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276d–276g, as amended, appoints the following Senator as Vice Chairman of the Senate Delegation to the Canada-U.S. Interparliamentary Group conference during the 115th Congress: the Honorable AMY KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota.

The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276d–276g, as amended, appoints the following Senator as Chairman of the Senate Delegation to the Canada-U.S. Interparliamentary Group conference during the 115th Congress: the Honorable MICHAEL D. CRAPO of Idaho.

The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, upon the recommendation of the Democratic leader, pursuant to Public Law 105–292, as amended by Public Law 106–55, Public Law 107–228, and Public Law 112–75, appoints the following individual to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom: Gayle C. Manchin of West Virginia.

NATIONAL PARK WEEK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 478, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 478) designating the week of April 21, 2018, through April 29, 2018, as ''National Park Week.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I 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. 478) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF ''INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL CHILD ABDUCTION MONTH''

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 431.

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. 431) supporting the goals and ideals of ''International Parental Child Abduction Month'' and expressing the sense of the Senate that Congress should raise awareness of the harm caused by international parental child abduction.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I 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.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 431) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 12, 2018, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

AUTHORIZING USE OF THE CAPITOL GROUNDS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 115, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 115) authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Peace Officers Memorial Service and the National Honor Guard and Pipe Band Exhibition.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion 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 concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 115) was agreed to.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, APRIL 23, 2018

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m., Monday, April 23; 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, I ask that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Duncan nomination; finally, notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the cloture vote on the Duncan nomination occur at 5:30 p.m. on Monday.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, APRIL 23, 2018, 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 4:55 p.m., adjourned until Monday, April 23, 2018, at 3 p.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate April 19, 2018:

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

JAMES BRIDENSTINE, OF OKLAHOMA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION.