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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 26, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

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

AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. JONES. Madam Speaker, I am on the floor again today to talk about Afghanistan—the absolute waste of life and money.

A lot of people don't realize this, but if you go back to 2001, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, we have spent over $1.5 trillion, which averages out to about 11.2 million tax dollars paid every hour by the American people.

In today's national paper, the USA Today—and other headlines—the headline is this: ''Obama to Karzai: Time running out for security deal.''

Madam Speaker, based on recent polls, this would be good news for the American people if we would not continue this relationship with Afghanistan. It is nothing but an absolute waste of the taxpayers' money, and the American people are sick and tired of it. A recent poll last week by Gallup showed that almost 50 percent of the American people believe that the war in Afghanistan was a mistake to start with.

I can honestly say this: If it was not a mistake to start with, it is a mistake now that we continue to support and spend money on a corrupt leader named Karzai.

Madam Speaker, as I listened to the Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel yesterday talk about financial pressure on our military and the budget that he will be supporting that Mr. Obama has proposed, I wonder why we in Congress are not allowed to debate on the floor of this House—and I am not talking about the Senate now—whether we believe that we should have a 10-year agreement with Afghanistan.

Again, we are talking about spending anywhere from $3 billion to $4 billion a month. It is borrowed money from the Chinese and Japanese, and we continue to raise the debt ceiling because we cannot pay our own bills. It is time for the Congress to speak out on behalf of the American people and say enough is enough.

To be clear, this agreement that President Karzai has adamantly refused to sign, as The Washington Post reported earlier this week, during a December visit to Kabul, Hagel suggested that the late-February NATO meeting—meaning this week—was a cutoff point for Afghan President Karzai to sign the bilateral strategic agreement that sets the terms for a post-2014 U.S. presence.

Madam Speaker, we cannot any longer police the world. We can hardly afford to pay our own bills without going to foreign governments to borrow money.

Madam Speaker, it is time for Congress to reach out and to say that we listen to the American people. When we are talking about not even being able to take care of our veterans, and we are going to cut programs for children and senior citizens, and even our veterans are in jeopardy of getting the benefits that they have earned, it is time for the American people to put pressure on Congress to have this debate that many of us in both parties would like to have, quite frankly.

Madam Speaker, I have beside me a photograph of a young man named Eric Edmundson. Eric, in 2005, was in a Humvee that was hit by an IED that exploded. Eric has been in the national Wounded Warrior Project ads across this Nation.

Eric is like so many of the wounded. We just don't really think about them every day, but we should. Eric has a wonderful wife. His mom and dad were able to retire to New Bern, North Carolina, which is in my district, and help Eric have a quality of life.

Madam Speaker, I can honestly tell you that we have got so many veterans that we are going to need to take care of who earned the right for this government to take care of them that we are going to have a tsunami that is going to hit this Congress in a few years, and we are going to wonder how in the world can we give these wounded and their families what they have earned and deserve.

Madam Speaker, it is time for this Congress to put pressure on the leadership of the Republican Party and the Democratic Party to force a discussion and a debate on the future of our financial involvement in Afghanistan.

With that, Madam Speaker, I am going to ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the wounded, to bless

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the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I ask God to please bless the House and the Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for God's people, and to please bless the President of the United States, that he also would do what is right in the eyes of God for America.

END HUNGER NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. LUMMIS). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, there are close to 50 million people who are hungry in the United States of America. We are the richest country in the history of the world, and we have close to 50 million people who are food insecure or are hungry; 17 million of these people are kids.

We in Congress are not doing nearly enough to address this issue. In fact, this Congress has made things worse for many struggling families all across this country.

Last November there was an $11 billion cut that went into effect with regard to the SNAP program. That is the name of the program that was formerly known as food stamps, an $11 billion cut that impacted every single beneficiary on this program. Everybody got a cut. Food prices didn't go down, but they got a cut.

Then we just recently passed a farm bill in this Congress that made sure that those well-off special interests were protected and the rich got richer. But we paid for those subsidies by cutting SNAP by another $8.6 billion. It is shameful.

Madam Speaker, these cuts are real, and the people they impact are real. Sometimes I wonder whether those who voted for these cuts have any appreciation of what it is like to be poor in America, whether they have ever been to a food bank or a soup kitchen or ever talked to anybody who is on SNAP. It is hard. It is difficult to be poor in America.

Despite what I believe is this indifference and, in some cases, contempt for poor people that we have seen in this Chamber, I do want to acknowledge that outside of this Congress and outside of government there are many, many people who understand that we all should care about our brothers and sisters who are struggling and who are doing amazing things.

Last week, during our break, I visited with some people who I think are doing things that I found to be inspirational. Visiting these soup kitchens and shelters gave me some new inspiration and new hope that maybe what they are doing will be contagious and that those of us in this Congress will step up to the plate and take on the issue of hunger and poverty in this country.

I visited a soup kitchen in Amherst, Massachusetts, called Not Bread Alone. I met with the supervisor, Hannah Elliott, and an incredible group of volunteers, which included a chef and people from all walks of life, who prepared nutritious meals for those who are struggling.

I talked to the people who came in to have one of these nutritious meals. These people are our neighbors. These people have worked to make this country great. Some of them are veterans. They have fallen on hard times and can't afford to eat. And thank God for a place like Not Bread Alone, where they can come in and be able to be in a warm place and get a decent meal and feel like people care about them.

At UMass Amherst, I met a student named Jacob Liverman. I met him and a group of young students who launched this effort called the Food Recovery Network. What they do is work with the kitchen at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst so that the leftovers of the food that is prepared on a given day don't get thrown away.

They take those leftovers and follow all those procedures that you have to follow to make sure that everything is within the health codes. They take this food and deliver it to an emergency shelter called Craig's Doors, which is also in Amherst. I met Kevin Noonan, the executive director there, who is a wonderful man, along with all the volunteers there.

I had the privilege of being able to serve meals to the people that came through the shelter on a cold, wintry night. It is eye-opening when you talk to these people and learn about their backgrounds and learn about how they have fallen on hard times.

I am grateful that there are places like Craig's Doors. I am grateful that there are young students like the ones I met at the University of Massachusetts Amherst campus who have taken the initiative to step up to the plate and to help try to feed people who are hungry. I am grateful for places like Not Bread Alone that do such an incredible job in terms of providing food for people.

I went to Greenfield Community College and sat down with the president, Bob Pura, and his faculty and members of their kitchen. Because there is a need, they actually have a food bank on their campus. There are people going to school who do not have enough to eat. This school provides them the support and the help that they need. They also have a permaculture garden. They are growing food not only for that soup kitchen and for their food bank, but for their students as well, because they are putting an emphasis on nutrition.

I will close, Madam Speaker, by saying these are inspirational activities that are going on. We need to learn by them, and we need to do much better. Nobody in America should go hungry.

VENEZUELA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, today I rise for those who cannot speak freely in Venezuela. Widespread demonstrations have broken out throughout Venezuela to protest an oppressive regime that seeks to silence the people and deny their fundamental freedoms of expression and the right to assembly.

After years under Chavez and now Maduro, those brave men and women are expressing themselves in a united, clear voice that what they want is what should be rightfully theirs: respect for human rights and a true democracy in Venezuela. In response, as you can see here, Maduro and his thugs treat them like criminals.

Over the past weeks, Madam Speaker, 14 people have been killed by Maduro's forces; over 100 have been unjustly detained. But because Maduro controls the major media outlets, he has silenced many of those who attempt to draw attention to the plight of the Venezuelan people and instead cast the blame on the United States for all of the country's ills. The nerve of him.

Blaming the United States for his own domestic problems seems to be the modus operandi for Maduro, but the Venezuelan people are smarter than that. They recognize that this is just another scheme of Maduro's.

The regime tried to silence its people by blocking images on Twitter, as Venezuelans turn to social media to show the world the ugly reality that they are going through.

As the violence in Venezuela continues to escalate, responsible nations in the hemisphere and throughout the world have a moral obligation to stand with the people of Venezuela against the forces of fear and oppression. We must be the voice for those suffering under this repression. At the same time, we must condemn the violent actions of the Maduro regime against people who are yearning for liberty, justice, democracy, respect, and for human rights.

This fight for democracy and human rights isn't the struggle of Venezuelans only. It is the struggle of all who seek to advance the cause of human dignity and freedom.

How we respond matters. Madam Speaker, it is a test of our commitment to the ideals of freedom and democracy for everyone, not just for a few.

□ 1015

It is also a test of our resolve. Other oppressive leaders in the region are watching us to see if we back up our lofty words with action, so we must not equivocate. We must not waver.

We must stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves, and we must be the voice for those who are

being silenced by this repressive regime, because our inaction would only serve to embolden other rogue regimes that seek to fight back the tides of democracy.

Throughout the Western Hemisphere, Madam Speaker, we have seen these regimes, such as Venezuela and the one in Cuba, work together to oppress and silence civil society.

Just yesterday, in my native homeland of Cuba, Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, a leading Cuban pro-democracy advocate and a recipient of the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom, was unjustly arrested by agents of the Castro regime for expressing his support for Leopoldo Lopez in Venezuela, one of the leading opposition figures who remains in military jail as we speak.

We must send a unified message to these and other repressive leaders that we will not look the other way when they commit heinous acts against their own people. We must show them that the world is watching and that they will face serious consequences for their transgressions.

That is why, Madam Speaker, I have proposed House Resolution 488, that expresses solidarity with the people of Venezuela who yearn for freedom, for democracy, and dignity.

I commend the Government of Panama for calling for an urgent meeting of Latin American foreign ministers at the Organization of American States, OAS, to address this ongoing crisis in Venezuela. Sadly, this response is an exception, as other countries in the hemisphere remain deafeningly silent.

I call on the OAS to demonstrate its commitment to the principles of its Inter-American Democratic Charter and support the Venezuelan people's right for democratic reforms to be respected in their country and respect for human rights.

I urge the United States administration to make a priority of supporting the Venezuelan people's aspirations for democracy and liberty, and I urge my colleagues in the Congress to join me in this important call for solidarity.

WIND POWER

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

Mr. TONKO. Madam Speaker, we are in a global competition, a global race on clean energy and innovation. In our efforts to win this race and ensure our place as the kingpin of the global economy for decades to come, we must support a secure, all-of-the-above domestic energy supply that includes both newly abundant traditional fossil fuels as well as clean, renewable energy, energy such as wind, solar, biomass, hydro, nuclear, and more.

We simply cannot continue to rely on a single fossil fuel to power our economy. That is not wise, long-term policy.

Today, I would like to highlight one of these abundant, job-creating clean energy sources: wind energy.

One way to support this critical source of energy for our Nation is the Federal Production Tax Credit, the credit that keeps electricity rates low and encourages development of proven renewable energy projects.

This credit expired at the end of last year and must be retroactively extended to foster job growth and promote a greener and cleaner environment for the next generations.

The PTC, the Production Tax Credit, also creates jobs. In my district, the Capital Region of New York State, we are host to GE's Global Research Center and Wind Turbine Service Center. In 2012 alone, GE's wind division produced some 1,722 megawatts of power and provided a local capital investment of some $3.2 billion.

If we are serious about helping the private sector create quality jobs that will put purchasing power back in the hands of the middle class, we must support wind power as one part of our overall energy policy and strategy.

Madam Speaker, today, I renew my support for wind power and the almost 2,000 jobs this clean energy source generates in my home State of New York, a number that is growing by the day, and a group whose work every day is helping to grow our economy, clean the air we breathe and the water we drink, and make us truly energy independent.

PRESIDENT OBAMA IS VERY DIFFERENT THAN SENATOR OBAMA

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

Mr. OLSON. Madam Speaker, on the issue of increasing America's national debt, President Obama is very different than Senator Obama.

Senator Barack Obama, on the House floor, March 16, 2006:

> The fact that we are here today to debate raising America's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure. It is a sign that the U.S. Government can't pay its own bills. It is a sign we now depend on ongoing financial assistance from foreign countries to finance our government's reckless fiscal policies. Over the past 5 years, our Federal debt has increased by $3.5 trillion to $8.6 trillion. That is trillion with a ''t.'' That is money that we have borrowed from the Social Security trust fund, borrowed from China and Japan, borrowed from American taxpayers.
>
> Numbers that large are sometimes hard to understand. Some people may wonder why they matter. Here is why: this year the Federal Government will spend $220 billion on interest.

Senator Obama later explained:

> That is more money to pay interest on our debt this year than we will spend on education, homeland security, transportation, and veterans benefits combined.

After talking about Hurricane Katrina, Senator Obama shifted to the debt tax:

> And the cost of our debt is one of the fastest growing expenses in our Federal budget. This rising debt is a hidden domestic enemy, robbing our cities and States of critical investments in infrastructure like bridges, ports, and levees, robbing our families and our children of critical investments in education, health care reform, robbing our seniors of the retirement and health security they have counted on.
>
> Every dollar we pay in interest is a dollar that is not going to investment in America's priorities. Instead, interest payments are a significant tax on all Americans, a debt tax that Washington doesn't want to talk about.
>
> If Washington were serious about an honest tax relief in this country, we would see an effort to reduce our national debt by returning to responsible fiscal policies.

And Senator Obama finally brought up our debt to unfriendly nations:

> Now, there is nothing wrong with borrowing from foreign countries. But we must remember that the more we depend on foreign nations to lend us money, the more our economic security is tied to the whims of foreign leaders whose interests might not be aligned with ours.
>
> Increasing America's debt weakens us domestically and internationally. Leadership means that ''the buck stops here.'' Instead, Washington is shifting the burden of bad choices today onto the backs of our children and grandchildren. America has a debt problem and a failure of leadership. Americans deserve better.
>
> I therefore intend to oppose the effort to increase America's debt limit.

Today, our national debt is $18 trillion with a ''t.'' Clearly, President Obama has forgotten Senator Obama's words, but the American people remember, and on their behalf, I ask President Obama to decrease our debt by working with Congress to reform our Tax Code to make it pro-growth and anti-debt.

HONORING DAVID LACHMANN ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor David Lachmann on his retirement from the House of Representatives and to thank him for his 25 years of federal service.

David came to Washington in 1989 to work for former Congressman Steve Solarz of Brooklyn, staffing him on the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, as well as on issues related to criminal justice, religious liberty, housing, and the environment.

When I was elected to Congress in 1992, David became my first legislative director. In 1997, David moved to the Judiciary Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law. For the past 13 years, he has served as the Democratic chief of staff on the Constitution and Civil Justice Subcommittee.

As an expert on the First Amendment, and particularly on issues of religious liberty and church-state relations, David was instrumental in the passage of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act.

He is also one of the foremost experts in the House on bankruptcy, a very technical and complicated area of law

but one that affects millions of people. Over the last 25 years, David has worked tirelessly to advocate for the rights and well-being of people who are most in need of Congress' protection but who do not have access to high-priced lobbyists.

David performed these services every day, whether in defending against attacks on women's reproductive rights, working to protect Americans' civil liberties against PATRIOT Act provisions, or building support for legislation to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act.

David's resume is impressive, but it does not tell the full story. David is a legend in the House. He is one of those committed public servants who has become an institution within the institution.

As the chief of staff of the Constitution Subcommittee, David has been the point person on some of the most difficult and divisive issues facing Congress each year. Yet, he brings a sense of humor, wit, and perspective that is well known in the House, without ever sacrificing his commitment to advancing the cause of equality and justice, and to defending the rights and freedoms of the most vulnerable among us.

He has provided Members of Congress, staff, and advocates with a wealth of expertise and institutional memory on a wide range of issues that would be difficult, if not impossible, to replace. It will be a long time before I stop picking up the phone and dialing his number to ask him a question about some matter before the committee, or to get his perspective on the latest Supreme Court decision, or to just reminisce about the days of 1970s and 1980s New York politics.

David has worked with me for a long time, and his biggest contribution has been as a trusted adviser and loyal friend.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking David for his service and for his dedication to working on behalf of the American people. He will be sorely missed in this institution, but we wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

□ 1030

DIVERSE LOCAL AND NATIONAL SUPPORT FOR FARM BILL

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, on February 7, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Agricultural Act of 2014, the 5-year farm bill reauthorization that passed Congress with bipartisan support and reduces annual budget deficits by $16.6 billion over 10 years.

Industry professionals across my home State of Pennsylvania and nationally—including farmers, foresters, conservationists, researchers, and policy advocates—have praised the law as a historic improvement, the Federal agriculture policy that will improve land management, support key areas of economic activity, and bolster important investments in education and applied research.

Susan Benedict, an American Tree Farm System certified forest owner from State College, Pennsylvania, stated:

> As a Pennsylvania tree farmer, I can happily say this farm bill was well worth the wait. With the promotion of new market opportunities in the Biobased Markets Program and green building markets, improved access to critical conservation programs, and increased regulatory certainty when protecting water quality of my forest's roads, this farm bill is truly the best farm bill yet for forests. I applaud conference committee members for championing strong forestry provisions, such as the Biobased Markets Program changes, for America's 22 million family forest owners.

Kenneth C. Kane, president of Generations Forestry in Kane, Pennsylvania, stated:

> From the outside looking in, Congress displayed a level of bipartisanship on the farm bill that has been lacking, which is far better than the gridlock we have encountered. This is a wonderful bill and a good final product from numerous standpoints. From the standpoint of the Forest Service, this bill gives Secretary Vilsack and Forest Chief Tidwell more tools to actively manage forests, which is critically important. Now that these tools are available, the Forest Service must use them. This bill also offers our foresters and private industry more tools to actively manage, so this is also very important.

Barbara Christ, the interim dean of agricultural sciences at Penn State University in State College, Pennsylvania, stated:

> Agricultural policy impacts every American by advancing food security for our Nation and beyond, including providing for critical research and education programs. We are thrilled that a new 5-year farm bill is now a reality. As a specialty crop State, of particular interest to Pennsylvania is the inclusion of the specialty crop research initiative. These programs help keep our Pennsylvania farmers competitive in an increasingly complex environment and help tackle the ongoing challenge of feeding a growing population.

Robert Maiden, executive director of Pennsylvania's Association of Conservation Districts, stated:

> The new Federal farm bill has many strong conservation programs that are lifelines for Pennsylvania farmers. We needed Congress to understand these points and ensure that the importance of conservation efforts wasn't lost in the final farm bill language. The final bill addressed our fiscal challenges by understanding the necessity of reductions to Federal spending while identifying the need to improve conservation program efficiencies and improvements in program delivery. The final bill will allow for cleaner water for Pennsylvania waterways, resulting in healthier communities and stronger economies.

The president and CEO of the Nature Conservancy stated:

> Despite the polarized political climate and challenging budget times, this farm bill would be one of the strongest ever for conservation and forestry. The farm bill's conservation provisions are practical, cost effective, and provide solid ways for the government to collaborate with individual landowners.

The president and CEO of the American Forest Foundation stated:

> The long-awaited farm bill provides resources critical to implementing conservation practices on the ground and making good forest stewardship affordable. The improvements in the new farm bill include stronger market opportunities for forests, specifically with improvements to the Biobased Markets Program, and a strengthened commitment to expanding prospects for wood in green building markets, the fastest growing market for wood products. It also includes strong support for programs that combat forest invasive pests and pathogens and provisions to increase forest owners' regulatory certainty when protecting water quality.

Madam Speaker, it isn't every day that a broad cross-section of policy advocates and industry professionals find themselves on the same side of a given policy issue. Then again, it isn't every day that both parties actually work together for the good of the country and produce good public policy that improves the Nation's economic health, while at the same time, reforms government, and reduces spending.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND MINIMUM WAGE

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

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to draw attention, once again, to an issue that some in this Congress seem to have forgotten: the millions of Americans who are unemployed or are working for wages that cannot support their families.

Imagine being told that you have to support your family for the rest of your life with just a month's paycheck. If it sounds impossible to manage, it is because far too often it is.

Low-income families have to make impossible choices between food and medicine. They often live in unsafe neighborhoods and send their kids to subpar schools because they have no other option. Getting paid the minimum wage has always been difficult, but it is getting harder year after year.

If the minimum wage had been tied to inflation in 1960, it would be $10.10 today, or just over $20,000 per year. Now, someone making this today wouldn't be wealthy, but working full-time might at least allow them to make ends meet. For me, this is what our country is really all about. If you work hard, you can build a life for yourself and your family.

Madam Speaker, this is why I am a very proud cosponsor of the Fair Minimum Wage Act, which finally raises the minimum wage for millions of Americans. Unfortunately, some of my colleagues oppose this very bill, claiming that raising the minimum wage should be a State-by-State decision. Now, that is fine if your State chooses

to raise its minimum wage, but if not, your constituents are no better off. They are still making $7.25 an hour.

So I have just one question: If you are a well-intentioned, patriotic Republican who wants to leave the decision up to the States, are you prepared to explain to your constituents why they are worth less to you than the people across State lines?

For my part, I do not want low-wage Hoosiers to make less than those in other States just because our general assembly decides not to act. Of course, I understand the argument that some people may work fewer hours and some may even lose their jobs. This may be true. But it is important to remember that we have raised our minimum wage in the past, and in the past, the very same argument has proven itself to be untrue. So I am very optimistic that American employers, and particularly Hoosier employers in my congressional district, will do what they can to weather a minimum wage increase without letting folks go.

Now, unfortunately, this is not the only unnecessary struggle Congress has laid on America's low-income families this year. Today, our well-intentioned, patriotic Republican leaders continue to block an extension of emergency unemployment insurance, and because of congressional inaction, nearly 2 million Americans, Madam Speaker, were instantly cut off from their benefits in December, with 72,000 more being cut off each week.

Many of my Republican friends have painted unemployment benefits as a slush fund for certain lazy Americans. This is not only incredibly offensive, it is untrue. Americans want to work, but in many communities, there are simply no jobs available. In our economic downturn, Madam Speaker, everything from restaurants to machine shops to retail stores closed their doors and are only now starting to come back.

In Indianapolis, many Hoosiers are finding they no longer have the skills necessary for the modern workforce. Educated men and women with years of experience have to retrain before they even get rehired. Others have seen their industries simply disappear and have to prepare themselves for an entirely new career. This is far from laziness. Retraining and looking for a job is hard work with no pay. These Americans deserve our help covering expenses while they get back on their feet.

Madam Speaker, my good House Republican friends have yet to bring a real jobs bill to the floor in the 113th Congress, instead, focusing continually on deregulation and repealing the Affordable Care Act. Meanwhile, they overlook that raising the minimum wage is the right thing to do, putting our country back on track.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 39 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

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

Eternal God, through whom we see what we could be and what we can become, thank You for giving us another day.

In these days, our Nation is faced with pressing issues: constitutional, religious, and personal rights, and matters of great political importance.

We thank You that so many Americans have been challenged and have risen to the exercise of their responsibilities as citizens to participate in the great debates of these days.

Grant wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to us all, as well as an extra measure of charity.

Send Your spirit upon the Members of this people's House who walk through this valley under public scrutiny. Give them peace and Solomonic prudence in their deliberations.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. LANKFORD 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

SILICA

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

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. Speaker, comments have closed on a proposed rule from OSHA for sand in the workplace.

Prolonged breathing of silica, sand, can cause serious health issues. No one will dispute that. But this new rule is interesting in its design. In the comment request, OSHA specifically singles out one industry—oil and gas—as a key reason for the rule change. They write, in part, ''A recent cooperative study identified overexposures to silica among workers conducting hydraulic fracturing operations,'' as their prime reason for the rule change.

It is interesting that after the rule has been in place since 1971, OSHA has made this change. Fracking is not new. It has been around for decades. Why the sudden change in this administration?

I believe the change is because this administration is looking for one more way to impede oil and gas development in the United States. If this is not just about oil and gas, will OSHA set new rules for beach lifeguards who work in sand all day? How about road crews in Arizona who work in blowing sand all day? How about gift shops and restaurants along our coasts? What about dune buggy operators in the sand dunes of Little Sahara State Park in northwest Oklahoma?

The people of my district work every day to provide our Nation energy independence and to get our Nation out of the Middle East. But they are tired of fighting mounds of new regulations, unfunded mandates, and attacks on their livelihood as they serve our Nation.

WIND PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT

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

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition to talk about a significant issue for Massachusetts and our nation: the wind production tax credit.

In the past 2 years, clean energy jobs in Massachusetts have grown by 24 percent and are projected to grow another 11 percent in 2014. Thanks to the wind industry, the Commonwealth has seen an influx of over $200 million in capital investment and is home to nine wind-related manufacturing facilities.

Massachusetts is also home to the Wind Technology Testing Center, which at the time of its opening was the first facility in the country capable of testing large-scale wind turbine blades up to 300 feet in length. This testing center has created high-skilled jobs and has helped spur the development of next-generation blades made here in the United States.

We must act now to make sure that these innovative American businesses can continue to create new manufacturing opportunities here in the United States.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting an extension of the wind production tax credit.

STOP TARGETING POLITICAL BELIEFS

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

Ms. JENKINS. Mr. Speaker, investigations by the Ways and Means and Government Reform Committees have uncovered numerous examples of what appears to be a concerted effort by the IRS to target conservative groups and develop new regulations that could essentially silence conservative groups.

If allowed to take effect, these proposed regulations impact groups that have always been allowed to voice their positions on public policy. Notably, one group exempt from these proposed regulations—even though they do similar types of outreach—is labor.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation is founded on the freedom of speech, and any effort to hinder grassroots advocacy by the IRS must be stopped. At the very least the IRS regulations should be put on hold until investigations into the agency's prior misconduct are complete.

I urge my colleagues to support the Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs by the IRS Act, to ensure the administration does not use the IRS as a weapon to silence groups based on political beliefs.

LET'S GIVE AMERICA A RAISE

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, the Federal minimum wage has failed to keep up with the cost of living, leaving far too many families on the brink of poverty. For millions of Americans struggling to make ends meet on the current minimum wage, times have gotten harder and harder.

Increasing the minimum wage to $10.10 per hour would be especially important for the thousands of working women currently trying to pull their families out of poverty. Two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women. Nearly a third of the families headed by a single female are living in poverty.

This is wrong. No mother who works hard at a full-time job to provide for her children and family should be living in poverty. Our success as a nation hinges on the success of women. When women succeed, America succeeds.

That is why I have just signed a discharge petition to bring a bill to this floor so that we can vote on raising the Federal minimum wage to $10.10 for all hardworking Americans, including our mothers and daughters.

I think it is time. Let's give America a raise.

OAS MUST DO MORE TO SUPPORT DEMOCRACY IN VENEZUELA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on the Organization of American States, OAS, to take immediate action in support of freedom and democracy in Venezuela. The OAS must not remain silent while the people who are peaceful in Venezuela are being murdered on the streets by the Maduro regime.

I commend the government of Panama for proposing a region-wide foreign minister meeting to discuss the violations of human rights in Venezuela.

If the OAS can convene a special session over the lack of airspace access for a plane from Bolivia, then surely it must convene one on the ongoing democracy in Venezuela.

As a member of the OAS and its largest international donor, the U.S. has a moral obligation to ensure that these democratic principles are upheld, and if the OAS does not do more to address these attacks on freedom, then, Mr. Speaker, we must use our full voice, vote, and influence to compel it into action.

PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT

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

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of a critical jobs-creating policy for Iowa and our country that must be extended immediately, the production tax credit.

Once again, Congress has allowed the job-creating production tax credit to expire. This is unacceptable. Now is the time to not just talk about job creation but to act on a policy that is a proven job creator.

The production tax credit has helped revitalize our manufacturing base and build a homegrown industry. The wind industry supports some 80,000 jobs across the country and over 6,000 in Iowa alone. With Iowa a leader in wind power, the industry is investing in our rural communities and moving us toward a cleaner, homegrown source of energy.

The last time the PTC expired, thousands of jobs were lost, including hundreds right in my district in Iowa. We can't let these jobs disappear again. The PTC must be extended.

THE TRAIN WRECK OF OBAMACARE CONTINUES

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

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, the train wreck of the President's health care plan continues. Last Friday afternoon, curious timing, the Centers for Medicare Services released a report.

Mr. Speaker, the CMS is working with the IRS to implement ObamaCare, and the report said it looked at the effect on small businesses of ObamaCare and the effect on the premiums that were going to be paid by men and women who work in those small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, their report, from the President's own administration, said that 11 million workers will pay a higher health care premium under the Affordable Care Act. That is more than 5 million women who are going to pay a higher health care premium, when the promise the President made was that every family would save $2,500 per year.

Mr. Speaker, they are not only not going to save $2,500, those 11 million Americans are going to pay more for their health care next year, hardworking middle class Americans who can't afford it.

America deserves better.

PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT EXTENSION

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, while we fool around again with a lot of minor bills here today, we refuse to deal with the ones that we ought to be dealing with. We need to be involved in passing things that create jobs.

Now, the production tax credit is an absolute no-brainer. We have used it for years and years. As long as I have been in the Congress it has been here, and the wind industry is dependent on it.

It is 3,000 jobs in my State, and thousands of jobs across this country. We passed it in the nineties. We let it expire. We lost all the jobs, and we are doing it again.

Now, climate change ought to be impressing people that we have to move away from fossil fuels and look for alternative energy, and this is the way we are going to do it.

In the 20th century, we invested in aerospace and microchip industries through the production tax credit, and we made all the advances of the Internet and everything else on the basis of these Production Tax Credits.

The 21st century is going to be about alternative energy, and this House dawdles around, attacking the IRS, and trying to repeal the ACA and all of this.

Why don't you make it a suspension bill?

It would pass in a minute.

□ 1215

LOGAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Logan Regional Hospital, which serves the citizens of the Cache Valley of northern Utah.

In 1914, a new hospital with 60 beds was established that boasted modern patient conveniences, such as an X-ray machine. From 1948–75, the LDS church assumed responsibility for the hospital. In 1975, Intermountain Healthcare, a not-for-profit community service, was organized, which became a model for health care excellence.

In 1980, the hospital was expanded and moved to its present location, thanks to the help of $2 million from private donors. Today, the hospital has 148 beds and offers a full range of hospital services.

The 100 years of continued health care service has been possible thanks to the professionals who have donated so much of their lives to provide excellence in health care to their patients.

Logan Regional Hospital fulfills the dreams of its original founders. Its not-for-profit community governance from committed board members continues to excel in providing for quality health care services.

THE COST OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION

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

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, as the cost of a college education continues to rise, Americans have become increasingly dependent on Federal student loans for access. Families are watching tuition creep up year after year, while their incomes and their savings have not kept pace.

To make matters worse, there have been widespread reports of abusive practices in the student loan servicing industry, and that makes it harder for borrowers to repay their loans. These trends jeopardize the promise of higher education as the great equalizer, a place of opportunity for all. Parents are worried that their children won't ever get a shot at the American Dream because they are drowning in debt.

And this week, the majority will bring up legislation that would undermine the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's independence and their rulemaking authority; and this bill would weaken essential consumer protections and make it all but impossible to fight abuse in the student loan industry.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on H.R. 3193 and stand up for students and families who deserve fair treatment.

PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT

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

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, my home State of Hawaii is fortunate to have some of the most abundant renewable energy resources in the world, and yet we still spend $4.5 billion every year to import fossil fuels to power our State.

This is not sustainable, and that is why Hawaii is aggressively working towards a goal of being 70 percent alternative energy source by the year 2030. But in order to succeed, we need strong, responsible policies that support and invest in clean energy development; and all alternative energy options are necessary.

We must renew the production tax credit for wind energy. Due to the PTC, the U.S. now leads the world in wind energy production, and the industry supports more than 80,000 domestic jobs. It is in the best interest of our environment, our economy, and future generations that we renew the PTC to ensure that our Nation continues to be a world leader in clean energy.

END THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, I rise in support of the President, the Republicans, and the Democrats in this institution and across this country who want an end to the war in Afghanistan. It has cost us trillions of dollars that we can ill-afford.

There has been $100 billion spent on infrastructure, yet the inspector general cannot find where the money has gone nor where the projects have been completed. There is $30 billion in the pipeline now. We need to end that.

We need to bring all the troops home. Bring them home now. Save that money. Put it toward deficit reduction and investing in America—our roads, our bridges, our schools, our health care system. Our priorities demand it and require it.

Afghanistan is now the most corrupt nation in the world. Afghanistan supplies more illegal drugs to the rest of the world than all of the rest of the nations combined. It is time to end our involvement and stop this shameful waste of America's taxpayer treasure and our patriots' blood.

CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, if you listen to the other side, you would think that the costs of the Environmental Protection Agency's efforts to reduce global warming and to protect our environment are breaking the back of our economy, but that is hardly the case.

What is really beginning to break the back of our economy is the costs associated with extreme weather events. From Hurricane Sandy to the droughts in the Midwest and the West, it is costing tens of billions of dollars every year, and it is getting worse.

In fact, 10 years ago, the insurance industry estimated what the costs would be, and it was way less than it is today; and they acknowledge it is because of the effects of climate change. This applies to the Hartford Financial Services Group, AIG Prudential, and the Reinsurance Association of America. They all say that this is the footprint of climate change and that extreme weather conditions are going to get worse.

So you have to ask yourself: If the insurance industry is acknowledging the presence of climate change, why can't the Congress? Will the majority of this House stay in denial that the climate is changing, that human activities are contributing to this change? Are they going to continue to play an obstructionist role, or are they going to act responsibly for the benefit of future generations? I hope it is the latter.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

TAXPAYER TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2014

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3308) to require a Federal agency to include language in certain educational and advertising materials indicating that such materials are produced and disseminated at taxpayer expense, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3308

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 ''Taxpayer Transparency Act of 2014''.

SEC. 2. REQUIREMENTS FOR PRINTED MATERIALS AND ADVERTISEMENTS BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.

(a) REQUIREMENT TO IDENTIFY FUNDING SOURCE FOR COMMUNICATION FUNDED BY FEDERAL AGENCY.—Each communication funded by a Federal agency that is an advertisement, or that provides information about any Federal Government program, benefit, or service, shall clearly state—

(1) in the case of a printed communication, including mass mailings, signs, and billboards, that the communication is printed or published at taxpayer expense; and

(2) in the case of a communication transmitted through radio, television, the Internet, or any means other than the means referred to in paragraph (1), that the communication is produced or disseminated at taxpayer expense.

(b) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) PRINTED COMMUNICATION.—Any printed communication described in subsection (a)(1) shall—

(A) be of sufficient type size to be clearly readable by the recipient of the communication;

(B) to the extent feasible, be contained in a printed box set apart from the other contents of the communication; and

(C) to the extent feasible, be printed with a reasonable degree of color contrast between the background and the printed statement.

(2) RADIO, TELEVISION, AND INTERNET COMMUNICATION.—

(A) AUDIO COMMUNICATION.—Any audio communication described in subsection (a)(2) shall include an audio statement that communicates the information required under that subsection in a clearly spoken manner.

(B) VIDEO COMMUNICATION.—Any video communication described in subsection (a)(2) shall include a statement with the information referred to under that subsection—

(i) that is conveyed in a clearly spoken manner;

(ii) that is conveyed by a voice-over or screen view of the person making the statement; and

(iii) to the extent feasible, that also appears in writing at the end of the communication in a clearly readable manner with a reasonable degree of color contrast between the background and the printed statement, for a period of at least 4 seconds.

(C) E-MAIL COMMUNICATION.—Any e-mail communication described in subsection (a)(2) shall include the information required under that subsection, displayed in a manner that—

(i) is of sufficient type size to be clearly readable by the recipient of the communication;

(ii) is set apart from the other contents of the communication; and

(iii) includes a reasonable degree of color contrast between the background and the printed statement.

(c) IDENTIFICATION OF OTHER FUNDING SOURCE FOR CERTAIN COMMUNICATIONS.—In the case of a communication funded entirely by user fees, by any other source that does not include Federal funds, or by a combination of such fees or other source, a Federal agency may apply the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) by substituting ''by the United States Government'' for ''at taxpayer expense''.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term ''Federal agency'' has the meaning given the term ''Executive agency'' in section 133 of title 41, United States Code.

(2) MASS MAILING.—The term ''mass mailing'' means any mailing or distribution of 499 or more newsletters, pamphlets, or other printed matter with substantially identical content, whether such matter is deposited singly or in bulk, or at the same time or different times, except that such term does not include any mailing—

(A) in direct response to a communication from a person to whom the matter is mailed; or

(B) of a news release to the communications media.

(e) SOURCE OF FUNDS.—The funds used by a Federal agency to carry out this Act shall be derived from amounts made available to the agency for advertising, or for providing information about any Federal Government program, benefit, or service.

(f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall apply only to communications printed or otherwise produced after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. GUIDANCE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.

Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall develop and issue guidance on implementing the requirements of this Act.

SEC. 4. JUDICIAL REVIEW AND ENFORCEABILITY.

(a) JUDICIAL REVIEW.—There shall be no judicial review of compliance or noncompliance with any provision of this Act.

(b) ENFORCEABILITY.—No provision of this Act shall be construed to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by any administrative or judicial action.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FARENTHOLD) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I am here today to speak on H.R. 3308, which requires the Federal Government to disclose that advertisements and information on government programs and services are paid for by the taxpayer.

Advertisements provide information, but in many instances, they are designed to induce people to buy or use a product or service. While we can debate whether individual Federal advertising campaigns are overly promotional, surely we can agree that the public should know that they, themselves, are sponsoring a government marketing piece.

Americans deserve to know how their tax dollars are being spent, and H.R. 3308 adds needed transparency to the business of government by requiring disclosures when taxpayer dollars are spent on advertising and educational materials.

This bill is designed to help people know what is going on. It is not intended to be a burden on local broadcasters, their advertisers, or any of the work that they do in local communities.

As a former broadcaster, I understand the important role that advertising plays, but it is also important that the people know what is an advertisement being paid for with government money, what is a public service announcement, and what is being paid for by private individuals.

This bill adds a disclaimer to ads in printed material very similar to what all of us in this Chamber are familiar with. There are advertising rules for Members' campaigns, where you have to indicate, This was paid for by so-and-so.

This would just require government agencies who purchase advertising or produce written material to add a disclaimer saying something to the effect of, Produced and aired at taxpayer expense.

I will reserve the balance of my time at this point, Mr. Speaker.

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

Under this legislation, Mr. Speaker, any communication an agency makes that is an advertisement or that provides information about a Federal Government program, benefit, or service would have to say that it is printed or published at taxpayer expense. Emails, radio, and television ads would have to say that they are produced and disseminated at taxpayer expense.

Some agencies already identify the agencies that print them. For example, the Army prints, ''Paid for by the United States Army'' on its recruiting posters. This bill would require the Army to change its wording and say, ''Printed at taxpayer expense.'' I have not heard any explanation, either at the committee or here on the floor, for why such a change is so necessary.

The gentlewoman from Illinois, Congresswoman DUCKWORTH, the former Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs, raised an important point during our committee's consideration of this bill. She pointed out that some materials printed by the Department of Veterans Affairs state that the VA produced the materials. This is important because veterans need to be able to trust the source of the information, and seeing ''Department of Veterans Affairs'' engenders just that trust.

Four years ago, this body passed a law, cosponsored by Chairman ISSA, the chairman of our committee, that prohibited nongovernment parties from sending mailings marked ''census'' without a clear disclaimer with the name of the party sending the mailing.

That law was passed after the Republican National Committee sent a mailing that led recipients to think it was an official census document when it was not.

□ 1230

We passed that law because we wanted to protect consumers from being misled into believing a communication from a nongovernmental source was, in fact, an official government document. We should use that same logic and caution with this bill. I think it is important that this bill is interpreted to allow agencies to continue to say that a communication is paid for by that agency rather than being required to say that the document is printed or published at taxpayer expense.

During the committee's consideration of this legislation, Chairman ISSA and my friend, Chairman FARENTHOLD, made commitments to Representative DUCKWORTH to work with her in finding mutually agreeable language. Representative DUCKWORTH suggested language that would address the issues we

raised with the military and the Veterans Administration. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that language is not—not—included in this bill, and no changes were made at all since the committee considered it, despite the assurances given to Representative DUCKWORTH.

I will not vote against the bill, but I certainly hope that, if this bill or a similar bill moves through the Senate, the majority in the House will keep the commitments made to Representative DUCKWORTH and the Democrats on our committee to find a satisfactory resolution to the legitimate concerns that were raised.

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

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

I would like to take a moment to address the concerns raised by the gentleman from Virginia before yielding to the author of the bill, Mr. LONG.

During the markup, Representative DUCKWORTH was concerned about certain agencies like the VA and the Department of Defense; and during the markup, we did add a provision, at the minority's request, that allowed the Office of Management and Budget to implement regulations in exactly how this is going to be done. It certainly does not prohibit ''paid for by the Army'' or ''paid for by the Veterans Administration.'' It would simply add, ''paid for by the Army at taxpayer expense,'' which would clearly be compliant with this law, the idea being to determine what the taxpayers are paying for and what is being donated for time, for instance, by a broadcast facility for public service announcements or to differentiate ads that are not paid for by the government. There is no disclaimer. We know it is not paid for with taxpayer dollars.

What we are after here is to let the taxpayer know when they see something on the television, hear something on the radio, or see a printed material that their tax dollars funded it and it is something they can either be proud of or they can pick up the phone and call us up here in Washington, D.C. and say, What the heck are you doing wasting our money on these types of ads?

It empowers the public to know. We are not trying to limit Federal agencies. We are not trying to detract from the fine work that the VA does or to detract from the recruiting efforts that our Armed Forces are in.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Will my friend yield?

Mr. FARENTHOLD. I yield to the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank my friend.

Is there any doubt, do you think, in a taxpayer's mind that if the current situation that identifies something as paid for by the U.S. Army, then certainly we all understand that it is also paid for by the U.S. taxpayer?

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Reclaiming my time, we have got an alphabet soup of government agencies. As I review documents for the budget, I sometimes have to Google what some of the agencies in the Federal Government do. Obviously, almost everybody knows what the Army is, but if you are not in the financial services, do you know what the CFPB is? Or do you know what some of the smaller subagencies are? And I think that is what we are getting at.

At this point, I will, however, yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Missouri, Mr. BILLY LONG, the author of this bill, my good friend and a fellow broadcaster, I might add.

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Texas for yielding to me.

Every day, Federal agencies spend money advertising various programs without mentioning where the funding for these programs or their ads are coming from. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis famously said that sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants. The Taxpayer Transparency Act is about shining a light on how taxpayer dollars are spent by requiring executive branch agencies to disclose that these advertisements are paid for at taxpayer expense. Simply, this bill extends similar requirements already imposed on the House and the Senate to the executive branch.

It is time for government to start working for the people again. By providing more transparency in their spending, executive branch agencies will have to answer to the people. Americans have every right to know exactly how their tax dollars are being spent. As Members of Congress, we should all support an open and honest government, and this legislation does that by requiring executive branch agencies to be transparent with spending taxpayer dollars which promote Federal programs.

I urge the House to support this bill and look forward to further action by our colleagues in the Senate.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Could I inquire of the Speaker how much time remains on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Virginia has 17½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 14½ minutes remaining.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers on this side. Does the gentleman have others on his side?

Mr. FARENTHOLD. I don't have any further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I certainly laud the intent of the bill. I sometimes wish, however, that we applied this same rubric to ourselves here in Congress. Wouldn't it be interesting for the taxpayers to know, for example, that a dead-end kind of inquiry on the IRS being pursued by the majority in this body just in our committee alone has already cost the taxpayers of the United States $14 million producing virtually nothing? And it would be very interesting to know how much it has cost the taxpayers of this country when we had 46 or 47 repeal of the Affordable Care Act amendments in bills in this Congress and in the previous Congress.

Having said that, I certainly am not going to vote against the bill, but I am concerned that some of the concerns raised by my colleagues, particularly Congresswoman DUCKWORTH, were not, in fact, addressed in the final bill brought before this floor. It is my hope we could continue to work together to try to resolve that with some compromise language as we work with our colleagues in the other body.

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

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

Without getting into the pros and cons of the various investigations that this body does, I will say that it is our constitutional obligation to provide oversight to the various Federal agencies. One of the ways we do that is through the investigation that our committee does bring up.

I do want to say we did visit with Representative DUCKWORTH, and we do feel as if her concerns have been addressed. We could not agree on specific language with Ms. DUCKWORTH, but we were able to come up with these provisions that the minority requested at the markup that allowed the OMB to come up with the implementing regulations. It also includes a provision suggested by the minority to make clear that communications funded entirely by user fees or by sources other than that that do not include Federal funds may indicate how it is funded through the United States Government.

But this is a bill all designed to provide transparency, let taxpayers see the fruits of the spending of taxpayer dollars on advertisements, and to make a judgment about that on their own and know what is going on and know how their money is being spent.

As my colleague from Missouri pointed out, sunshine is the best disinfectant. It is what we are about in the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. It is what this bill does, again, designed as a regulation on government agencies, not as an attempt to go after broadcasters, print shops, or anything like that. This is just to get the government agencies to tell the taxpayers what they bought with the disclaimer on there.

It is commonsense legislation. I urge all my colleagues to stand behind it. It is something that I think will be a huge step forward towards transparency, and I look forward to this bill's passage.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, last fall we learned that the Department of Health and Human Services spent nearly $12 million dollars of taxpayer money for airtime campaigns to promote Obamacare. While this was

a gross misuse of taxpayer dollars allocated to specifically target states that have opted out of Medicaid expansion, it was not an isolated event.

For this reason, I joined my colleague from Missouri as the original cosponsor of H.R. 3308, the Taxpayer Transparency Act.

This bill does just what it says—provides transparency when spending tax dollars earned by hard working Americans.

My colleague's bill would require agencies in the executive branch to disclose any and all advertisements funded by taxpayers. This includes all mailers, brochures, tv and radio ads, emails, billboards, and posters.

Both the House and Senate are required to disclose this information in franked mailing—so why are executive branch agencies not held to the same standard of transparency? Our constituents deserve better.

To my colleagues, I urge you to pass this bill to hold the federal government accountable for waste and abuse of taxpayer money.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Chairman, I rise in opposition to this legislation.

For the last three years, House Republicans have repeatedly attacked critical public health, safety, and environmental protections.

This package of anti-regulatory bills is just another such attack on agency rulemakings—one that is falsely advertised as an effort to improve transparency.

Title one of this bill, which was reported by the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, would prevent a rule from taking effect until certain information is posted online for at least six months.

The only exception to this requirement would be for the agency to forgo a notice and comment period or for the President to issue an Executive Order.

This delay is completely unnecessary and is effectively a six-month moratorium on rules. It also could give agencies a perverse incentive to avoid a public comment period altogether if a statutory or court-ordered deadline could be missed.

Just one example of a rule that could be affected by this bill is the Food and Drug Administration's proposed rule on electronic prescribing information, which would ensure that doctors have the most current safety information on prescription drugs.

Under this bill, this drug safety rule could not be finalized until OMB posts information about the rule on its web site for six months.

FDA, like other agencies, already details the status of its rulemakings on its website, and extensive information about proposed rules is also available on the website Regulations.gov.

Yet under this bill, if OMB failed to post a required piece of information, FDA could not finalize the rule unless the President stepped in and issued an Executive Order. It should not be that hard for doctors to have the most up-to-date safety information about prescription drugs.

That is just title one of this Frankenstein bill. The other three titles of this bill are even worse. One title would add 60 additional requirements to the rulemaking process.

We should be making the regulatory process more efficient and effective. Adding 60 new requirements will do exactly the opposite and make it needlessly complex.

Madam Chairman, this is a package of bad bills that would do nothing to improve our rulemaking process. I urge every Member to oppose it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FARENTHOLD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3308, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3865, STOP TARGETING OF POLITICAL BELIEFS BY THE IRS ACT OF 2014; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2804, ALL ECONOMIC REGULATIONS ARE TRANSPARENT ACT OF 2014; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 487 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 487

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 3865) to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from modifying the standard for determining whether an organization is operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare for purposes of section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. At any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2804) to amend title 5, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to publish information about rules on the Internet, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and amendments specified in this section and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113-38. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. It shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of February 27, 2014, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules, as though under clause 1 of rule XV, relating to the bill (H.R. 3370) to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes.

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

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

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

□ 1245

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, you have heard me say it before, it makes me so happy to be a member of the Rules Committee because our entire resolution gets read down here. The entire Rules resolution gets read, and by golly, Mr. Speaker, if you are not proud of what you are doing in your committee, you better not sign up for a committee where every word of the work that you do gets read each and every time, but I am proud of the work we are doing in the Rules Committee.

The rule that we have on the floor today, Mr. Speaker, is going to make two bills in order. Both, I would argue, are incredibly important for providing

not just transparency to what goes on here in Washington but also to ensure that the people's voice continues to be heard in Washington.

House Resolution 487, this rule, is a closed rule for consideration of H.R. 3865. That is the Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs by the IRS Act, Mr. Speaker. That is in response to what now every American understands to be the 501(c)(4) scandal, for lack of a better word; that for the first time in my lifetime, there are allegations that the IRS is targeting folks on the basis of their political beliefs for whether or not they are able to have their organization certified as a tax-exempt organization. That is not just a concern of groups on one side of the aisle or the other, Mr. Speaker, that is a concern of folks across the spectrum, and I would argue it is a concern for all Americans who believe that having their voice heard is important.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution provides for a structured rule for the consideration of H.R. 2804, the All Economic Regulations are Transparent Act.

Mr. Speaker, in that structured rule, we made in order 11 amendments. We had two Members come by and testify on behalf of their amendments last night in the Rules Committee. We made both of those amendments in order. In addition, we made four Republican amendments and five other Democratic amendments in order; so for a total of 11 amendments, four Republican amendments and seven Democratic amendments were made in order on that underlying bill. As is customary, it provides the minority with a motion to recommit on both bills.

Mr. Speaker, I sit on the Government Reform Committee. We just had a Government Reform Committee bill pass here on the floor of the House, and we have another one here today. It aims for transparency. There is just no question in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that we have replaced taxation in this country with regulation. Rarely does someone come down and say, ''I want to tax an industry.'' What they will come down and say is, ''I want to regulate an industry.'' In fact, in my great State of Georgia, Mr. Speaker, we are regulating jobs right out of existence. We don't have to tax them out of existence. We don't have to outlaw an industry. We just regulate it out of existence.

Perhaps there are some industries that need to be regulated out of existence, and we should have that full and open debate on the floor of the House, but what is absolutely certain is that the American people need to be able to understand the power of the regulatory process, and the impact that it has on jobs and economic development in their community.

Today in statute, Mr. Speaker, there is a requirement that the administration twice a year publish a notice of all of those regulations that are being considered and what their impact is anticipated to be, but we have had instances, as recently as 2012, Mr. Speaker, where the administration just ignored that statute altogether. Now understand, the requirement is that you must inform the American people twice a year, just twice a year, about the regulations that are coming through the pipeline that will impact them, their families, and their businesses, and yet, that has been ignored. There has been no ability for folks to understand the magnitude of those regulations.

So we came back in this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, and said, listen, not only should you be doing that, you should probably be doing it once a month. If you have seen the Federal Register, Mr. Speaker, it is thick. It comes out every day of the week. It captures all of the new rules and regulations that are coming out. They are coming out like water out of a spigot. They are tough to keep track of. So this bill says let's do it not twice a year, let's do it once a month. Let's make sure that the American people understand in a volume that they can see and read once a month what those new rules and regulations are, and, if an agency chooses to ignore that requirement, that proposed rule and regulation will not go into effect such that the American people will get six months of notice about what it is that is going on.

I will give a good example, Mr. Speaker. It goes to the second bill we are considering, the Stop Political Targeting bill that is on the floor here today. There is a public comment period that is on right now. I don't know if most folks in America know that. I know everybody understands the IRS targeting scandal. I don't know if they know that the administration is involved in a rulemaking right now. The investigation is still ongoing into the IRS. The extent of the abuse is not yet understood at the IRS. The committees are continuing to work through that process, as the law requires, and yet the administration has released a rule that says we think we know how to fix this, even though the investigation is not done yet; this is what we want to do, and the public comment period ends tomorrow. The public comment period ends tomorrow.

Now, folks can go to www.regulations.gov. They can still go and file their comment if they believe that the people's voice being heard is important, but think about that, Mr. Speaker. A scandal that everyone in America understands, a scandal that I believe is offensive to absolutely everyone in America because it doesn't matter which party you are in, you shouldn't target folks who disagree with you; we should absolutely have an full and open debate and let the best ideas win. Yet the administration has proposed a solution to a problem that is not yet fully understood, and the opportunity for the American people to comment on it ends tomorrow. I don't think folks know that back home, Mr. Speaker.

This transparency bill we have on the floor today intends to address that, not just for this regulation, but for all future regulations, and the Stop Political Targeting bill that we have on the floor today says this and this alone: it says since we don't fully understand what is going on, and since we know with certainty that the IRS has breached the public's trust, not the entire IRS but just this one scandal here in the 501(c)(4) operations, since we know with certainty that the public's trust has been diminished, let's not have the administration, in the absence of a full understanding by the Congress, the absence of full comment by the American people, let's not have the administration completely re-regulate that area. Rather, let's put this off, not forever, Mr. Speaker, because we all agree that work needs to be done, but for 1 year and 1 year only so that the Congress can have a full understanding and the American people can have a full accounting of what it was that led to citizens' voices being silenced by the Internal Revenue Service in their applications for 501(c)(4) status.

Those are the two bills we have on the floor today, Mr. Speaker. Again, all of the germane amendments that were offered, and candidly, there were no germane amendments that were offered to the Stop Political Targeting Act, so that is a closed rule with just the one motion to recommit, and 11 amendments made in order for the government transparency bill on the floor today, only four Republican amendments, seven Democratic amendments, so we can have a full and open debate. I am very proud of this rule, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am forced to rise again in opposition to the rule and the two underlying bills that are counterproductive and aren't dealing with the issues that our constituents sent us here to address. Each of these bills was brought under a restrictive process, one of them a completely closed rule that blocked all efforts from both sides of the aisle to improve the legislation.

Let's talk about the IRS bill first.

The IRS bill has a title that I think would engender broad bipartisan support. If we want to run a bill that prevents the IRS from discriminating against organizations based on their political affiliations, whether they are progressive or tea party or anywhere in between, I think there would be a way to come together in support, hopefully near unanimous support, around such a bill.

Like many Americans, I was outraged that organizations had been singled out based on the name of their organization for additional scrutiny.

That is simply not the right criteria that the IRS should be using. I hope they got the message over at the IRS loud and clear, and I hope we can move to fully implement the recommendations of the inspector general to ensure that this never happens again.

However, this bill actually undoes one of the very recommendations of the inspector general from the inspector general's own report. There is even a Republican bill in the Ways and Means Committee by PETE ROSKAM that would require the IRS Commissioner to implement all of the recommendations of the inspector general, including these very regulations that this other Republican bill is seeking to prevent the implementation of. So make up our minds here, folks.

If we want to move together to prevent the IRS from discriminating against any organization because of their political affiliation, let's do so, whether it is something binding, implementing in statute the recommendations of the inspector general, whether it is a sense of Congress, I stand ready to work with my colleague from Georgia and others to speak with a strong voice that that kind of discrimination has no role in the IRS. However, that is entirely separate from what this bill does, which guts one of the very inspector general recommendations that was designed to remedy this problem going forward.

As for the other bill, the ALERRT Act, it would slow down the regulatory process and increase red tape for agencies. It has been estimated that this bill increases reporting requirements for agencies by six times. This is a Republican bureaucrat welfare bill. How many more government bureaucrats are you going to have to hire to deal with six times more paperwork that is going to come from this bill?

You know, when I talk to my constituents in Colorado about what do we need to do, they don't say, ''You need to go to Washington and help bury government workers in more paperwork. I want more red tape.''

Yet, that is the bill we have here today, a Republican bill that would bury the Federal Government under six times as much reporting requirements for agencies. That is not what the American people want. That is why I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this rule and this bill.

Look, there are some issues that we could be working on here today, Mr. Speaker. Let me talk about a few of those. These are the kinds of issues that I believe if my party had the opportunity to bring bills to the floor of this Chamber, we would be bringing those bills to the floor of this Chamber. One of those is immigration reform. Rather than spending time debating bills that are counterproductive and aren't going anywhere, let's consider legislation that would replace our broken immigration system with one that works.

The Senate, Mr. Speaker, was able to come together, 68 Members, Democratic and Republican, around a commonsense solution, securing our border, ensuring that people who are here illegally get in line behind those who are here legally, implementing mandatory workplace authentication of workers, making sure the future flow of workers is in line with the needs of our economy and America can continue to compete in the 21st century. We have a nearly identical bill in the House, H.R. 15, a bipartisan bill. I think if we brought it forward under a rule, it would pass. Let's bring that bill forward, Mr. Speaker.

Nearly a year ago, the New Democratic Coalition Immigration Task Force, which I cochair, released detailed principles on comprehensive immigration reform. I applaud the Republican principles that were issued on immigration reform. There is a lot that we have in common. I believe that we can work together to pass a bill to create American jobs, ensure that we are more competitive in the global economy, reduce the deficit by hundreds of billions of dollars, and that reflects our values as Americans and reflects our values as people of faith.

Yet, the House majority has found time to shepherd dozens of bills through the Judiciary Committee to the floor of the House, including one that we are considering today, but the House hasn't dedicated a single moment of floor time to an immigration reform bill. We haven't even tried, Mr. Speaker. We haven't had a 3-hour debate, we haven't had a 1-hour debate, we haven't had a 1-minute debate on any immigration reform bill here on the floor of the House of Representatives. You don't get to ''yes'' without scheduling the time and the space for Democrats and Republicans of good faith to work together to solve a problem that the American people want and demand a solution for.

Across the country, business leaders, faith leaders, national and local editorial boards, and the law enforcement community are calling for real leadership on advancing immigration reform now. In fact, just yesterday, the Chamber of Commerce sent a letter to Speaker BOEHNER from more than 600 businesses urging Congress to pass immigration reform. The Chamber president, Tom Donohue, posted a blog post emphasizing the need to have a modernized E-Verify system, provisions that are included in H.R. 15.

Last week, a Wall Street Journal oped criticized the Republicans' failure to act on commonsense reform. Citing a recent study from the American Farm Bureau about the cost of failing to act, The Wall Street Journal wrote:

> Republicans have killed immigration reform for now, but the Farm Bureau study shows that in the real economy it is still needed. The irony is that many Republicans who support handouts to farmers oppose reforms that wouldn't cost taxpayers a dime and would help the economy.

So instead of passing a bill that reduces the deficit, secures our borders, and makes the reforms we need, Republicans say let's bury the government in red tape, increasing the paperwork for agencies by six times, and let's give government handouts to farmers. Those are the Republican policies that we are seeing in this Congress, and it is why the American people hold this institution in great disapproval. The longer we delay in passing comprehensive immigration reform, the greater the cost of inaction becomes.

□ 1300

According to the Congressional Budget Office's nonpartisan analysis, passing immigration reform would increase our gross domestic product by 3.3 percent, raise wages by $470 billion for American citizens, and create an average of 121,000 jobs for Americans each year over the next decade.

So, rather than create jobs for Federal bureaucrats having to deal with six times as much paperwork, let's create jobs in the private sector, Mr. Speaker. Let's pass immigration reform to ensure that American companies can compete in the increasingly complex global marketplace.

If we have the ability, Mr. Speaker, to bring a bill forward to the floor, another bill we would bring forward is increasing the minimum wage to $10.10. Just before coming up here today to manage this rule, Mr. Speaker, I signed a discharge petition to bring that bill to the floor, a bill that I proudly cosponsor, a bill authored by my colleague, Mr. MILLER of California.

Raising the minimum wage would help restore fairness for working men and women across the country. It would lift millions of Americans out of poverty. It would fuel demand and economic growth.

A letter from over 600 economists, including seven Nobel Prize winners, said:

> At a time when persistent high unemployment is putting enormous downward pressure on wages, such a minimum wage increase will provide a much-needed boost.

It is no panacea, but if we are looking at helping Americans earn enough so that they don't have to be part of the social safety net or government welfare programs, we need to make sure that they can do that in the private sector because—you know what?—at current minimum wage levels, a family working full-time, 40 hours a week, earns about $14,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, you try living on $14,000 a year. I couldn't do it. I don't think you could do it, Mr. Speaker.

Guess what? That is why we have a social safety net that helps Americans and supplements their income. Whether it is Medicaid, whether it is food stamps, Americans earning $14,000 a year don't live a great life, but they get a little help from us, and that is the right thing to do; it reflects our values.

Do you know what? If we can help them earn a little bit more, they will require less help from other taxpayers

in paying their rent, paying their bills, putting groceries on their table.

So we can be fiscally responsible in reducing the need for social safety net programs if we can help lift up more Americans out of poverty. One substantial step towards doing that will be to increase the minimum wage to $10.10.

Another issue that we would love to bring forward, Mr. Speaker, would be renewing unemployment insurance. Again, when unemployment insurance ran out with employment at high levels, it sucked money out of the economy, money that could otherwise go to create jobs and private sector growth.

In the past and in prior recessions and in prior times when we had this level of unemployment, this has always been a bipartisan issue. There has always been responsible governing majorities of Republicans and Democrats, in this Chamber and the other Chamber, that have put together extensions for unemployment insurance.

And yet, once again, it has run out, and we seek to bring a simple bill to the floor that ensures that we don't endanger our recovery by sucking money out of the economy in our time of need.

I will go on and on, Mr. Speaker, about bills we could be considering, but sadly, the truth is—and the American people see this—we are not considering those bills here today. We are considering a bill that adds six times as much paperwork to already overworked Federal workers, and we are considering a bill that guts one of the recommendations of the inspector general that was designed to help prevent the IRS from discriminating based on political affiliation and ensure that we have sufficient transparency, consistent with our Tax Code around entities in the political arena.

We can do better, Mr. Speaker. I encourage my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to do better. I am confident that, if they are not able to do better, Mr. Speaker, the American people will give my side of the aisle a chance to do better. Either way, Mr. Speaker, immigration reform doesn't solve itself. It takes the United States Congress to solve it.

While the President can move forward with his executive powers, as he has with the deferred action program, the only comprehensive solution can come from the United States Congress.

I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work in good faith towards addressing the flaws in our immigration system and replacing chaos with the rule of law, increasing our competitiveness, reducing our deficits, securing our borders, making America safer, and creating jobs for Americans.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 10 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS), a freshman Member, a young Member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, in support of this legislation.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for yielding me the time.

One of the things that comes when we have these debates, and we have a lot of issues that come before the floor, we speak in terms of—and my good friend from Georgia, we talked about this before—we talk in terms of bill numbers; we talk in terms of rules, the good gentleman from across the aisle from Colorado often speaks of; and we all talk in the terms that we understand.

But many times, when you look at bills and you look at the things that are coming before the floor, it is a good idea to start painting the picture of those that are impacted by it. Mr. Speaker, when we begin to do that and when we begin to look at the bills on the floor today, I want to tell you a story.

The story involves Mr. Puckett. He owns a small business that has been creating jobs for over 100 years, a family-owned brick company. Mr. Puckett attributes the success of his business to their hard work and loyal employees.

Unfortunately, when I met Mr. Puckett, the conversation was not so optimistic. He testified before the Judiciary Committee on the first bill I introduced, H.R. 1493, which is now title IV of this legislation, because his company had just lost 50 jobs as a result of two regulations crafted behind closed doors.

In a Nation of over 300 million, 50 jobs may not seem like much, but in Mr. Puckett's town, that is the difference between 50 families having food on the table or going hungry; or for small towns, like I have in northeast Georgia, it means the difference in staying in their beloved part of the State or moving somewhere else to find a job.

Every State, every congressional district, has their Mr. Pucketts. No business has been untouched by the toll of costly and overburdensome regulations. That is why I rise today in strong support of this rule and the underlying legislative package.

Now, a lot will be said and has been said about this, in saying that we need to do other things, we need to go on to this project. I just heard from my friend from across the aisle. As I have done before from here, I will simply remind him, in that nirvana state of just a few years ago, when they had the choice to do whatever they wanted to do, they chose to leave immigration on the table while they fixed other things which we are fixing today.

But today, we are going to talk about the Mr. Pucketts of the world and the business owners, but not just the business owners, the folks who work for them, the folks that so many times are missed by what we are trying to do.

By reforming our Nation's regulatory system, we jump-start the engine of our economy. When our economy gets up and going, our families flourish.

A lot can be said about this whole package. There are other speakers who will speak later today about the different titles. I am speaking specifically to title IV, which is commonly known as ''sue and settle.''

I have talked to Members of both Democrats and Republicans who go home and have townhall meetings. One of the things that happens all the time is you begin to talk about regulation in bills and what does this do. I see this sense of many who are in the audience. All of a sudden, their eyes just glaze over, and they say: Here it comes, Washington speak; we don't get it.

Well, I am just a country boy from northeast Georgia, and I just want to put it in simple terms. This makes it very simple to understand the sue-and-settle legislation.

Two people have a problem. They don't get along. Something is not right. In one group, they have maybe a business or a group that have a disagreement on something going on, and they can't seem to find their solution, so the one actually says: Whoa, I see something here. There is a regulation that I can sue on. This is a government agency that I can go sue. So we have a third party in play.

So what we do is we take two people who have an issue—and I will just use ''people'' as the term here—and we have their outlet as saying: I will sue a third party—being the Federal Government—and while I am suing, I will work out a deal with the bureaucrats in this agency and go to a judge and get a consent order; and then, by the way, then that consent order is binding on the other person.

I grew up in a family with a brother. I have often kidded that I thought he was adopted, but he is not. He is actually my brother. It is like any other sibling rivalry, but when we would have a disagreement, it is sort of like him going to Mom and Mom only believing him, only hearing his side of the story, and then punishing me—which, by the way, for anybody watching today, that happened quite regularly.

I have spoken many times to my mom and dad about that. But is that fair? No, it is not fair. Both sides need to be heard. You need to have the opportunity. That is what sue-and-settle legislation does.

You can hear a lot, and I am sure there will be many folks who will come to the floor today and tonight saying: No, that is not what it does; you are gumming up the works. And I will get to that in a minute.

But when we understand what these do—the abusive use of consent and decree and settlements to coerce agency action is often referred to, as I have said, to sue and settle—it is the reason Mr. Puckett was losing these jobs. He did not have the input because of one of these decrees.

Agencies are failing to uphold their statutory rulemaking discretion and are allowing lawsuits from outside the groups to determine their priorities and duties. Between 2009 and 2012, the majority of these sue-and-settle actions occurred in the environmental

realm, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and Endangered Species Act.

Again, when you come forward trying to make regulatory rules, we have, like we had testified into Rules Committee last night, that anybody threatening to say something about the regulatory action is wanting dirty water, dirty air, and baby cribs that fall apart, that is just a mischaracterization and not worthy of debate to the American people.

There is no one on this side of the aisle, Mr. Speaker, that wants to breathe dirty air; there is no one on this side of the aisle that wants dirty drinking water; and there is no one on this side of the aisle that wants malfunctioning parts that hurt people. That is not worthy of this debate.

This is simply saying that we are having an issue of fairness. Our President talks fairness. He discusses transparency. We are calling on him to say: We agree with you, Mr. President, on this issue. Let's have transparency. Let's have fairness here.

But, when someone enters an out-of-sight backroom deal with unelected employees—bureaucrats—to establish when the EPA will meet its past-due responsibilities, it is effectively deciding how EPA will use its limited resources and, thus, creating policy priorities for the Agency.

If the EPA needs assistance in prioritizing its many regulatory responsibilities, I recommend they consult the States who must implement these regulations and the communities that will be impacted by them.

Unlike what some claim, H.R. 1493 does nothing to hinder the rights of citizens to bring suit against their government. Again, another ''let's throw up something against the wall to see if it sticks.'' This does nothing. They can still bring the suits. We are just simply asking for transparency.

Instead of buying into the mantra of special interest groups that benefit from these sweetheart deals, let's look at what it actually does. As I described before in basic terms, it allows fairness; it allows transparency; and it allows those with constitutional standing to be part of a suit so that they can have input into something that will affect them. I believe everyone can agree to that.

If you are being affected, you ought to—and especially when it comes to the United States Government—we ought to be able to tell what this bill and what these rules and regulations do to us.

This is good governance. Why should we let just a certain area and a certain group—Mr. Speaker, you know of this as well. There are areas in which they get into disagreements and only their views are put forward. Sue and settle works to eliminate that.

And then, also, the bill actually requires agencies to publish notice of a proposed decree or settlement in the Federal Register and take and respond to public comments at least 60 days prior to filing the decree or the settlement. Again, it is simply improving public participation.

This is what we are about here. This is what this bill does. This bill takes a measured and reasonable approach to the sue-and-settle problem. It ensures that settlements are conducted out in the open and impacted stakeholders can have a seat at the table.

That is good governance. That is putting transparency out there. That is doing the things that we are supposed to do here.

I also have to respond to my friend from Colorado. We have great debates down here. I enjoy listening to your perspective and coming down, Mr. Speaker, and having this kind of conversation; but I was amazed because I believe, today, the American people—there are many times I have very frustrated people in the Ninth District of Georgia who say: Both your Houses, Republican, Democrats, you are the same. I am tired of it all.

Well, today is one of those days, in this discussion right here, that you can honestly say: Here is the difference in governing philosophy. And it came out just a minute ago.

I am here with a bill and other parts of this bill today that are actually looking for transparency, openness, and willing to get regulations that are effective in a limited form of government which our Founders thought of, so that businesses can still be businesses, employees can still have jobs, moms and dads can still have paychecks and take care of the kids at home and take care of their families.

□ 1315

What I heard just a few minutes ago was the concern about the burden on the Federal Government. We are more concerned that this may cause extra work. Frankly, from my perspective, I believe this legislation can help because we can trim the size of the Federal Government and give roles and responsibilities where they need to be with States and others, and when we do so, that gives us the proper respect.

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

Mr. WOODALL. I yield the gentleman an additional 2 minutes.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I think what we see here is a concern for the Federal Government. Our government employees are great folks—they do good work—but I am more concerned with the American business owner. More importantly, I am concerned with the workers who will lose their jobs, have lost their jobs, or who have had to change jobs.

This is the difference right now, Mr. Speaker. If you want to see governance philosophy that is different, I am concerned that government should do what it is supposed to do and that the burden they are putting on themselves should be removed. My concern is the business owner and the worker. My concern is Mr. Puckett. My concern even more is for the 50 folks who don't have jobs because the government, through regulatory backroom deals, has cut out their livelihoods.

Who do they see for that, Mr. Speaker? Who do they go and complain to? What government agency takes their phone calls when their government has, in essence, helped put them out of jobs?

No one on this side wants anything except an economy that is flourishing and people who are working and jobs that are secure. It is about the everyday man and woman who gets up and goes to work, but their business owners are having to tell them ''not today.'' We are being inundated with rules and regulations. I will stand with the American worker every day. I will acknowledge the role of our government in its limited form, but don't ever mistake there is a separate philosophy here, one that encourages Big Government and one that says, ''I am for the workers who get up every morning and go to work to take care of their families.''

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, before further yielding, I want to address some of the comments, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, this bill creates a backdoor increase in the Federal bureaucracy. When you are talking about increasing reporting requirements by six times and adding 60 additional procedural and analytical requirements to the rulemaking process, you know that this bill must contemplate increasing the size of the Federal bureaucracy to deal with these increased requirements.

As an entrepreneur who started a number of small businesses, I know the importance of having certainty and predictability in the regulatory process. The additional bureaucracy instituted by this ALERRT Act will simply not help businesses thrive and grow. This legislation would create headaches for businesses at a time when many small businesses are already struggling to recover from the recession.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up H.R. 1010, which is legislation to raise the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour, in order to restore fairness for men and women across our country.

To discuss our proposal, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of New York. I thank the gentleman from Colorado for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition on the motion to move the previous question so that this body may consider H.R. 1010, the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2013.

This crucial piece of legislation will positively impact the lives of nearly 30 million American workers and their families by gradually raising the Federal minimum wage from its current

$7.25 an hour to $10.10 an hour by 2016. Beyond 2016, the bill ties the Federal minimum wage to annual inflation, ensuring that hardworking men and women will never again see their wages stagnate due to congressional obstruction or inaction.

Let's first discuss who benefits from this legislation. I am sure that many watching at home and some in this very room may have a skewed perception of the contemporary minimum wage worker. I will try my best to clear up a few of these fallacies so that this debate can be framed by fact and not by stereotype.

The average age of the minimum wage worker is 35 years old: 54 percent of them are full-time workers, and 55 percent of them are women. The average affected worker earns half of his or her family's total income, and more than one-fourth of the minimum wage workers have children. Of the Nation's, roughly, 75 million children, nearly one-fifth of them have at least one parent who would receive a raise if the minimum wage were increased to $10.10 an hour. An employee working 40 hours per week for the entire 52-week calendar—no time off—at the Federal minimum wage will earn just $15,080 in 2014.

Now, who can live on $15,000 a year?

I just heard the gentleman from Georgia speak passionately about his concern for the American worker. I would ask that gentleman and others who are concerned about the American worker: Are you concerned about all of the American workers, or are you just concerned with those who earn at higher brackets than $15,080 a year? A worker who works full time and is still below the Federal poverty level will qualify for Medicaid, for CHIP, for SNAP, and for other public assistance programs that will cost taxpayers approximately $7 billion this year alone.

Let's raise the minimum wage, and let's lift people out of poverty without spending a dime of additional Federal money. Let's save on those programs that the Federal Government has put in place to help those maintain a standard of living who need a helping hand.

A recent poll conducted by Quinnipiac University found that 71 percent of American workers support raising the minimum wage. That same poll found that Democrats, Republicans and Independents are all in agreement that raising the minimum wage is the right thing to do.

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

Mr. POLIS. I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. I refer back to the words of Speaker BOEHNER in his first speech to this Chamber upon being sworn in as Speaker on January 5, 2011.

He said:

> This is the people's House. This is their Congress—it is not about us; it is about them—and what they want is a government that is honest, accountable, and responsive to their needs.

Seventy-one percent of the American people are asking us to do this. If the Speaker's words mean more than just words on a page, I would urge him to bring this bill to the floor so that we can respond to the 71 percent of the American people who think that raising the minimum wage is good economic policy and that it is good personnel policy.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleague from Colorado if he has any speakers remaining.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, we do. We have at least one speaker who is here and ready to go.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES).

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, the people whom I represent at home in Brooklyn and in Queens have been hit hard by the devastation of Superstorm Sandy, and many of these working families are still struggling to recover from this vicious storm. Homes were destroyed. Businesses were ruined. Lives have been turned upside down.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, we need to deal with the issue that has been brought before the people who have suffered from this storm and who now face significant flood insurance rate increases as a result of the Biggert-Waters law passed in 2012. The people who were victimized by Superstorm Sandy are now facing the prospect of significant flood insurance premium rate increases that are heading directly at them like an out-of-control freight train, and this House should be stepping in to stop that freight train dead in its tracks. That is why I support the reform of the Biggert-Waters law. We should suspend the flood insurance increases that are heading towards these Superstorm Sandy victims. We should allow for FEMA to conduct an affordability study. We should give Congress the opportunity to get this issue correct.

The failure of this House to act on flood insurance reform is yet another example of the delay and the dysfunction in dealing with the real issues that confront the American people, and our inability to move forward as previously planned is just yet another time when a manmade disaster from this House is being imposed on the American people.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes to say, if you care about any of these issues that have been brought up today—and these are not issues that are involved in the rule, and these are not issues that are coming to the floor today—then you care about whether or not the American people are able to make their voices heard, because I am absolutely certain, as I have learned in my 3 years of having a voting card, Mr. Speaker, that the American voters still run this show. Now, the voters have a tough time having their voices heard, but if they can have their voices heard, they can make a difference.

We are talking about issues that we wish we could change, Mr. Speaker. Today on the floor, we have an issue that we can change. The administration is proposing regulations that will silence voices on these very issues that my colleagues are raising.

Let me read from Cathy Duvall, the Sierra Club's director of public advocacy and partnerships, who says this about the proposed regulations from the Obama administration's Treasury Department:

> The proposal harms efforts that have nothing to do with politics—from our ability to communicate with our members about clean air and water to our efforts to educate the public about toxic pollution.

Mr. Speaker, if you believe in this process as I do, if you believe in this Nation as I do, then you believe that it is paramount that the people's voices are able to be heard. That is the issue here today. If you believe that the priorities of this House should be changed, if you believe the priorities of this Nation should be changed, if you believe anything in this Nation should be changed, you must believe that we should preserve the power of the individual's voice.

That is why this rule moratorium is here today, Mr. Speaker. That is why the investigations must go on. That is why we must reject the administration's rush to judgment here and ensure that our priority continues to be that of the board of directors of this country—the American voters.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule because it needs an amendment. I rise today in order to ask, when the motion on the previous question to end the debate is brought up, that we vote ''no'' so that at that point an amendment can be introduced.

If that possibility is available, I would like to bring up the provisions of H.R. 1010, which will provide a long overdue increase in the minimum wage. The bills that we are considering today are just distractions from the issues that are most important. We need to be addressing the problems that people are having.

Mr. Speaker, today's families are struggling to pay for basic needs, such as housing, health care, groceries, transportation. Someone working full time at a minimum wage job today only earns about $14,000 a year. At that Federal minimum wage today of $7.25, a parent working full time, year round, doesn't earn enough to get above the poverty level. When I say a ''parent,''

that is because studies have been done and have shown that the average minimum wage worker is 35 years old;

Raising the minimum wage not only increases workers' income and reduces turnover, it stimulates the economy. That is because people earning the minimum wage are spending every dime that they get, thus helping the economy. We have heard fears about possible job losses, but the effect of an increased minimum wage on jobs has been studied for decades, and these studies have proven that no job loss can be expected with a modest increase in the minimum wage.

We have a clear choice. We can choose to require a fair, living wage so that people can afford food and housing for their families, or we as taxpayers can be left picking up the tab through increased public assistance when they cannot pay their bills, and we can be left with a stagnant economy that is not as improved as it would be with an increased minimum wage.

So I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' when the previous question is moved. I also encourage them to support legislation to increase the minimum wage so that we can improve the quality of life for millions of Americans and improve the economy in the process.

□ 1330

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

I say to my friend from Virginia I think he is absolutely speaking from the heart when it comes to sharing the voice of his constituents in Virginia. My constituents take a slightly different view. They look to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office that said, yes, you can raise the minimum wage. You called it a modest raise. I think they called it a more than 40 percent increase in the minimum wage. But you can raise the minimum wage, as some are proposing, and that is going to lift 900,000 families above the poverty line and that is going to destroy 500,000 jobs.

I don't fault my colleagues at all for being concerned about those 900,000 individuals that are going to be lifted above the poverty line. I think we all want folks lifted above the poverty line. I don't want folks working a lifetime for minimum wage.

I want people working their way up the ladder. It is a ladder of opportunity that we ought to be building in this House. But to dismiss those 500,000 individuals that the Congressional Budget Office said will lose their jobs altogether are not partisan fights we have, Mr. Speaker. These are heartfelt discussions that we have about how best to serve the American people to whom we have sworn an oath to the Constitution that rules this land.

These are very difficult issues, but they are made better each and every time, I am certain, Mr. Speaker, if we preserve the power of the American people to have their voice heard in this debate. That is what is so important about this rule and why we must pass this rule today—to bring to the floor the Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs by the IRS Act—so that Americans' voices are not just silenced on the basis of their content, but not silenced period.

It is abhorrent that we would silence voices on the basis of their content, but I would argue, Mr. Speaker, it is abhorrent if we have an opportunity to stop voices from being silenced at all.

I believe this House will take that step today, and that is why I am proud to be here representing this rule.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. I would inquire if the gentleman from Georgia has remaining speakers.

Mr. WOODALL. I do not have any remaining speakers.

Mr. POLIS. I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, these underlying bills are destined, if they pass this Chamber, like so many bills, for the Senate's bill graveyard. Why? Because they are counterproductive. They are not what the American people want. They don't do what they say.

If we had a bill that fully implemented the recommendations to prevent any kind of discrimination based on political affiliation at the IRS, we could pass that bill. That would be an important step forward in ensuring that the terrible embarrassment and pie on your face that the IRS had, the loss of confidence that it engendered among the American people, will not happen again.

That is a good issue to work on, but that is not what we have. Instead, we have a bill that actually guts one of the very recommendations of the inspector general designed to prevent this from happening again—the exact opposite of the title of the bill.

We also have a bill before us that creates more red tape in the Federal Government and regulatory agencies. I don't think the American people are calling out for more red tape. I don't think small businesses want regulators, whose approval they need, to be so buried with six times as many reports and 60 times more analytical requirements that they won't even be able to give routine approval for various things that small businesses and entrepreneurs need. It is a counterproductive step.

So instead of addressing the issues that the American people want us to act on, from immigration reform to raising the minimum wage to extending unemployment insurance, we are debating counterproductive, single-Chamber bills that will die in the Senate and would be harmful to the country if passed.

My colleagues Mr. SCOTT and Mr. BISHOP gave eloquent testimony for the importance of raising the minimum wage. I certainly agree with my colleague from Georgia that it is not a panacea. Would that there were a silver bullet to lift people out of poverty, it would have 435 votes.

I do believe that the American people agree that when you work full time, you shouldn't need a government handout. You should be able to support your family at a very basic level. You shouldn't have to live in poverty if you are working 40, 50, 60 hours a week at a backbreaking job. Raising the minimum wage to $10.10 will help accomplish that.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up H.R. 1010, legislation to raise the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour, to restore fairness for working men and women across the country.

Someone working full-time, year-round at minimum wage earns just over $14,000. That is nearly $4,000 below the poverty line. It means that other Americans will need to subsidize that person through government support, welfare, or food stamps. Because, guess what. That $14,000 isn't enough to provide for a family, have a shot at the American Dream, or even to put a roof over your head and food on the table.

By raising the minimum wage to $10.10, we can help Americans become self-sufficient to support themselves and their families with pride and have a job that gives them pride to put food on their table and a roof over their head without the need for government support.

Increasing the minimum wage to $10.10 is simply a return to the level of the minimum wage in the 1960s. It would allow millions of additional American workers to support their families.

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Georgia said, this rule does not contain immigration reform and minimum wage, but I think it is important for the American people to know what it could contain, what it should contain with this Chamber under Republican leadership, what it would contain if this Chamber were under Democratic leadership.

The agriculture community, the faith-based community, the business community, the law enforcement community, and the fiscal responsibility community all speak with one voice on immigration reform. What we are doing now doesn't work.

There are over 10 million people here illegally. Companies violate the law every day. There is over close to 2 million deportations, each at cost to the taxpayers of $10,000 to $20,000.

It is time to replace our broken immigration system with the rule of law, reduce our deficit by hundreds of billions of dollars, create over 100,000 jobs

for Americans, finally secure our borders, and ensure that nobody works illegally in this country, potentially undermining wages for American workers. That is what we can accomplish. We recognize it would be a bipartisan solution.

H.R. 15, the Senate-passed bill, doesn't have everything that Democrats want in it; it doesn't have everything that Republicans want in it; but it would be good for our country. It would be great for our country and for the American people.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' and defeat the previous question. I urge a ''no'' vote on the rule, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, you have heard a lot of heartfelt sentiments from my friends here on the floor of the House today. Unfortunately, what you haven't heard is what we are going to do together to ensure that the heartfelt sentiments of every single citizen of these United States can be heard here in Washington.

I fear my friend from Colorado is right. I don't say that lightly. He has a lot of good ideas, and I hope to collaborate with him on even more. I fear he is right that this is a single-Chamber solution. I fear that only the United States House of Representatives is concerned with protecting the voice of the people—not just people who agree with me, Mr. Speaker, but people from all stripes.

I have read from the Sierra Club earlier. Let me read from the ACLU's comments to the administration on this rule. This is what they say: ''Social welfare organizations praise or criticize candidates for public office on the issues and they should be able to do so freely, without fear of losing or being denied tax-exempt status.''

That is ''the heart of our representative democracy,'' the ACLU says.

''The proposed rule''—that is the administration's rule; that is the rule we are here today to stop—''threatens to discourage or sterilize an enormous amount of political discourse in America.''

Mr. Speaker, I have a chart here today. It lists what tax-exempt organizations are able to do. A 501(c) is that section of the Tax Code that deals with tax-exempt organizations.

You have 501(c)(3)'s that are able to do get-out-the-vote work, voter registration work, and candidate forums. 501(c)(4)'s are where the administration is regulating, and that is the source of the scandal: the targeting of American citizens based on their political beliefs. And 501(c)(5)'s are the labor unions in the country.

Mr. Speaker, what folks need to understand is that, as we sit here today, all of these groups can do get-out-the-vote work. All can do voter registration work and candidate forums. Why? Because it advances our Republic. It advances the cause of freedom and discourse in America.

But this, Mr. Speaker, is what the administration is proposing. For 501(c)(5)'s, or labor unions, it is proposing they continue doing all of that material. Also, for 501(c)(3)'s to continue doing all of that. But the 501(c)(4)'s—the very same 501(c)(4)'s that were targeted by the IRS on the basis of their political beliefs—those groups, and those groups alone, would be silenced.

Mr. Speaker, America is not advantaged by that rule. Maybe in some shortsighted way someone believes their personal political agenda is advanced by that scheme, Mr. Speaker, but we do not. We as a Nation do not. It is a shortsighted gain. That is why we put this bill on the floor today to delay these new regulations, this change of how American political discourse occurs, for 1 year—and 1 year only—while the investigation completes itself.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to read from the report that the inspector general crafted at the Treasury Department. He says, What were the words, what triggered this additional investigation that went on?

This is what they were, Mr. Speaker.

If you use the word ''Tea Party,'' you might get special scrutiny. If you use the word ''patriot'' in your name, you might get special scrutiny. If you were concerned, Mr. Speaker—and this is reading from the Treasury Department report—if you were concerned about government spending, government debt, or taxes, you could be subjected to special scrutiny. If you wanted, Mr. Speaker, to ''make America a better place to live,'' you could be subjected to special scrutiny.

The administration has gone far beyond that, Mr. Speaker. They are not just going to subject some groups to special scrutiny, as is the source of the scandal. They are silencing all groups. If you had a statement in your case file, Mr. Speaker, that criticized how this country is being run, you were subject to special scrutiny.

Mr. Speaker, that is not just our right, that is our obligation. Our obligation as citizens is to criticize the way this country is being run when we don't agree. Because, after all, Mr. Speaker, the President doesn't run this country. The Congress doesn't run this country. We the people run this country.

This rule to bring this bill is about one thing and one thing only, and that is making sure that those people to whom the Constitution invests every bit of power that the country has to offer, the American citizens have a voice with which to express their concerns and the information on which to educate that voice.

My colleague from Georgia was absolutely right, Mr. Speaker. There are so many things that happen on the floor of this House, you can't tell the difference between who is who regionally, politically, and what it is that folks believe. But this issue is one of those defining issues.

Do you believe that the board of directors of America, the United States citizen, deserves a loud voice and full information? If you do, you vote ''yes'' on this rule, you vote ''yes'' on the underlying legislation, you reject the administration's effort to silence the American people on both sides of the aisle, and you commit yourself to believing that a full and open debate is the only way in which this country will succeed.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud cosponsor of H.R. 3865, the Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs by the IRS Act, offered by my friend and Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. Camp of Michigan.

In the wake of the IRS's admission last year that it improperly targeted conservative groups, troubling information continues to come to light detailing just how high the scandal went. In response, the President briefly feigned the appropriate indignation and did some cursory bureaucratic reshuffling.

Then, rather than actually addressing this stunning abuse of First Amendment rights, the Administration decided to double down by proposing a regulation that all but codifies the targeting. The proposed IRS regulation—which would change the way that tax exempt status is determined for social welfare organizations—is a move that would significantly impact the activities and First Amendment rights of those organizations. It adds a massive paperwork burden for organizations, and broadens the IRS's power over political activity.

The IRS issued the rule despite six ongoing investigations into the discriminatory targeting and the fact that the existing guidance has been in place and functioning for more than 50 years.

In order to combat this proposed overreach by the IRS, H.R. 3685 prohibits it from finalizing this unnecessary rule—and similar rules—for one year.

Despite President Obama's claims that there was ''not even a smidgen of corruption'' at the IRS, I believe the American people still deserve real answers and a true commitment to preserving their First Amendment rights. H.R. 3865 is critical to working to regain the trust of Americans and preventing the Administration from codifying the IRS's unacceptable and discriminatory targeting.

Mr. Speaker, Americans deserve more than opaque and hurried rule changes meant to crush political discourse. At the very least, the Administration should commit to having all the facts from completed investigations before drastically changing the rules to suit its election year strategy. For that reason, I urge my colleagues to join me in fighting the IRS's continued attempts to stifle free speech by supporting H.R. 3865.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 3865.

For years, Congress demanded action on this issue. In an independent report, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) told the IRS and Treasury to remove the gray and give clear guidance regarding the tax treatment of social welfare organizations.

There were dramatic hearings, and the public demanded clear, fair rules. Members of this Congress from both sides of the aisle agreed that the IRS should implement all nine of the TIGTA recommendations.

This is just what the IRS and Treasury did. They are taking their time, and trying to do the right thing—once and for all. The IRS already received 23,000 comments on the proposed rulemaking—23 thousand, Mr. Speaker.

And today, not even eight months later, this body is trying to tear down long overdue progress and restart the clock at square one. So, you can see why I oppose bringing this bill to the Floor today. It makes no sense, no sense at all.

Mr. Speaker, Members of Congress can be constructive, supportive, and effective. Instead, this bill returns to the old tradition of no, by any means necessary.

I urge each and every one of my colleagues to oppose this unnecessary bill.

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, today the House will vote on H.R. 3865 the Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs by the IRS Act, legislation to prevent the IRS from implementing newly proposed rules to restrict the First Amendment rights of certain non-profit groups. This legislation is an important step in holding the IRS accountable for its illegal targeting of conservative organizations in the run-up to the 2012 election.

Last year it was revealed by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration that the IRS used inappropriate criteria to review organizations applying for tax-exempt status based upon their names and policy positions. Now the IRS wants to rewrite the rules to justify its inappropriate and likely criminal behavior. Congress should not let the IRS take ANY regulatory action until wrong-doers within the IRS are held accountable.

In April, top IRS official Lois Lerner revealed in a public forum that the agency had been discriminating against more than 75 groups with conservative sounding names in the run-up to November 2012. Ms. Lerner actually went so far as to plant a question in the audience about the issue in order to pre-empt the release of the Inspector General's audit.

When all this became public, Members of the Administration including the President and the Attorney General expressed their outrage and called it unacceptable. The Attorney General even went so far as to declare his intent to conduct a criminal investigation.

Furthermore, it's clear from testimony given during the various Congressional hearings over the years and correspondence with the IRS that officials there were not telling Members of Congress the truth. In March of 2012—a year before this story broke—then-IRS Commissioner Douglas Shulman assured Congress: 'there is no targeting of conservative groups.' On April 23, 2012, I joined with 62 of my House colleagues in writing the IRS Commissioner inquiring further about the possible targeting and we were assured that there was no targeting or delay in processing IRS applications submitted by conservative groups.

Ms. Lerner, a longtime federal employee and senior IRS official, has since asserted her Fifth Amendment Constitutional right by refusing to testify before Congress and tell the American people exactly what the IRS was doing and who had ordered these discriminatory actions.

To make matters worse, it was further revealed that IRS employees released confidential donor information and even private taxpayer records. Disclosing confidential taxpayer information is one of the worst things an IRS employee can do—it's a felony, punishable with a $5,000 fine and up to 5 years in prison. In fact, the Treasury Inspector General noted at least eight instances of unauthorized access to records, with at least one willful violation.

These are serious abuses but to date, not a single IRS employee has been indicted. The FBI has refused to file criminal charges. The Washington Post has reported that the investigation into this scandal is being led by Barbara Bosserman, a partisan who 'donated a combined $6,750 to President Obama's elections and the Democratic National Committee between 2004 and 2012.' Furthermore, she does not serve in the Public Integrity Section that typically oversees these matters, but rather the Civil Rights Division, historically the most partisan office at the Department of Justice.

This week I am joined by nearly fifty of my House colleagues in writing to the Attorney General demanding the appointment of an independent special prosecutor to investigate the IRS's illegal targeting of conservative groups. Only an independent investigator who is not aligned with either political party will have the credibility to get to the bottom of this matter and hold wrong-doers accountable—whoever they may be.

I have also introduced H.R. 3762 which would hold federal employees at the IRS personally accountable when they release private taxpayer information. Under this bill, individuals whose private information is released would have a personal right of action against the employee rather than simply hoping that the Department of Justice will take action.

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

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 487 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS OF COLORADO

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

SEC. 4. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1010) to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 5. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 1010.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. WOODALL. With that, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

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

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on ordering the previous question will be followed by 5-minute votes on adopting the resolution, if ordered, and suspending the rules and passing H.R. 1944.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 224, nays 192, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 65]

YEAS—224

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NAYS—192

Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Edwards
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—14

Blumenauer
Brooks (IN)
Cantor
Davis, Rodney
Duckworth
Ellison
Gosar
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
Miller, Gary
Pastor (AZ)
Posey
Rush
Tiberi

□ 1411

Ms. KUSTER and Messrs. CICILLINE and KENNEDY changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. RIGELL and BROOKS of Alabama changed their vote from ''nay'' to yea.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 65 I was meeting with a local official, Mayor Chris Koos, and missed the time to cast my vote. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yes.''

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

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

RECORDED VOTE

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

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 231, noes 185, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 66]

AYES—231

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOES—185

Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)

Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—14

Blumenauer
Cárdenas
Cooper
Ellison
Gosar
Graves (GA)
Gutiérrez
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
Miller, Gary
Pastor (AZ)
Roe (TN)
Rush
Tiberi

□ 1421

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS PROTECTION ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1944) to protect private property rights, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 353, nays 65, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 67]

YEAS—353

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cassidy
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clay
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moore
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Napolitano
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Waters
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NAYS—65

Becerra
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Crowley
Cummings
DeGette
Dingell
Edwards
Engel
Farr
Frankel (FL)
Grayson
Grijalva
Hastings (FL)
Holt
Huffman
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Keating
Kennedy
Kildee
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Maffei
Matsui
McDermott
McGovern
Meeks
Meng
Miller, George
Moran
Nadler
Neal
O'Rourke
Pelosi
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Schakowsky
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Slaughter
Swalwell (CA)
Tierney
Tsongas
Wasserman Schultz
Waxman
Welch

NOT VOTING—12

Blumenauer
Ellison
Gosar
Hudson
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
Michaud
Miller, Gary
Pastor (AZ)
Rush
Tiberi
Westmoreland

□ 1429

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, I unintentionally missed rollcall vote No. 66 and cast an incorrect vote for rollcall vote No. 67 on Wednesday, February 26, 2014. I would like to correct my error and ask that the record reflect the following: on H. Res. 487, rollcall vote No. 66, I should have voted "no;" on H.R. 1944, rollcall vote No. 67, I should have voted "aye."

□ 1430

STOP TARGETING OF POLITICAL BELIEFS BY THE IRS ACT OF 2014

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 487, I call up the bill (H.R. 3865) to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from modifying the standard for determining whether an organization is operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare for purposes of section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia). Pursuant to House Resolution 487, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, printed in the bill, is adopted. The bill, as amended, is considered read.

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

H.R. 3865

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs by the IRS Act of 2014''.

SEC. 2. APPLICABLE STANDARD FOR DETERMINATIONS OF WHETHER AN ORGANIZATION IS OPERATED EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL WELFARE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The standard and definitions as in effect on January 1, 2010, which are used to determine whether an organization is operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare for purposes of section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall apply for purposes of determining the status of organizations under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) PROHIBITION ON MODIFICATION OF STANDARD.—The Secretary of the Treasury may not issue, revise, or finalize any regulation (including the proposed regulations published at 78 Fed. Reg. 71535 (November 29, 2013)), revenue ruling, or other guidance not limited to a particular taxpayer relating to the standard and definitions specified in subsection (a).

(c) APPLICATION TO ORGANIZATIONS.—Except as provided in subsection (d), this section shall apply with respect to any organization claiming tax exempt status under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 which was created on, before, or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) SUNSET.—This section shall not apply after the one-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs by the IRS Act of 2014''.

SEC. 2. APPLICABLE STANDARD FOR DETERMINATIONS OF WHETHER AN ORGANIZATION IS OPERATED EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL WELFARE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The standard and definitions as in effect on January 1, 2010, which are used to determine whether an organization is operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare for purposes of section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall apply for purposes of determining the status of organizations under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) PROHIBITION ON MODIFICATION OF STANDARD.—The Secretary of the Treasury may not (nor may any delegate of such Secretary) issue, revise, or finalize any regulation (including the proposed regulations published at 78 Fed. Reg. 71535 (November 29, 2013)), revenue ruling, or other guidance not limited to a particular taxpayer relating to the standard and definitions specified in subsection (a).

(c) APPLICATION TO ORGANIZATIONS.—Except as provided in subsection (d), this section shall apply with respect to any organization claiming tax exempt status under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 which was created on, before, or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) SUNSET.—This section shall not apply after the one-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 3865.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3865, the Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs by the IRS Act of 2014, to stop the IRS and Treasury from restricting free speech activities of social welfare organizations that have been in place for over 50 years.

Last May, we learned that the IRS targeted conservative groups seeking tax-exempt status. For over 9 months, committee investigators have reviewed hundreds of thousands of internal IRS documents and interviewed IRS officials regarding the targeting. Our investigation is not yet over, and the Ways and Means Committee continues to wait for the IRS to turn over Lois Lerner's emails. Despite the ongoing investigations both in Congress and by the inspector general, last November Treasury rushed forward with proposed new regulations to stifle 501(c)(4) groups, upending rules that have been in place for over half a century.

Under the proposed rule, social welfare organizations would face additional, unprecedented scrutiny for engaging in the most basic nonpartisan political activity, such as organizing nonpartisan get-out-the-vote drives, registering voters, or hosting candidate forums in their neighborhood. If the Treasury Department and the IRS have their way, these sorts of activities would jeopardize the tax-exempt status of social welfare organizations.

Making matters worse, the administration is pushing the proposed rule based on a false premise. Treasury issued these rules under the premise of ''considerable confusion'' in the tax-exempt application process. They use the term considerable confusion to justify their actions. However, the committee's investigation has found no evidence that confusion caused the IRS to systematically target conservative groups. In fact, we found evidence to the contrary, that IRS workers in Cincinnati flagged Tea Party cases for Washington, D.C., because of ''media attention.'' Before Washington got involved, front-line IRS employees were already processing and approving Tea Party applications with no intrusive questionnaires or signs of confusion.

In addition to being based on a false premise, the proposed rule was drafted in secrecy and long before the administration's proclaimed need for clarity. Our investigation has discovered that Treasury and the IRS were working on these new rules behind closed doors for years—well before the targeting came to light.

While the administration claims that the proposed rule is a response to the inspector general's audit report, IRS employees told committee staff in transcribed interviews that discussions about the rule started much earlier, in the spring of 2011. Further, a June 2012 email between Treasury officials and then-IRS director of tax exempt organizations, Lois Lerner, shows that these potential regulations were being discussed off plan—meaning that the plans for the regulations were to be discussed behind closed doors. This type of behavior raises serious questions about the integrity of the rulemaking process and counsels for putting a hold on the draft rules.

The intent of the rules proposed by the Obama administration is clear: to legalize the IRS' inappropriate targeting of conservative groups. These proposed rules severely limit groups' rights to engage in public debate by labeling activities such as candidate forums, get-out-the-vote efforts, and voter registration as ''political activity'' for 501(c)(4) groups. However, 501(c)(3)'s—which are not allowed to engage in my political activity—and labor unions are free to continue to engage in these activities without limitation.

It is clear that the American people are also concerned that these proposed rules would squash their First Amendment rights. Treasury has received over 94,000 comments on the rule so far, which is the most they have ever received on any rule ever. Given the American public's significant interest in the proposed rules, it is imperative that Treasury put a hold on them until the investigations into the targeting are complete so that all the facts are known and the public has ample opportunity to be heard.

This legislation will ensure that Treasury does not rush this rule into effect this year, allows the ongoing investigations to issue findings on the targeting, helps us to stop the IRS' targeting of taxpayers based on their personal beliefs, and is a commonsense step to preserve these groups' ability to engage in public debate.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting ''yes'' to this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) control the remainder of my time.

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

There was no objection.

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

On a day when the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. CAMP, is unveiling a tax measure that requires serious bipartisanship to be successful, we are here on the floor considering a totally political bill in an attempt to resurrect an alleged scandal that never existed.

Was there incompetence at the IRS in the processing of 501(c)(4) applications?

Yes—and I was among the very first who said that those in supervision should be held accountable.

Was there corruption, political interference, White House involvement, an enemies list, as the Republicans have claimed since day one?

Absolutely not; no evidence whatsoever.

Yesterday, the IRS Commissioner confirmed that $8 million has been spent directly on those investigations as over 255 people have spent over 79,000 hours doing nothing but responding to congressional investigations. An additional $6 million to $8 million has been spent to add capacity to information technology systems to process securely the 500,000 pages of documents Congress has received.

What have they learned? That both progressive and conservative groups were inappropriately screened out by name and not activity, and that no one was involved in this outside of the IRS, and that there was no political motivation involved.

When the inspector general asked his chief investigator to look into the possibility of political motivation by the IRS, that investigator concluded:

> There was no indication that pulling these selected applications was politically motivated. The email traffic indicated there were unclear processing directions and the group wanted to make sure they had guidance on processing the applications so they pulled them. This is a very important nuance.

Indeed, it is, and it is precisely that lack of clarity that the IRS was responding to in proposing new regulations for 501(c)(4) organizations. New regulations that are designed to bring certainty in determining whether an organization's primary activities are political.

The regulations are among several steps the IG himself recommended in his audit report that the IRS undertake, each of which the Republicans repeatedly called for action on.

In a June 3, 2013, hearing before the House Appropriations Committee, Chairman CRENSHAW told Acting IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel:

> We're going to insist that the IRS implement all nine of the recommendations in the inspector general's report.

A Republican member of the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. ROSKAM, has a bill to implement all of the inspector general's recommendations, including implementing new 501(c)(4) regulations.

Why is this important? Because applications for 501(c)(4) status have nearly doubled between 2010 and 2012—to 3,357, and spending has skyrocketed.

In 2006, $1 million was spent by (c)(4) organizations. In 2010, $92 million was spent. In 2012, $256 million has been spent by (c)(4) organizations.

The (c)(4) designation presently allows organizations to keep their donors secret, hidden as to which individuals contributed, and that is exactly the secrecy that the Republicans are trying to preserve.

Why? Because the three largest spenders, representing fully 51 percent of the total, are a Who's Who list of Republican political operatives.

□ 1445

It is indicated here: Crossroads GPS, Karl Rove, $71 million; Americans for Prosperity, the Koch brothers, $36 million; and the American Future Fund, the Koch brothers again, $25 million. That is $132 million of the skyrocketing $256 million that the Federal Election Commission had reported to it, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

If you live in a targeted State and you turn on your television, you have probably seen these groups at work distorting the Affordable Care Act.

That is why we are here today, purely and simply, not because Republicans want to stand up for the rights of social welfare organizations—and they often talk about small ones—but to preserve the secrecy around the Republicans' big campaign efforts.

These are draft regulations that the Republicans themselves called for. Over 76,000 comments—and I think now more—have been received, and the comment period does not close until Friday.

These regulations aren't likely to come out this year anyway with all these comments, so why this bill? Why this bill? It is very, very clear, and it is very simple. There is a problem with 501(c)(4)'s. The three organizations that I mentioned that are involved as political operatives, in one form or another, these are people who have donors nobody knows. This is secret money.

Why are we standing here and saying to the IRS: Don't look at 502(c)(4)'s; don't look at the possible massive abuse; don't look at what has happened in the last few years where political operatives, under the guise of 501(c)(4), have moved from $1 million in many cases to $256 million reported to the FEC?

Our constituents, Democrats and Republicans, are offering their comments. Some of them I agree with and they deserve to be read, but not to be shredded at the hands of a November campaign strategy by the Republican Party of this country and by the Republican Conference of this House.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) control the balance of the time.

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

There was no objection.

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

I want to take a moment just to respond to some of the comments that my friend on the other side made.

First of all, there are three ongoing investigations that are incomplete. There is the congressional investigation being conducted by multiple committees, incomplete; there is the inspector general investigation, still incomplete and ongoing; and there is a third, a criminal investigation.

I ask, first off, the question: Why start regulating now when we don't have all the information? Let's let all this go to conclusion and then institute the proper reforms.

I want to point out that in its report on targeting, the inspector general recommended the Treasury and the IRS provide guidance on how to measure political activity—not what constitutes political activity, how to measure it.

The proposed rule has been in development since 2011. Internal IRS emails between Treasury and IRS show that they were developing the rule off plan—off plan. That means beyond the sunshine of disclosure and out in the open—off plan. What do they have to hide? Why are they doing this? And this is actually before all the allegations came out.

Then, when asked at the markup of H.R. 3865—this legislation—whether the proposed rule answers the inspector general's recommendation for the IRS and Treasury to provide guidance on measuring political activity, Tom Barthold, the chief of staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation, nonpartisan, said: The proposed rule does not address the measurement issue.

All we are seeking to do is to delay the implementation of this rule until we complete the investigation and we have all the facts, and then we can talk about what necessary reforms should be implemented.

But I think it is a bit premature to start putting forth regulations that will infringe on First Amendment rights. It is a very blunt instrument and a very dangerous path to embark upon at this point in time.

With that, I am happy to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY), my friend, a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the piece of legislation we are talking about.

I think it is rather chilling that 223 years ago, our First Amendment rights were enshrined in our Bill of Rights. We have all taken the same oath. We said, to the best of our ability, we preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. I am hearing now dollar signs or dollar numbers being there saying, well, we can't afford to spend this kind of money.

Never before in America were we ever worried about the cost of money when

it comes to defending our freedoms and liberties under our Constitution and our Bill of Rights. It has no dollar attached to it. It is basically fundamentally American.

When we talk about American citizens not being able to talk that way—the First Amendment, by the way, protects us and enshrines us, 45 words in the First Amendment that protect and enshrine our rights.

This is not a political issue. This is not about an ''R'' or a ''D.'' This is about a ''we.'' This is about the entire country. If we are going to sit here and say: Oh, no, this just has to do with an election—an election—really, an election?—we cannot allow the voice of the people not to be heard in our town squares. When they need to speak out, they need to know that they can speak out without being threatened or without being worried about what is going to happen to them.

This is so basically who we are as Americans. It has nothing to do with Republicans and Democrats, Independents and Libertarians. It has to do with who we are. If we cannot see that and we turn this into a political agenda and talking points, then, my gosh, how far we have fallen from what the Founders intended at the very beginning.

We cannot have this debate in seriousness and say we are spending too much money to protect the rights of our American citizens. That is absolutely foolish.

I am very, very strong on the protection of what we are talking about. H.R. 3865 reconfirms what the American people need to know. They can speak out on anything, anytime, anywhere they want, without having to be worried about anybody interfering with it, especially a government.

This is a government that serves the people; this is not a people that serve our government. And to think that we have to have a piece of legislation in addition to our First Amendment rights on the floor is absolutely so different than what we think.

Again, the voice of the American people has got to be heard. I don't care—conservative, liberal, I don't care where you are coming from. You have the right to speak out anytime you want.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining on both sides, for housekeeping purposes?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 22 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Louisiana has 21½ minutes remaining.

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, we have all heard the outrage and the innuendos from my Republican colleagues and their chief mouthpiece, FOX News. The facts should show this is phony, a phony investigation against President Obama launched for political purposes: facts like the person who began these investigations was a self-described conservative Republican; facts like more than 500,000 pages of documents have been provided to Congress, and there is no smoking gun; facts like, of the five dozen interviews of IRS employees at 15 congressional hearings, that nothing was found.

These are the facts, but I realize some will choose to not believe the facts versus fiction. Let me provide some basic commonsense information.

The inspector general who oversees the IRS, someone who was appointed by then-President George W. Bush—someone who has admitted that he covered up political targeting of progressive groups in his report to Congress; someone who had a number of private meetings with the Republican chair of the Oversight Committee, DARRELL ISSA, and then came out to issue public statements as facts—this someone, J. Russell George, has testified under oath that he notified Congressman DARRELL ISSA of his investigation into the IRS in the summer of 2012.

Do you know what else was happening in the summer of 2012? A very close Presidential election.

Does anyone honestly think, if there was an actual scandal or an actual targeting of just Tea Party groups by the administration in the months and the weeks leading up to the 2012 elections when Barack Obama was going to the ballot, that Congressman DARRELL ISSA wouldn't blow the whistle and expose it when he was notified that an investigation was ongoing and occurring?

It just doesn't pass the laugh test. This is another phony scam in the realm of phony scams my Republican colleagues make up to go after Democratic Presidents.

But what is also interesting is that, just as the Republicans continue their crusade to discredit the IRS, the Republicans have rallied around their version of tax reform—I have a copy of the summation right here; this is just the summation—a radical version that will empower—empower—the IRS. This legislation that they are offering today will empower the IRS and raise taxes on families while cutting them for multinational corporations.

For the past several years, the public has been told that the Republicans would try to rip the Tax Code out from its roots and that it would be rewritten by Democrats and Republicans together.

Well, guess what. Democrats were never once invited to help draft, draft this bill. Speaker BOEHNER even dismissed Democratic criticism of the process by saying, ''Blah, blah, blah.''

So what is the result? A radical Republican tax plan that will, if enacted, end the tax break for families to deduct their State and local income taxes that they already paid in taxes to the States and local governments. It will slash the mortgage interest deduction for homeowners. It will create a new tax on Social Security. It will tax workers for the health care offered by their employer. It will increase taxes on hundreds of thousands of our military families. It will institute the chained CPI to raise taxes, and it is also known to reduce veterans' and Social Security benefit checks.

This really does beg the question: Whose side are our Republican colleagues on? They try to look populist by creating false and fake scandals and bashing the IRS, but in reality, their words and actions mask their bill to empower the IRS and radically redesign the Tax Code, making families pay more so international corporations can pay less.

That is the real scandal here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I welcome the opportunity to debate tax reform, but it is obvious to me that the gentleman hasn't read the bill yet, and I think you should read the bill before you debate tax reform. That will come on another day.

But I want to get back to why we are here today. I want to point out that this is a bipartisan IRS investigation by Congress. I want to also point out, in that regard, that the Ways and Means Committee document requests are bipartisan joint requests from Chairman CAMP and Ranking Member LEVIN. Ranking Member LEVIN also admits that the investigation is incomplete.

So we have to get down to the bottom of this and let this investigation be done. The American people deserve to know what the truth is before we start issuing new law or having new regulations issued by the executive branch which will have the chilling effect of infringing on First Amendment rights.

One of the previous speakers on the other side mentioned the IRS spending money and manpower on this investigation. Yes, the IRS also spent $40 million on conferences over the period of the targeting.

□ 1500

One conference alone cost $4.1 million—waste. In 2012, the IRS spent $21.6 million on union activity—taxpayer dollars on union activity. Explain that to the taxpayer. The IRS also spends about $5 million annually on its full-service production studio in New Carrollton, Maryland.

The fact of the matter is that the American people are tired of the waste. They are tired, and they are also very concerned about the infringement on their First Amendment rights.

With that, I am very pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RENACCI).

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3865, the Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs by the IRS Act.

Last year, northeast Ohioans and Americans across the country were

deeply troubled to learn the IRS abused its power by targeting conservative groups. Many in Ohio's 16th District, my district, contacted my office to express grave concerns about the lack of accountability and transparency within the IRS. Not only did the Federal agency violate the public trust, but it infringed on our First Amendment rights.

The Ways and Means Committee began investigating allegations of potential political discrimination within the IRS nearly 3 years ago. What was discovered is disturbing. The committee found evidence that conservative groups were targeted to an extent far beyond what was initially reported. As part of its ongoing investigation, the committee requested and reviewed hundreds of thousands of internal IRS documents, and it interviewed dozens of its employees.

Recently, the IRS published draft rules that would essentially authorize the continued targeting of political groups. These rules represent a disregard for liberties outlined in our Constitution, and they demonstrate the dangers of a growing Federal Government. The IRS' actions bring to light just how rampant abuse is within this administration. The American people will not tolerate it, and neither will Congress.

This legislation is commonsense. It would require the IRS to halt this rulemaking process until the committee completes its investigation. It is critical that the committee gathers all the facts before the IRS implements these rules, which were created behind closed doors. That is not political. That is just common sense. There should be no controversy at all.

This legislation builds upon a bill I introduced last year which would specifically spell out that any IRS employee, regardless of political affiliation, who targeted a taxpayer for political purposes could be immediately relieved of his duties. It passed the House with broad bipartisan support.

This is not a partisan issue. Whether you are a Republican, a Democrat or an Independent, above all, we are Americans. Targeting anyone based on any affiliation goes against the very principles this country was founded upon. Americans of all political beliefs deserve to know that they will not be targeted by their government for political purposes.

I thank Chairman CAMP for his hard work on this important legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind the gentleman from Ohio that this tax bill, know as the Tax Reform Act of 2014, which was made public today, will be a sucker punch to the guts of families who live in higher tax States, like Illinois, Wisconsin, Nebraska, New York, and Ohio. All of these States have representation from the Republican Party on the Ways and Means Committee. They helped to draft this legislation. The question is: Whose side are they on?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington State (Mr. MCDERMOTT).

(Mr. MCDERMOTT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, here we are back in the theater of the absurd. The Republicans are wasting valuable time and resources on political theater, crafted to make the producers at FOX television happy while they should be moving forward with the country's business.

There have been six separate investigations. Not a single shred of evidence has been found demonstrating political motivation or White House involvement in the IRS grouping of the tea party applications by name. Now, one of my colleagues is a physician. He is from Louisiana. He has operated many times. You do not begin surgery until you know what is going on with the patient. We have six investigations which found no reason to operate, no reason to pass this legislation. Yet here it is. Ironically, the real trickery of this is this bill. It is designed to protect Karl Rove's Crossroads GPS and the Koch Brothers of Houston from exposing where the money that they put into the political process is being used.

Everyone knows what a 501(c)(4) is about. You give the money to the organizations. They don't have to report your name to anyone, and then the organizations can use it any way they want. Now, if an organization goes to the IRS and says, ''we want a 501(c)(4),'' the IRS should ask a few questions, don't you think, if they are going to give an exemption from the American people, from those people paying the taxes who put it in there? Karl Rove and all of his cohorts ought to pay taxes if they are going to use it for the political process, and it is the IRS' job to find that out. It is the same with liberal groups. Any group that comes in has to explain what it is going to do with the money.

We have had six investigations, but now we have a bill without any conclusion from any committee or any investigation that there is a problem. The floor of the House should not be the stage for the Republicans to work out their November election strategy and funding. If Republicans really want to work on behalf of the American people, they should get serious and roll up their sleeves. The production tax credit ought to pass out of here as a unanimous consent. There are a thousand things that ought to be happening here today instead of this silly bill, which will have no effect. It is not going through the Senate. The President isn't going to sign it. It is simply political theater to give the directors at FOX TV things to put on television.

If you intend to do something real, you can, but this bill is not real. It is simply to reignite the baseless allegations against the White House.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR), the majority leader of the House.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs by the IRS Act.

Political speech was considered by our Founders to be deserving of the utmost protection. The First Amendment they wrote is no less crucial to our democracy today than it was in those initial days. Since those days, Americans have come up with all sorts of ways to exercise their fundamental free speech rights, including assembling together in organizations to express their thoughts about what their government is doing.

These groups, including those known as 501(c)(4) organizations, are an important part of our democracy. Many of these groups are formed to specifically engage and educate our citizenry through candidate forums, debates, grassroots lobbying, voter registration, and other activities to promote the common good so America has an informed public.

For over 50 years, these organizations have been eligible to apply for tax-exempt status, but now, Mr. Speaker, that status is under threat from new regulations being proposed by the IRS. The goal here is clear. These regulations were reverse engineered in order to directly silence political opponents of this administration's.

That is the worst kind of government abuse. Silencing your critics is commonplace in authoritarian countries, not in the United States of America. Frankly, it is a cowardly act to silence people via backroom regulations. Those who disagree with any administration's policies, whether conservative or liberal, still deserve the constitutional protections afforded to them. This kind of government abuse must stop, and it must stop now.

Today, we have an opportunity to act in a bipartisan manner because this bill prevents these costly regulations from taking effect on groups that promote issues both sides of the aisle deeply care about. Nearly 70,000 comments have been submitted about this proposed regulation from both sides or all sides of the ideological spectrum. The majority of those submissions are negative.

Recently, the American Civil Liberties Union submitted a 26-page comment to IRS Commissioner John Koskinen, stating:

> Social welfare organizations praise or criticize candidates for public office on the issues, and they should be able to do so freely, without fear of losing or being denied tax-exempt status, even if doing so could influence a citizen's vote.

The ACLU continued, stating that the advocacy work done by these groups is ''the heart of our representative democracy.''

The ACLU and so many others who have also spoken out in opposition to this proposed regulation are absolutely

right. Political speech represents the best part of America, the ability for Americans to be able to reach out to their elected representatives and let them know when they agree or disagree with them.

No matter which side of the aisle we are on, Mr. Speaker, we must protect that fundamental freedom. So let us stand together today and pass this bill so that Americans, whether individually or collectively, can continue to strengthen our political process without fear of retribution.

I would like to thank Chairman CAMP as well as subcommittee Chairman BOUSTANY on the Ways and Means Committee and all of those across our country who have spoken out on this issue, and I ask my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. CROWLEY. The only threat, Mr. Speaker, to the freedoms of Americans is not the bill we are discussing on the floor today but the bill that was announced this afternoon, the Tax Reform Act of 2014—the freedom of Americans to purchase their first homes, the freedom of Americans not to have attacks placed on their health care. Those are the types of freedoms that are being threatened today.

With that, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA), the chair of the Democratic Caucus of the House of Representatives.

Mr. BECERRA. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I think the best way to describe this bill is to call it the ''prevent secret money from disclosure act,'' because that is what we are really talking about.

What matters today to most Americans? If you talk to folks back home or on the street, they will tell you: Are you working on making sure the private sector is creating jobs? Does this bill help create jobs? No. They will say: Then at least make sure, if I am paying taxes, you are using them the right way. Does this bill help taxpayers save money? No.

So why are we doing this?

You are hearing folks talk about the Constitution. The Constitution doesn't guarantee campaign donors get special tax treatment or protections. The First Amendment protects speech, not secret contributions.

So what is the problem?

The problem is that the IRS has finally figured out that a whole bunch of folks are funneling a lot of dark, secret money into organizations that under the Tax Code are permitted and that they are using this to influence our American campaigns.

We have no idea who is making these contributions of millions of dollars—secret dollars—to influence campaigns here in America. Is it foreign governments giving these millions of dollars? We don't know. Is it money launderers trying to influence elections? We don't know. We have no idea who is giving this money because, under the Tax Code under which these organizations are filing, they have no obligation to disclose who has given them one red cent.

That Tax Code section, 501(c)(4), is very similar to the 501(c)(3), the charitable organization we are very familiar with. 501(c)(4)s are classified as ''social welfare organizations.'' Guess what? Do you know how much those social welfare organizations spent doing campaign and political work in our elections? How much do you think the political campaigns spent, the Republican National Committee and the Democratic National Committee combined? $255 billion in the 2012 election. That is what the two political parties spent together. How much did social welfare organizations spend on campaign and political activity? More than the two political parties combined—$256 billion. Can you tell me where one penny came from? No, you can't, because it is all secret money.

What are the proponents of this bill trying to do? They are trying to hide the names of those who gave the money. Why? We don't know.

□ 1515

But it sure would be nice to know who is getting all this money, when just 8 years ago, those same social welfare organizations gave a total of $1 million for political purposes. It was $256 billion in 2012. Eight years ago, it was $1 million.

Something is going on in America. Someone is trying to buy elections. And we can't figure it out because those donors don't have to be disclosed. It is time to make sure that those donations are disclosed. That is all the IRS is trying to do.

It is cloaked as something different by proponents of this bill. Let's not hide the money. It is time to disclose those contractors.

Vote down this bill.

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

There is no denying that we may need reforms in this. There has been a lot of debate about this. The gentleman from California and I have had those kinds of conversations. But I would point out that the investigations are not complete, and they need to be complete.

The ranking member mentioned earlier in his comments money and donors as reasons for this rule, but neither the word ''donor,'' ''money,'' or ''contributions'' appears in the regulation.

It has been cited by the former Commissioner of the IRS that there was confusion. A confusion narrative emerged, but it was on the basis of no internal investigation at the IRS. There has been no interview of the employees, no facts established. We are still doing this investigation, from our standpoint, as is the inspector general.

We know from our investigation so far, having interviews with the Cincinnati employees, that they were not confused by the rules. They were processing the applications until interference came down from Washington, from higher up in the Exempt Organizations Division of the IRS. Employees then flagged Tea Party applications and others because of what they said were ''media interest,'' not confusion. Within 24 hours of the flagging for media interest, these Washington, D.C., officials at the IRS requested Tea Party applications.

Unlike the IRS, the Committee on Ways and Means has been investigating this matter, and we have not completed this investigation. But committee investigators have interviewed nearly three dozen IRS officials, from frontline screeners to the former commissioner. We have reviewed hundreds of thousands of documents. It is nearing completion, but this investigation is being held up.

A central figure in this investigation is Lois Lerner. We have not gotten the information that we have requested from Lois Lerner. We have put the newly confirmed Commissioner on notice that if he wants to move forward with reforms and do all the things he wants to do during his tenure at IRS, we have got to get this investigation done. We have to get the facts on the table, and this IRS has to come clean before the American people.

This agency occupies a central part of every single American's life. It affects every one of us. This agency has the power to destroy each and every one of us. And that is why the trust and the integrity needs to be restored.

All this rule does is shuts down speech. It does nothing that these gentlemen, our friends on the other side of the aisle, have mentioned in terms of reforms and cleaning up the election system and all that. No, it does none of that. It just simply stifles speech. I don't think that is appropriate.

We owe it to the American people and we owe it to the integrity of this institution to complete this investigation, put the facts on the table, and follow these facts wherever they may lead. This is not political. This is simply looking at the facts.

Rather than a recently drafted cure for confusion, this proposed rule, like I said, simply focuses to silence some of these small groups, silence conservatives.

As early as 2011, long before the inspector general audit, IRS officials in Washington, D.C., began talking about the proposed rule. We have email from Treasury to IRS, off plan—off plan. Now we are trying to get more of those emails because we want to know what they mean by ''off plan.'' What was really discussed and why was all this talked about before the allegations even came forward from these various groups?

This is not right. We need to get to the bottom of it. And rather than curing confusion, the proposed rule would simply silence these social welfare organizations and have a disproportionate effect on some of these right-

leaning conservative groups that were subject, in the first place, to the targeting.

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

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

My good friend from Louisiana would continue to have you believe that only right-wing and conservative groups were being investigated when in fact he knows and we know that it went well beyond that. There were progressive groups who were also subject to this investigation.

Mr. Speaker, let me also point out to my friend from Louisiana, he mentioned that maybe members of the Democratic Caucus had not yet perused the Republican Tax Reform Act of 2014. I would just point out for the record that I am assuming he read the proposed regulations. He mentioned that money was not mentioned, when in fact on the first page, in the fourth standout:

> Contributions of money or anything of value to, or solicitation of contributions on behalf of, a candidate, political organization, or any other section 501(c) organization engaged in candidate-related political activity.

So money is mentioned on the first page, just to set the record straight, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Republican radical tax plan will, for the first time, tax workers for their health insurance benefits that they are provided through their job and tax previously untaxed Social Security income. The question, again, is: Whose side are they on?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. BILL PASCRELL, my friend.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I sincerely have the greatest respect for the good doctor. I think he is a reasonable man and a good person, but when you are explaining, you are losing.

I rise in strong opposition to this legislation.

After we learned last year about the inexcusable way the IRS evaluated applications for tax-exempt status—because that is what is at the heart of this issue—I was hopeful that we could have a bipartisan response. After all, it was not only conservative groups, as you have heard, that had their applications singled out solely because of words like ''Tea Party.'' No one is denying that. Progressive groups were inappropriately filtered as well. My Democratic colleagues and I were equally outraged by this behavior. We put it on the record. But those hopes faded quickly when it became apparent that my colleagues on the other side weren't actually interested in investigating this wrongdoing and fixing the problems.

This bill is just the latest example of how, instead, they are only concerned with scoring cheap political points. Where I am from in Paterson, New Jersey, we would call this Pyrrhic sophistry. That is what we would call it. Empty arguments, deceitful. That is what that means.

The examples the Republican leader pointed out could be under section 527. But if you are under 527, you need to disclose where the money came from. So you choose not to be under section 527 of the Tax Code. You would rather be in another section. And what is that other section? You are not tax liable and you don't have to disclose who gave you the money.

What is this? Russia? China?

You heard the numbers. We are talking about billions of dollars. The difference? They would have to disclose where the money came from.

No evidence of any retribution has been found yet within either political party. So this is really a witch hunt. For the American people, unfortunately, it is the integrity of our electoral process here that is on trial.

The fact is that the Supreme Court's rulings have legalized a torrent of hundreds of millions of dollars in corporate spending that has infected our elections.

We ask again today, join us in correcting that decision by the Supreme Court. It has infected our legal process.

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

Mr. CROWLEY. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. PASCRELL. One of the most egregious newly legal big spenders are organizations operating as 501(c)(4) tax-exempt groups. They could easily be under section 527. We created a special section of the Tax Code precisely for tax-exempt political groups. No, they don't want to go under those groups, because if they go under those groups, they have got to tell us who is contributing to them.

This is absolutely chicanery. These regulations aren't some wild-eyed, down-the-rabbit-hole conspiracy theory to prosecute the President's political enemies.

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

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

Mr. PASCRELL. They are simply about preserving congressional intent and providing clear rules of the road, both for tax-exempt groups and the IRS, about what exactly is political activity so they know what is permissible under the law.

This isn't about free speech. This isn't about being a Tea Party or a Progressive. Spend all the money you want to say whatever you want about any election. Just don't expect to be able to do so while calling yourself a tax-exempt social welfare group.

We are paying more taxes because these people are getting away with it. That is the bottom line. And you, I know, Doctor, are totally against that, because you would not really, in the final analysis, prefer that some groups are better than others—those particularly who don't tell us who donated to the group.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, how much time is left on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 4½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Louisiana has 11½ minutes remaining.

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

In the Nation Magazine, Nan Aron of the liberal judicial lobby, the Alliance for Justice, writes:

> 501(c)(4)'s are made up of over 86,000 mostly small organizations nationwide that are active participants in civic life.

They were not invented in the last election cycle. They have been around for generations. Their purpose isn't to hide donors. It is to advance policies.

Ms. Aron also adds:

> These groups were involved in elections because it is often impossible to advance a policy cause without being involved in the political process.

This is from the liberal side of the political spectrum.

I am now pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana, TODD YOUNG, a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today because this is an essential issue that affects groups in my home State of Indiana, as well as groups throughout the country.

As a member of the Committee on Ways and Means, I have been present during hearings where we have learned that the IRS targeted conservative and Tea Party groups. During those same hearings, I have shared letters and documents that showed some of the targeted conservative groups were my fellow Hoosiers.

Regretfully, it appears that the IRS, rather than holding those responsible for this targeted sort of activity, is seeking to make political targeting part of their standard operating procedure. The recently proposed IRS regulation that pertains to these 501(c)(4) groups is designed to do so in a way that clearly inhibits their First Amendment activities.

501(c)(4) is the section of our Tax Code that many of the conservative groups tried to file under. They can't file as a 501(c)(3) because that would limit their ability to engage in grassroots lobbying. They can't file as a 501(c)(5) because they aren't a labor union. They can't file as a 501(c)(6) because they aren't a chamber of commerce. They can't file as a 527 because that would limit them only to political activity.

None of these other organizations are affected by the new regulations—only 501(c)(4)'s.

Now, this seems curious to me, and the regulation seems aimed at preventing such groups from engaging in civil discourse. This is why I strongly support H.R. 3865, the Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs, or STOP, Act.

This bill doesn't say that the IRS cannot regulate this issue, or even that they should not regulate this issue.

□ 1530

Instead, it just tells them to wait until the investigation into this targeting concludes before discussing whether any changes to the rules are necessary.

It is eminently reasonable. It would help protect the political speech and the civil rights of my constituents and those around the country. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill.

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

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM), our friend on the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, there is one thing worse than gridlock, according to my predecessor, Congressman Henry Hyde. The worst thing than gridlock is the greased chute of government.

It is ironic that the very administration that jammed through the Affordable Care Act, also known in the vernacular as ObamaCare, the very group that foisted that on the American public in the middle of the night, without much oversight, without much discussion, just jammed it all through, now has a new remedy as it relates to this newest problem, and that is, do it again. Do it again on another issue.

We heard our friend from New Jersey posing a question, and he is misinformed. The nature of his question was somehow that the American public is paying for this, and yet, we had testimony that Mr. CAMP, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, asked this question of Mr. Barthold, who is the chief of staff for the Joint Committee on Taxation.

He asked this question—this is DAVE CAMP, chairman of the committee:

> Do these proposed regulations respond to some kind of revenue loss or some kind of tax avoidance scheme?
>
> Answer: Not that I am aware of, sir. These organizations are generally exempt, and a revenue loss has not been identified as the basis of these proposed regulations.

So let's not kid ourselves. Here is the reality. The reality is that this stifles speech. This is from an administration that has been complicit in overseeing an Internal Revenue Service that has picked winners and losers, Mr. Speaker, has been able to say you get to participate in the public debate and you don't.

We ought not do this. There have been over 100,000 comments on this proposed regulation. For those that want to participate and offer their own comment, Mr. Speaker, they can go to roskam.house.gov/dontbesilenced to make sure that their voice is heard as well offering an official comment on this.

One thing we do know: we know that an administration which has a tendency to over-respond, we know that an administration that has not much credibility, frankly, on being thoughtful and nimble as it comes to legislation, is not the administration that we should trust at this point in time with a rule of such incredible consequence when they have demonstrated no capacity to do right things in the past.

I urge the passage of this bill.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM).

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, Federal law states that social welfare groups must exclusively promote social welfare. Social welfare includes activities like early childhood education, environmental protection, or veterans' assistance, not partisan political campaign activity.

Now, there is an important book on the House floor, and it is a dictionary. We have that book here because this is a lawmaking institution, and the precise definition of words is incredibly important.

Now, last time I looked up the word ''exclusively,'' it meant everything, excluding everything else, solely, or only.

However, the IRS must have found an alternative definition for exclusively when it issued a regulation allowing social welfare organizations to only primarily promote social welfare. This contradiction between Federal law and IRS regulation has allowed these groups to spend over a quarter-billion dollars on political campaign activity, not their social welfare mission, while keeping their donors secret.

I urge my colleagues simply to vote against the bill and let the IRS move forward with this proposed regulation to correct this. ''Exclusively'' should mean exclusively.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, how much time remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Louisiana has 6½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from New York has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE).

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louisiana for yielding and for his leadership on holding the IRS accountable.

Mr. Speaker, we should not stand by and let the IRS target American citizens based on their political beliefs, and yet, that is what has been going on. It has been uncovered.

The President tries to act like it is some isolated incident, and yet, of course, we have got all kind of testimony that shows this goes way beyond some local office. This is widespread abuse of power by the Internal Revenue Service, and what we are seeing now, with this latest proposed rule, is literally something that would try to shut down an entire segment of American people who want to participate in the democratic process, Mr. Speaker.

The IRS should not be able to go and target people based on their political views, and yet that is what is happening, and President Obama is encouraging this kind of activity where you, literally, have the White House using enemy lists to go after people with groups like the IRS.

We have seen it with the EPA. We have seen it with the NLRB and the entire alphabet soup of Federal agencies that seems to want to go after people that might say something, exercising their First Amendment rights, that the White House disagrees with.

That is not how America works. That is not what this great country is built upon, Mr. Speaker.

If the President doesn't like the political views of somebody, that is what the great discourse of this country is all about. That is what makes our country so great, that we can disagree. We can exercise those great rights that the Founding Fathers put in place and that was later established in the Bill of Rights, the first of those Bill of Rights being the First Amendment, encouraging free speech. It is what makes us strong as a Nation.

Yet here comes the IRS trying to shut down, use the heavy hammer of their power to try to shut down political speech of people who disagree with them.

It is not going to work, Mr. Speaker. We are not going to stand for it here in this House. I commend my colleague for bringing the legislation, which I am proud to cosponsor. Over 94,000 Americans have already weighed in on this as well, signing letters and inputting public comment, including 70 members of the Republican Study Committee who have chimed in.

We are not going to stand for this. This will be a bipartisan vote in support of this legislation to stop the abuse of the IRS.

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

Obviously my Republican colleagues don't want to talk about their radical Republican tax bill. I understand. I know why, because it is an actual bill on the American taxpaying public, a bill that would tax Social Security and would eliminate tax deductions on State and local taxes that taxpayers have already paid. It will implement chainsaw CPI.

Instead, they want to focus on a phony scandal—I understand it—and not this extreme scandal Republican tax bill, a bill they will force upon the American public.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague. I have listened all afternoon as my Republican colleagues have held forth about the importance of the First Amendment. No one is debating that. That is not what this bill is about, despite your best efforts to suggest it is.

What this bill is about is letting organizations spend millions of dollars of secret money, secret money, to try to buy elections to serve their special interests. That is what this bill is about.

Now, our Republican colleagues have talked repeatedly about the Treasury

inspector general's report. I don't know if they have read the report, but one of the recommendations was for the IRS to revise its regulations and guidelines to clarify this particular area.

I would have hoped that all of us would want the IRS out of the business of determining whether or not a 501(c)(4) is primarily involved in political activity or primarily involved in social welfare activity.

I don't want them under the nose of every organization trying to figure it out, and that is why the IRS is trying to reform this area of the law.

So why isn't that what our Republican colleagues want?

Because this isn't about allowing those groups to exercise free speech. It is allowing those organizations to be used to channel secret money without disclosing those expenditures to the voters. That is what this is all about, because you can spend as much money as you want on political advocacy and campaigns. All you have to do is organize as a 527, which is another organization under the Tax Code which, by the way, is also tax exempt.

So why isn't that good enough?

You can say as much as you want, spend millions of dollars. I will tell you why. Because under 527's, people are spending all that money to influence elections, they have to disclose. They have to tell voters who they are spending millions of dollars to try and influence those votes.

That is not good enough for our Republican colleagues. They want to preserve this messy situation because it allows all that secret money to flow into these campaigns.

We believe voters have a right to know who is trying to spend millions of dollars to influence these votes, and by the way, eight of the nine Justices on the Supreme Court in Citizens United, a case which I had lots of problems with lots of parts of it, but eight of the nine Justices agree with us that transparency is important.

Here is what Justice Kennedy said. These transparency laws ''impose no ceiling on campaign-related activities'' and ''do not prevent anyone from speaking,'' but they have ''a governmental interest in providing the electorate with information about the sources of election-related spending.''

Eight out of nine Supreme Court Justices agree with what every poll shows, that the American people overwhelmingly want transparency in our elections. Because why? Transparency brings accountability.

I think every American has an interest in knowing who is spending millions of dollars to try and get them elected to Congress, to serve particular special interests.

So, Mr. Speaker, for goodness sakes, this isn't about the First Amendment. Everyone is in favor of the First Amendment. This is about allowing secret money in campaigns, and we should not allow that. It is against the public interest.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

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

I would, first off, mention that the regulation does not mention donors.

Secondly, I would like to point out that the ACLU itself said these requirements ''will pose insurmountable compliance issues that go beyond practicality and raise First Amendment concerns of the highest order.''

The gentleman mentioned the Treasury inspector general report, but he didn't quite precisely characterize what the inspector general said. The inspector general said in his report that the IRS, one of the recommendations is the IRS provide guidance on how to measure political activity, not what constitutes political activity.

So with those clarifications, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and DAVE CAMP for leading this effort to protect our free speech.

Whenever someone in Washington tells you don't worry, it is not really about free speech, trust me, it is.

A lot of Americans are frightened by the thought that their government would target them based on their political beliefs, and I am convinced the darkest days in America's history have been when the government has tried to silence the voices of those who disagree with it.

We suffered under this intimidation during the civil rights era, under the antiwar era, and now today, because conservative organizations, constitutional organizations, some who simply want to make the country better and have that voice, are now being targeted.

Make no mistake. This is not about clearing up confusion. This is about intimidation. This is about the government using one of the most powerful agencies it has, the IRS, the only agency that can destroy your life, your family, your business' life with their immense power, targeting people because of their political beliefs.

If you talk about what is free speech, I would point to this: look at organizations back home in your community. Those who want to do get out to vote, so go vote and have your voices heard. Voter registration, candidate forms, let's find out what elected officials and candidates feel about the issues.

Then just grassroots lobbying, letting their neighbors, their communities, their members understand the issues and weigh in. That is free speech. That is the First Amendment, and when this government targets Americans based on it, we have got to stop it.

Make no mistake, Republican, Democrat, Tea Party, Progressive, I don't care where you are at on there, we cannot let the government have this power. It must be stopped now.

□ 1545

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, let me simply close this debate by saying that, throughout all of this vigorous discussion, we want to make clear that this bill just simply asks for a 1-year delay in the implementation of this rule to allow ample time for Congress to complete its investigation and for the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration to complete its investigation, so that we have the facts on the table.

We shouldn't be jumping ahead of the gun and possibly, and likely, infringe on the First Amendment rights of so many people unless we have the facts.

The ranking member of the committee, Mr. LEVIN, has admitted that the investigation is incomplete. Let's just give this time. We owe it to the American people to do that. We owe it to the integrity of this institution to do our work prior to having these premature judgments come forward, especially when the rule does not address all the issues that have been discussed today.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I ask that we all vote in favor of this bill, support it, and move it forward. Let's hit that pause button. Let's complete the investigation and do our due diligence.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 487, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

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

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

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

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

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

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I am opposed.

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Van Hollen moves to recommit the bill, H.R. 3865, to the Committee on Ways and Means with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Add at the end the following new sections:

SEC. 3. PRESERVING DEMOCRACY FROM THE CORRUPTING INFLUENCE OF SECRET DONORS.

Nothing in this Act shall limit, restrict, or prohibit the Secretary of the Treasury from issuing regulations requiring the disclosure of secret political donors.

SEC. 4. RESTORING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR AMERICA'S JOB SEEKERS.

This Act shall not take effect until the Secretary of the Treasury has certified that the most recent percentage of the insured unemployed (those for whom unemployment taxes were paid during prior employment) who are receiving Federal or State unemployment insurance (UI) benefits when they are actively seeking work is at least equal to the percentage receiving such benefits for the last quarter of 2013, as determined by the

Department of Labor's quarterly UI data summary measurement of the Unemployment Insurance recipiency rate for all UI programs.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I reserve a point of order against the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A point of order is reserved.

Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland is recognized for 5 minutes in support of his motion.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill, which will not kill the bill or send it back to committee.

If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended, and as the motion indicated, it addresses secret money in elections. I am trying to make sure we end that secret money. It also deals with the issue of extending unemployment insurance, which my colleague from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) will discuss in a minute.

But I want to focus on this issue of secret money because this resolution, what we are asking our Republican colleagues to join us on, is to vote on a very simple statement: to say that nothing in this act shall limit, restrict, or prohibit the Secretary of the Treasury from issuing regulations requiring the disclosure of secret political donors.

Our Republican colleagues all afternoon have said this is about the First Amendment. This is about protecting the right of people to express their views.

That is not what their bill is about. Everyone is in favor of people being able to express their views. As I indicated earlier, you can form what is known as a 527 organization; and whether you are an individual or an organization in that form, you can spend millions of dollars to try to influence the outcome of elections.

What we are saying is the voters have a right to know who is bankrolling these campaign efforts. What we have seen over the last couple of years is a huge increase, an explosion of money being spent by outside groups to try to influence the outcome of elections to try to elect Members of Congress to support whatever interests those groups may support.

This motion, what we are proposing, would still allow all this money to be spent. But—and here is the key—most of that money is now flowing through 501(c)(4) organizations because some groups have been abusing those organizations to allow them to use them as secret conduits, conduits to allow them to secretly fund campaigns.

All we are saying is let's not take away the right and ability of the Treasury Department to adopt regulations to make sure we don't allow that secret money because I thought most of us agreed in transparency, and I thought most of us agreed in accountability.

And I know that eight of the nine Supreme Court Justices, even in a controversial case, support transparency and disclosure. They say that is good for democracy. And you know what? Every poll shows that the American people overwhelmingly agree. So let's vote for disclosure and vote for this motion.

With that, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN).

Mr. LEVIN. Let's look at the facts. Only those who won't look don't see them.

There have been 1.9 million long-term unemployed Americans who have lost their unemployment insurance since December 28 and another 72,000 every week. Unemployment insurance lifted 2.5 million from poverty in 2012, and now hundreds of thousands are sinking into poverty because this institution and the House majority will not act.

The long-term unemployment rate in this country: 36 percent of jobless workers over 6 months; the lowest percentage of jobless receiving unemployment insurance in over 50 years. It is mindless not to act in terms of the national economy. It is heartless not to act in terms of the individual lives of hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of thousands of Americans and their families.

Vote for this motion to recommit. I don't see how anybody can go home and vote ''no.''

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my point of order, and I seek the time in opposition to the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The reservation is withdrawn.

The gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes in opposition to the motion.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, this motion to recommit actually allows and perpetuates the targeting of Americans by the Internal Revenue Service. This motion to recommit permits the government to restrict the free speech of Americans.

I can't stand for this. The American people can't stand for this and should not stand for this. Vote ''no'' on this motion to recommit.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 191, nays 230, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 68]

YEAS—191

Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NAYS—230

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall

Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—9

Blumenauer
Ellison
Gosar
Jeffries
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
Pastor (AZ)
Rush
Westmoreland

□ 1620

Messrs. PITTENGER, COBLE, POSEY, RICE of South Carolina, BILIRAKIS, AMODEI, ADERHOLT, SCHOCK, and Ms. GRANGER changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Ms. FUDGE, Messrs. SERRANO and COHEN changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

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

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 243, noes 176, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 69]

AYES—243

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallego
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOES—176

Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kuster
Langevin
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—11

Blumenauer
Ellison
Gosar
Jeffries
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
Pastor (AZ)
Rangel
Rush
Scott, David
Westmoreland

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1627

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. POLIS

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk to correct the name of the bill to the Protect Anonymous Special Interests Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Polis of Colorado moves to amend the title of H.R. 3865 to read as follows:

To protect anonymous special interests by prohibiting the Internal Revenue Service from modifying the standard for determining whether an organization is operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare for purposes of section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 6 of rule XVI, the amendment is not debatable.

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS).

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

RECORDED VOTE

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

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 177, noes 241, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 70]

AYES—177

Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—241

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallego
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Maffei
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—12

Blumenauer
Ellison
Gosar
Grijalva
Jeffries
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
Pastor (AZ)
Rangel
Rush
Waxman
Westmoreland

□ 1645

Mr. CALVERT changed his vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2431. An act to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 899, UNFUNDED MANDATES INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2013

Ms. FOXX, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113–362) on the resolution (H. Res. 492) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 899) to provide for additional safeguards with respect to imposing Federal mandates, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ALL ECONOMIC REGULATIONS ARE TRANSPARENT ACT OF 2014

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 2804.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 487 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2804.

The Chair appoints the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1648

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2804) to amend title 5, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to publish information about rules on the Internet, and for other purposes, with Ms. FOXX in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

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

Just over 6 months ago, President Obama announced that he would once again pivot to the economy. The bottom line of his speech: after 4½ years of the Obama administration, ''We're not there yet.''

The President was right. We were not there yet nor are we there today. Job creation and economic growth continue to fall short of what is needed to produce a real and durable recovery in our country. The nominal unemployment rate is down, but that is not because enough workers have found jobs; it is because so many unemployed workers have despaired of ever finding new full-time work. They have either left the workforce or have settled for part-time jobs.

As long as this situation continues, Congress must stay focused on enacting reforms that will stop the losses, return America to prosperity, and return discouraged workers to the dignity of a good, full-time job. The legislation we consider today is just that

kind of reform. Through its strong, commonsense measures, the ALERRT Act will powerfully and comprehensively reform the Federal regulatory system, from how regulations are planned to how they are promulgated to how they are dealt with in court.

This is legislation that Congress cannot pass too soon, for while the Obama administration's pivot to the economy has faltered, the Federal bureaucracy has not wavered an instant in its imposition of new and costly regulation on our economy. The ALERRT Act responds by offering real relief to the real Americans who suffer under the mounting burdens of tyrannical regulation.

Consider, for example, Rob James, a city councilman from Avon Lake, Ohio, who testified before the Judiciary Committee this term about the impacts of new and excessive regulation on his town, its workers, and its families.

Avon Lake is a small town facing devastation by ideologically driven, anti-fossil fuel power plant regulations. These regulations are expected to destroy jobs at Avon Lake, harm Avon Lake's families, and make it even harder for Avon Lake to find the resources to provide emergency services, quality schools, and help for its neediest citizens, all the while doing comparatively little to control mercury emissions, which are the stated target of the regulations.

Title I of the ALERRT Act helps people and towns like Rob James and Avon Lake to know in real time when devastating regulations are planned, comment in time to help change them, estimate their real costs, and better plan for the results as agencies reach their final decisions.

Consider, too, Bob Sells, one of my constituents and president of the Virginia-based division of a heavy construction materials producer. His company and its workers were harmed by EPA cement kiln emission regulations that were technically unattainable and included provisions vastly changed from what EPA proposed for public comment; other EPA emission regulations that were stricter than needed to protect health, gerrymandered to impose expensive controls on other types of emissions and which prohibited commonsense uses of cheap and safe fuel that could actually help the environment; and Department of Transportation regulations that, without increasing safety, vastly increased record-keeping for ready-mix concrete drivers, unnecessarily limited their hours and suppressed their wages.

Title II of the ALERRT Act helps to protect people like Bob Sells and his workers from regulations that ask job creators to achieve the unachievable, do not help to control their stated regulatory targets, suppress hours and wages for no good reason, and inundate Americans with unnecessary paperwork.

Title III of the ALERRT Act offers long-needed help to small business people like Carl Harris, the vice president and general manager of Carl Harris Co., Inc., in Wichita, Kansas. Mr. Harris is a small home builder. Every day, he has to fight and overcome the fact that government regulations now account for 25 percent of the final price of a new single-family home.

Mr. Harris participates in small business review panels of existing law uses to try to lower the costs of regulations for small businesses, but he has seen firsthand how loopholes in existing law allow Federal agencies to ignore small business concerns while ''checking the box'' of contacting small businesses. One case is that of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Cranes and Derricks Rule, which was effectively negotiated before small business was ever consulted and threatened to impose disproportionate costs on small builders.

Title III of the ALERRT Act helps small business job creators like Mr. HARRIS make sure that agencies like OSHA stop treating them like procedural hurdles and afterthoughts, take into real account the difficulties small businesses face, and lower costs on small businesses that must be lowered.

Finally, consider Allen Puckett, III, who is the fourth-generation owner of Columbus Brick Company, a family-owned enterprise that has been making fired-clay bricks in Columbus, Mississippi, since 1890. His company distributes bricks to more than 15 States, has second-, third- and fourth-generation employees, offers a fully funded, profit-sharing retirement plan and a 401(k) matching program, and has a nurse practitioner come on site twice a month to provide a free clinic to all of its employees.

Mr. Puckett's company may now be shuttered in the face of two waves of sue-and-settle brick-making emissions regulations that threaten to put his company and others like it out of business. After time-consuming litigation, the first regulations were thrown out in court but not before Mr. Puckett's company had already lost at least $750,000 in compliance costs and the entire industry had lost $100 million. The second replacement regulations threaten to be twice as expensive, so expensive that Columbus Brick Company expects to have to downsize by two-thirds or close.

The translation for hardworking Americans employed by such businesses is: higher prices for goods, fewer job opportunities and lower wages.

Title IV of the ALERRT Act helps people like Allen Puckett find out about sue-and-settle rulemaking deals in time, make sure their concerns are heard by agencies and the courts, and have a fighting chance to achieve a just result for themselves, their employees, and the families and communities that depend on them.

In all of these ways and more, the ALERRT Act brings urgently needed regulatory reform to hardworking Americans, whether they are small business people struggling to be heard by faceless Washington bureaucracies or whether they are citizens of small towns who are crushed by the impacts of regulations that force plant closings, harm families, and kill the revenues needed to provide vital services.

I thank Mr. BACHUS, Mr. HOLDING, and Mr. COLLINS for joining with me in offering the individual bills that now come to the floor together as the ALERRT Act, and I urge my colleagues to vote for this urgently needed legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Earlier this week, we had a declaration that this week would be ''stop government abuse'' week. My colleagues on the other side called for us to commemorate this week by the introduction of draconian anti-safety legislation that would allow businesses to declare war on the rules that protect Americans, including babies, children, and the elderly. That is why, Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2804, the Achieving Less Excess in Regulation and Requiring Transparency Act of 2014, also known as the so-called ''ALERRT Act.''

The ALERRT Act is a continuation of the same Republican obstruct at all costs paradigm that led to the sequester and to the shutdown of the Federal Government. This race to the bottom approach to the regulatory process is wasteful and dangerous, and it prioritizes profits over protecting Americans.

Although the ALERRT Act purports to ease the burden of regulations on American businesses, it would not create a single job, grow the economy or help any small business to thrive, nor does it address serious issues—the minimum wage, unemployment insurance, pay equity or immigration reform—that would help so many American workers and businesses. Instead, the only purpose of this bill is to straitjacket the same rulemaking process that protects countless Americans every day.

Title I of the bill imposes a 6-month moratorium on rules. The rulemaking process is already transparent, deliberative, and exhaustively inclusive of the views of small businesses and other interested parties.

□ 1700

Adding an additional 6 months to this process would do little except create uncertainty and increase compliance costs.

Instead of cutting through red tape, title II of the bill would add over 60 additional procedural and analytical requirements to the rulemaking process. This is yet another clear message that this bill would lengthen, not shorten or streamline, the rulemaking process, thus undermining the regulatory certainty and predictability that small businesses rely on to make long-term decisions.

In case the first two titles didn't adequately convey the message that Republicans are dead serious about helping deep-pocketed interests create regulatory mischief and confusion instead of offering serious solutions, titles III and IV would authorize virtually any party under the sun to challenge a proposed rule or intervene in litigation in Federal court no matter their connection, or lack thereof, to the issue.

Make no mistake. This bill is a wolf in sheep's clothing. It would jeopardize critical public health and safety regulatory protections and undermine the very small businesses it claims to protect.

By giving a handout to well-funded organizations to challenge proposed rules, consent decrees, and settlement agreements at every opportunity, the ALERRT Act would stack the deck against the public interest and the American taxpayer.

And who would be harmed by this deregulatory train wreck? Every American who wants to be able to breathe fresh air and who wants to drink clean water; every mother who wants safe formula for her baby and cribs that don't collapse on the baby in the middle of the night; and every small business competing for an edge in a marketplace dominated by large, well-funded competitors. And the list goes on and on and on.

I hope you will join me in my observation of stop government abuse by Republicans week and my opposition to the ALERRT Act.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this dangerous legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, it is now my pleasure to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING), a member of the Judiciary Committee and a contributor of one of the bills that has been included in the ALERRT Act.

Mr. HOLDING. Madam Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 2804, the ALERRT Act.

I would like to thank Chairman GOODLATTE, Chairman BACHUS, and the gentleman from Georgia for their hard work and contributions to making this legislation better.

In my district in North Carolina, small businesses are a primary driver of the economy. The businesses, like many across the country, are being harmed by excessive regulations. Excessive regulations mean lower wages for workers, fewer jobs, and higher prices for consumers.

Oftentimes, Madam Chairman, small businesses are not given enough notice of how new regulations will affect their everyday operations. They are faced with tough decisions like whether to cut workers' hours or wages or adjust their business plan elsewhere. That is why I introduced the ALERRT Act, to ensure that the administration publishes its regulatory agenda in a timely manner and provides annual disclosures about planned regulations, their expected costs, final rules, and cumulative regulatory costs, in general.

During President Obama's first term, our Nation's cumulative regulatory cost burden increased by $488 billion. Compounding the problem, this administration has failed to make public, as required by law, the effects of new regulations in a timely, reasonable manner.

The administration is required to submit a regulatory agenda twice a year, but they have consistently failed to do so on time. You will recall, Madam Chairman, that in 2012 the administration made neither disclosure required by law until December, after the general election. This deprived voters of the opportunity to see how proposed regulations would increase prices for household goods, lead to stagnant wages, and decrease job opportunities. This is important when Federal regulations already place an average burden of almost $15,000 per year on each American household. That is not a burden that folks in this economy—or any economy—should have to bear.

Madam Chairman, this bill is not about shutting down the regulatory process but about providing much-needed sunlight and transparency. It requires monthly online updates of information on planned regulations and their expected costs so everyone who is going to be affected can know, in real time, how to plan for the regulations' impacts or how to cast their vote.

The ALERRT Act is comprehensive reform that promotes economic growth and takes steps toward reform of the regulatory system to provide the government accountability that our citizens deserve.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BARROW).

Mr. BARROW of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 2804, the All Economic Regulations Are Transparent, or ALERRT, Act of 2013, and in support of the Miller-Courtney amendment.

I am pleased that this legislation includes the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act, a bill for which I am an original cosponsor with my Republican colleague from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS).

There are 30 million small businesses in America, and they employ over half of our workforce. These are companies in my district like Sarah in the City in Baxley or Buona Caffe in Augusta. Every day they open their doors and go to work helping American families and drive American commerce.

I also rise in support of the Miller-Courtney amendment. In February of 2008, 14 people were killed and 40 people were injured in a combustible dust explosion at the Imperial Sugar refinery in Port Wentworth, Georgia. Since then, I have worked with my colleague, Mr. MILLER, to pressure OSHA to mitigate this known hazard. I am hopeful that OSHA can complete its long-overdue work in this area to save families from ever having to go through this kind of grief again.

Now is the time for us to focus on getting people back to work and creating good-paying local jobs. That is why I support the Miller-Courtney amendment and the underlying legislation.

I urge ''yes'' votes on both.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, at this time it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES), the chairman of the Small Business Committee.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Chair, I want to thank the chairman of the committee for working with us today.

I rise in support of H.R. 2804, the ALERRT Act. This legislation represents a very important effort to bring some common sense and transparency to an out-of-control regulatory process that is stifling job growth, especially among small businesses.

I am especially pleased that legislation which the Committee on Small Business worked on, H.R. 2542, the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act, was incorporated into the ALERRT Act. Again, I want to thank Chairman GOODLATTE for working with the committee on the title of this bill.

For over 30 years, agencies have been required by the Regulatory Flexibility Act, or RFA, to examine the impacts of regulations on small businesses. If those impacts are significant, agencies must consider less burdensome alternatives. The problem is that agencies still fail to comply with that law, and the result is unworkable regulations that put unnecessary burdens on America's best job creators, which are small businesses.

In numerous hearings over the years, the Small Business Committee has heard about the consequences that burdensome regulations have on farmers, homebuilders, manufacturers, and many others. Instead of using their limited resources to grow and create jobs, small businesses have to spend more time and money on regulatory compliance and paperwork.

The Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act is going to eliminate loopholes that agencies have used to avoid compliance with the RFA. Most importantly, it requires agencies to generally scrutinize the impacts of regulations on small businesses before they are finalized.

Examining whether there are less burdensome or less costly ways to implement a regulation just makes common sense. Reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens frees up scarce time, money, and resources that small businesses can use to expand their operations and hire new employees.

The Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act is bipartisan legislation. It has strong support among the business communities. It simply requires agencies to do their homework before they regulate. If agencies do their work,

more Americans are going to be working.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I want to thank my good friend, Congressman JOHNSON, for his leadership and the management of this legislation.

I would just like us to take a journey down memory lane:

I am sure that many of us will be reminded of the famous Pinto and the crafting of that automobile. I have no commentary on the great industry that so many of us admire, but for those of us who have memories, we realize some of the injuries that occurred in the structure of the Pinto;

Or maybe it is cars without seatbelts or airbags;

Or maybe we recall times when we travel throughout our community and we notice not only a heavy fog but polluted air. Maybe some of us have been exposed to polluted water;

Or maybe you traveled internationally, even in the 21st century, seeing the conditions that many who live outside of the United States live in, with the utilization of dirty water because they have no other water or the food danger because it is not regulated.

Well, my friends, unfortunately, the legislation that is here on the floor of the House seems to take us backwards down a poisonous memory lane. So it is very difficult to support this legislation.

I said today in a committee hearing that I know that Members come here with good intentions. So I will not attribute to anyone that this bill does not come to the floor with good intentions, but it is a bill that has not been, as a whole, considered by the Judiciary Committee.

This is now being brought to the floor with three separate bills combined, now called the ALERRT Act. But it really imposes unneeded and costly analytical and procedural requirements on agencies that would prevent them from performing their statutory responsibilities to protect the public health and safety. This, I believe, is an important responsibility. It creates unnecessary regulatory and legal uncertainty and increases costs for businesses and State, local, and tribal governments and impedes plain common sense.

I will offer an amendment dealing with homeland security. We just had a hearing today that emphasized the importance of the work of the Homeland Security Department. With our new Secretary of Homeland Security, Secretary Johnson, we are very much on the right track, recognizing franchise terrorism and the need for securing the border. Much of the work done by Homeland Security is a regulatory structure.

Why would we want to impede securing America?

Well, my friends, that is what is going to occur with this legislation, the All Economic Regulations Are Transparent Act.

I also offered an amendment dealing with baby formula. For those of us mothers who have raised children and tend to their needs as newborns and use infant formula, it is well known that there is a great need to regulate companies that manufacture infant formulas in an effort to protect babies from food-borne illnesses and promote healthy growth.

On Thursday, the FDA announced plans to revise, earlier this month, infant formula regulations with an interim final rule that will be published soon. But guess what. The legislation that we have will stand in the way as an iron wall, if you will, prohibiting any rule from being finalized until certain information is posted for 6 months.

How long will 6 months be in the life of an infant?

The CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. It will override existing statutes, such as the Clean Air and Clean Water Act, and override any aspect of regulating this important food product, adding more than 60 additional procedural and analytical requirements to the FDA's work on trying to help babies and making it easier for rules to be delayed or stopped by allowing regulated industry and entities to intervene.

And so, in actuality, this is not saving money. It will be a quagmire of spending money. In the meantime, the protections of our innocent babies who demand the responsibility of adults to protect the food products that they need for life by good regulations will be stopped.

□ 1715

Well, Madam Chairman, I don't want to go back down memory lane and horrible car crashes and no seatbelts and no airbags and polluted air and dangerous water. That is what we will be doing.

I look forward to introducing my amendment on the floor regarding the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. I can't imagine that my colleagues would want to stand in the way of securing America.

With that in mind, I hope that we will find a way to defeat this legislation, or to make it better, and ask our colleagues who are they standing for.

Madam Chair, I rise today to speak on H.R. 2804, the "All Economic Regulations Are Transparent Act of 2014," the so-called "ALERRT Act."

H.R. 2804 makes numerous changes to the federal rule-making process, including: (1) requiring agencies to consider numerous new criteria when issuing rules, such as alternatives to rules proposals; (2) requiring agencies to review the "indirect" costs of proposed and existing rules; (3) giving the Small Business Administration expanded authority to intervene in the rule-making of other agencies; and (4) requiring federal agencies to file monthly reports on the status of their rule-making activities.

I cannot support this legislation in its present form for two reasons, one procedural and one substantive.

Procedurally, I oppose the bill because in its present form it was never considered by the Judiciary Committee. This bill was reported by the Oversight and Government Reform Committee on a party line 19–15 vote but was not acted on by Judiciary Committee.

As reported, the bill contained only provisions relating to monthly reporting requirements regarding agency rule-making.

But the bill being brought to the floor now includes three additional and very controversial Judiciary bills (H.R. 2122, Regulatory Accountability Act; H.R. 1493, Sunshine for Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act; and H.R. 2542, Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act).

This is not the way to legislate on matters that have such serious consequences for the public health and safety.

Substantively, I oppose the bill because it imposes unneeded and costly analytical and procedural requirements on agencies that would prevent them from performing their statutory responsibilities to protect the public health and safety.

I oppose the bill also because it creates unnecessary regulatory and legal uncertainty, increases costs for businesses and State, local and tribal governments, and impedes common-sense protections for the American public.

Madam Chairman, the bill is unnecessary and invites frivolous litigation. When a federal agency promulgates a regulation, it already must adhere to the requirements of the statute that it is implementing.

Agencies already must adhere to the robust and well-understood procedural requirements of federal law, including the Administrative Procedure Act, the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA), the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), and the Congressional Review Act.

Regulatory agencies already are required to promulgate regulations only upon a reasoned determination that the benefits of the regulations justify the costs and to consider regulatory alternatives. Final regulations are subject to review by the federal courts which, among other things, examine whether agencies have satisfied the substantive and procedural requirements of all applicable statutes.

Finally, Madam Chairman, H.R. 2804 in its current form does not include an exemption for rules promulgated by the Department of Homeland Security to protect the safety of the American people and the security of our country.

For this reason, I offered an amendment that provides this important exception and I thank the Rules Committee for making it in order.

The security of the homeland is one of the most preeminent concerns of the federal government. The increased need for national security following the attacks of September nth makes it important that the Department of Homeland Security not be unduly impeded in the promulgation of rules that may preempt attacks against our nation.

Unnecessary delays to rules set forth by the Department of Homeland Security can wastes

scarce resources that keep our nation safe as well as impede the regular operations of the agency.

The Jackson Lee Amendment to H.R. 2804 will improve the bill. But, on balance, the bill still has too many defects and should not be passed by this body.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, at this time it is my pleasure to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR), the majority leader.

Mr. CANTOR. Madam Chair, I thank the gentleman from Virginia.

Madam Chair, I rise today in support of the ALERTT Act and in defense of working middle class families who face the danger that overzealous Washington regulators will destroy their jobs and impose new red tape that cuts their wages.

An America that works allows small businesses to flourish, jobs to be created, and for folks to have more take-home pay in their pockets. America doesn't work when Washington regulators impose more red tape on businesses, large and small, regardless of the cost. This bill fixes that.

Madam Chair, I hear a lot on this floor about the warnings of days gone by and the fearmongering attached to trying to at least instill some accountability on this bureaucracy in Washington. I don't think any of us on either side of the aisle wants to defend overzealous bureaucrats and imposing unnecessary burdens that have clogged this economy.

Now, America doesn't work when special interest groups use the courts to impose backroom regulations that destroy jobs and reduce take-home pay. This bill before us fixes that.

Now, make no mistake, excessive red tape hurts working middle class families. For example, it was recently reported that a proposed OSHA regulation would impose costs on a portion of the growing domestic energy sector equal to $1,120 per affected employee. These employees should not have to worry that the proposed regulations could mean smaller paychecks.

Or take, for example, another emerging practice of Washington regulators that hides the real impact that excessive regulation has on jobs. Under the pretense of minimal regulatory impact, this administration argues that the jobs lost, for instance, in mining, manufacturing, or construction, will be offset by new jobs in regulatory compliance. Therefore, a majority of their regulations look a lot better and not as harmful.

This is wrong. This is not being straight with the public. We must deliver transparency and accountability on the part of this administration and its bureaucracy.

I doubt it is any solace to the plant worker who loses his or her job because of regulations that a new job in another sector will be created to comply with these regulations.

Today, we will consider an amendment by a colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, KEITH ROTHFUS, to fix these problems. This amendment will help protect middle class jobs and wages. It is exactly the kind of reform that will make America work again.

Americans should not have to settle for the ''new normal'' of slow economic and job growth that the Obama administration seems to have embraced. We, in this House, reject this ''new normal'' and we will continue to fight to create an America that works again.

I want to thank the gentleman from Virginia, Chairman GOODLATTE, and Representatives HOLDING, COLLINS and BACHUS, who have worked hard on this bill before us, and I urge my colleagues in the House to support working middle class families by supporting this bill.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mining, construction work, manufacturing, those are the kinds of livelihoods that have made this country a great nation, people being able to go to work with a lunchbox in hand and work hard every day, make a decent wage.

By the way, $7.25 an hour for a full-time worker would equate to about $14,500 a year. That is just simply not enough for a working person to raise a family and take care of that family. They need help when they make $7.25 an hour. They would need help from the government if they couldn't rely on friends and relatives for support.

So that is a shame, in this day and time, where a person working a manufacturing job, or even a job in a mine or on a construction site, would be making $7.25 an hour.

We should, perhaps, Madam Chair, be paying attention to income generators such as that kind of legislation, as opposed to legislation like H.R. 2804, which would simply make it difficult to protect those workers in those unsafe occupations like mining, like construction work, like manufacturing, keeping the work site, the job place safe. Regulations are what do that.

With that, Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, at this time it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS), the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise to support this measure, and particularly the portion that is sponsored by our colleague from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) that will ensure transparency of Federal agencies' litigation settlement practices.

In 2011, the Obama administration entered into a mega-settlement, which was a closed-door, sweeping Endangered Species Act settlement with two litigious groups that greatly increased the ESA listings and habitat designations that could impact tens of thousands of acres and thousands of river miles across the country.

These settlements shut out affected States, local governments, private property owners, and other stakeholders who deserve to know that the most current and best scientific data is being used on these decisions.

In my own district, the Fish and Wildlife Service just listed a plant subspecies, despite clear data showing that the plant was not a species likely to go extinct. In other words, settlement deadlines trumped the science.

Let me give a couple of examples. These settlement listings could result in a listing of the Lesser Prairie Chicken that would impact five Western States, and next year the listing of the Greater Sage Grouse could cover an area of 250 million acres in 13 Western States.

Then there is the long-eared bat that could impact 39 Midwestern and Eastern States.

That is not all, Madam Chairman. The settlements also mandate decisions for 374 aquatic species in the Gulf of Mexico.

The point is, important ESA discussions should not be forced by arbitrary court decisions or deadlines, or negotiated behind closed doors by Federal lawyers supposedly on behalf of the public interest.

This legislation aims to help correct this abuse by ensuring affected States and other parties can have a say in settlements before an unelected judge signs them, and it ensures that no settlement moves forward without the public knowing what is in it.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chair, oh, how I wish that my friends on the Republican side of the aisle cared as much about America's workers as they do about America's big businesses.

Oh, how I wish that they cared more to let a minimum wage bill come to the floor, where I believe that most Members of the House of Representatives would find it within their hearts to realize that $7.25, you just can't make it on that without help. Everyone who goes out and works hard every day should be able to be paid a fair living wage and be able to support themselves and their family.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, at this time it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), a member of the Judiciary Committee, and chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Virginia, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, for yielding me time this afternoon.

Madam Chairman, I support H.R. 2804, the Achieving Less Excess in Regulation and Requiring Transparency Act, known as the ALERTT Act.

One of the biggest concerns that I hear from Texas employers is the avalanche of unnecessary Federal regulatory costs. Regulation redirects scarce capital from investment and job creation to compliance with the Federal Government. In fact, the Small Business Administration has determined that Federal regulations cost the economy $1.75 trillion each year.

This commonsense legislation is an omnibus package of regulatory relief bills that the Judiciary Committee has worked on in recent years to protect businesses. I previously authored two of the bills that are included in H.R. 2804, and appreciate their being considered again this Congress.

The ALERTT Act adds transparency to the regulatory process. It strengthens existing laws in order to prevent Federal agencies from bypassing cost-benefit analyses designed to protect small businesses, and the bill requires Federal agencies to pick the least costly alternative rule to achieve that statutory goal.

H.R. 2804 limits organizations' ability to bring sue-and-settle lawsuits against Federal agencies. These lawsuits result in one-sided regulations that shut stakeholders out of the process. The ALERTT Act restores the proper balance to regulatory consent decrees and settlements.

Madam Chairman, I thank Chairman GOODLATTE and my colleagues for their efforts to provide much-needed regulatory relief to American businesses, and I urge adoption of H.R. 2804.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, the majority deliberately downplays the benefits of regulation and exaggerates the cost of regulation, when in fact, the benefits of regulation far exceed the costs, whether those benefits are defined in monetary terms or in terms of promoting values like protecting public health and safety, and ensuring civil rights and human dignity.

The explosion that occurred down in Texas not too long ago that wiped out an entire town, I believe it was a fertilizer plant. Many lives lost. If there had been adequate legislation and adequate regulation to protect those people and the workers in the plant, then those folks would still be here today.

What we are doing with this legislation is preventing the promulgation of the kinds of rules that would protect the health and safety of people throughout America, not just workers, but people who have to eat, people who have to drink, people who have to breathe. The benefits of regulation far outweigh the costs.

□ 1730

A 2012 draft of the Office of Management and Budget report to Congress on the costs and benefits of regulations concluded that the net benefits of regulation promulgated through the third fiscal year of the Obama administration have exceeded $91 billion.

This amount, which includes not only monetary savings, but also lives saved and injuries prevented, is more than 25 times the net benefits through the third fiscal year of the previous administration, and these are important points that I believe my friends on the other side of the aisle like to omit from their analysis.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, at this time, it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR).

Mr. BARR. Madam Chair, I thank the chairman for his leadership on the ALERRT Act, and I appreciate the opportunity to respond to my friends on the other side of the aisle who talk about the importance of taking into consideration workers in America.

And I would submit, Madam Chair, that if we truly are interested in the interests of American workers, we would vote immediately to pass regulatory relief in the form of the ALERRT Act.

If my friends on the other side of the aisle were truly interested in the welfare of the working people of America, they would stop the overly burdensome regulation that is putting the American people out of work.

In Kentucky, in my home State, if you don't think this is true, consider the facts, and the facts are these: that the unemployment rate in eastern Kentucky is 1½ percent higher than the national average. There is not a recession in eastern Kentucky.

It is a depression, and it is a depression because of overly burdensome regulations coming out of the EPA, which are putting thousands of my fellow Kentuckians and all of our fellow Americans out of work.

These are heartless policies. We have lost 7,000 jobs in Kentucky's coal mines in just the last 5 years, bringing coal industry employment in the Commonwealth to its lowest level since 1927. If you want to talk about the welfare of workers, these people need paychecks.

It is because of unaccountable, overly burdensome regulations, unaccountable bureaucrats in the executive branch, that these people no longer have the opportunity to provide for their families. This is wrong. We need to roll back these burdensome regulations.

I would just say this in conclusion, Madam Chair. It is dangerous when we combine legislative power into the hands of the executive branch. Madison, in Federalist Paper No. 47, in quoting Montesquieu, said:

> The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands; whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective; may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny. There can be no liberty where the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person.

That is what is happening in America today.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, at this time, it is my pleasure to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), the chairman of the Regulatory Reform, Commercial, and Antitrust Law Subcommittee, who has worked so closely with us on this legislation and who is the sponsor of one of the pieces of the ALERRT Act.

Mr. BACHUS. I thank the chairman.

Madam Chairman, when the law is against you, argue the facts. When the facts are against you, argue the law. When the law and the facts are against you, yell like hell and call your opponent names; and that is what we are seeing here.

This is a good law that we are proposing. The facts are on our side. And I have got to hand it to the gentleman from Georgia—crib-collapsing, baby formula-poisoning Republicans—you have done a good job, but let's go back to the facts. Get rid of the rhetoric, and talk about the facts.

The number one fact is that America is out of work. The chairman mentioned that. The gentleman from Kentucky, ANDY BARR, talked about people out of work. This country needs jobs.

Now, you have accused us of being against the American worker. We want American workers; we want people to have jobs; and to be an American worker, you have to have a job.

We can talk about the wages, but when you are unemployed, there is no wage. You talk about the American Dream, owning a home. It's not anymore. It is just having a job.

And 14 percent of our gross domestic product is absorbed by Federal regulations. Now, some of those are good regulations. We are not down here on the floor wanting to repeal some safety regulations for cribs. We are not trying to loosen the regulations on baby formula.

We are attacking—and let me say that there are good regulations; there are bad regulations; and then there are some really ugly regulations. $1.8 trillion is the annual price tag in complying with Federal regulations. That is not income tax. That is not health care. That is Federal regulations.

The Small Business Administration, not some Republican, said it costs $11,000 per American worker to comply with Federal regulations—$11,000. We are not saying that all of that is bad, but we are saying that of the hundreds of thousands of Federal regulations—and, by the way, of that $1.8 trillion, $520 million of that burden was passed in the last 4 years, and there are $87 billion worth of regulations waiting just this year to be passed.

Now, the Federal Reserve and Treasury, they come to testify at the Financial Services Committee every year, and they say: If you can increase the gross domestic product by 2 percent, we can create jobs—2 percent, if we can grow it from 2 to 4 percent. Well, let

me submit that, of that 14 percent of the gross national product that is absorbed by Federal regulations, we can find one out of seven of those regulations to change.

I will close by telling you a good one. The chairman started by talking about the cement industry. The EPA proposed a regulation that would have put 200,000 American cement workers out of work.

When we asked why, they said it is because of mercury and arsenic in the air. And we had a map, and it showed no mercury or arsenic around any of our cement plants, and we said, well, where is this mercury and arsenic coming from? China and Mexico.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, it is my pleasure to yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. BACHUS. But our response wasn't to go to Mexico or China. Well, it was, really. Our response was to raise our standards or tighten our standards to be three times more stringent than the EU. It would have cost all the profits of the cement industry for 25 years to comply.

When I asked someone at the EPA and I said, Well, wait a minute, the pollution is not coming from our plants, it is coming from Mexico and China, they said: That is not our problem.

Yes, it is. Just like Andy Barr's problem, because his workers are being put out of a job, it is all of our problems. It is my problem. It is your problem. It is his problem. We are up here standing for the American worker.

If we grow this economy by 2 or 3 more percent, we won't have a problem with jobs, and these regulations will start that process.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, the gentleman speaks eloquently as a lawyer, and he makes excellent points.

Regulations do cost. So out of a $15 trillion gross domestic product, $1.8 trillion dedicated for regulatory expenses which protect lives—I can't put a value on one human life—but tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people are dying because of unsafe conditions on the job. It is certainly worth $1.7 trillion out of $15 trillion in a year.

I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARTWRIGHT).

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Madam Chairman, this bill is being brought to the floor during this week that has been labeled ''stop government abuse week.'' I am here to say that this is a bill that has some stopping power, all right.

It would stop the government from protecting our health and safety by bringing the regulatory process to a grinding halt.

And I want to address title I of this antiregulatory package right now. It includes the text of the All Economic Regulations are Transparent Act. This legislation, Madam Chairwoman, is unnecessarily burdensome for agencies.

Agencies are already required to provide status updates twice a year on their plans for proposing and finalizing rules pursuant to the Regulatory Flexibility Act and Executive Order No. 12866.

This legislation would require agencies to report monthly. They are already required to report twice a year. This takes them to monthly. It is incredibly burdensome on agencies.

But the most egregious provision in title I would prohibit agency rules from taking effect until the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs has posted the information required by the bill online for at least 6 months. This moratorium can only be avoided if the agency claims an exception from the notice and comments requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act or if the President issues an executive order. Therefore, it delays most regulations by an additional 6 months.

I think we can all agree that transparency in the rulemaking process is a good thing, but this bill sacrifices common sense in the name of improving transparency without achieving any kind of meaningful transparency.

Agencies already make significant amounts of information available during the rulemaking process on the Web site www.regulations.gov. This bill could simply require agencies to make additional information publicly available, but it doesn't do that.

Under this bill, an agency could post information about the cost of a proposed rule on its own Web site for a year; but if the administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs didn't post the information for at least 6 months, the agency would be prohibited from finalizing the rule.

Madam Chair, my amendment would strike the moratorium provision in title I. Striking that provision would ensure that an agency rule will not be needlessly held up because the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs did not post a piece of information online for exactly 6 months.

I have been assured by the Congressional Budget Office that my amendment is revenue-neutral. I urge Members to vote for my amendment.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, I have no further requests for time. I believe that I have the right to close, so if the gentleman from Georgia would proceed, I will reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, my colleague from Alabama said that we all need to come together to find real solutions to create jobs. I submit that one way that we could create jobs, in addition to making sure that we have equal pay for equal work and that we increase the minimum wage to a living wage, another way to do that is through immigration reform.

The Chamber of Commerce and small businesses everywhere have come together in support of comprehensive immigration reform. Why? Because it creates jobs.

□ 1745

David Park, the cofounder and creator of Job Creators Alliance, wrote in 2012:

> Immigration reform is key to spurring innovation and getting the economy back on track. I am a small business owner who realizes the role legal immigrants play in creating new jobs. As founder and CEO of a boutique merchant bank, I have started or acquired nearly 30 small and midsize companies, creating hundreds of jobs for Americans across the country. I am also an immigrant and an example of how highly skilled immigrants educated in the United States can drive job creation right here.

So immigration reform, Madam Chair, is a job creator. We can't seem to get an immigration bill—which, by the way, has been passed by the Senate. We can't get it heard by this Congress. We cannot bring a bill to the floor that would pass the House that would result in comprehensive immigration reform. We cannot bring a bill to the floor of the House that would provide for a raise for Americans who work for $7.25 an hour, full-time. $14,500 a year is simply not enough to feed the family and take care of one's self. We can't get job-creating bills that would stimulate our economy by providing for dollars to go towards transportation and towards repairing and enhancing our infrastructure. Instead, we get caught up on messaging bills like the achieving less excess in regulation and requiring transparency act of 2014, also known as the ALERRT Act.

I oppose this bill for numerous reasons, the most important of which is that it would jeopardize critical public health and safety regulatory protections. For example, the bill requires agencies to consider potential costs and benefits associated with proposed and final rules, notwithstanding any other provisions of law. This supermandate would effectively trump all other statutes—such as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Occupational Safety and Health Act—that prohibit or limit the use of cost information in setting health and safety standards.

In addition, title II of the bill would require agencies and Federal courts to consider whether a rule has ''significant adverse effects on . . . the ability of United States-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises in domestic and export markets.'' The practical effect, Madam Chair, of this definition is that it will require agencies and the courts to consider the business and regulatory environment of other nations.

Consider, for example, a proposed rule that imposes heightened clean air requirements on American steel manufacturers. H.R. 2804 would necessarily require consideration of whether this regulation—which could potentially result in higher compliance costs—could make American steel products less competitive in a country, such as China, that has a much less stringent or no regulatory regime.

While the economic analysis under this requirement may be deceptively

simple, its dangerous ramifications for public health cannot be underestimated. Chinese officials have only recently begun to acknowledge the health hazard risks presented by extensive air pollution; and if you have been over there and tried to breathe, you know that the air is greatly polluted over there. And so the Chinese have finally awakened to that fact, but the end result is that the public health of Americans and the safety of the environment would be compromised so that American manufacturers can better compete with their foreign counterparts. This is a shortsighted regulatory race to the bottom that prioritizes profits over saving lives.

Another fundamental flaw with H.R. 2804 is that it will greatly lengthen and not shorten the already time-consuming process by which Federal rules are promulgated. Avoiding undue delay in rulemaking is important because strong regulation is vital to protecting Americans in nearly every aspect of their lives. On average, Madam Chair, it takes between 4 to 8 years for an agency to promulgate a new rule. But instead of streamlining the rulemaking process, this bill extensively adds numerous procedural hurdles to the process.

In title II of the bill, 60 additional procedural steps to the rulemaking process are included. Not only that, title II reinstates a long discredited rulemaking process that requires trial-type procedures. Known as formal rulemaking, this time-consuming process was widely rejected decades ago as being highly ineffective.

Recently proposed regulations that could be impacted by this and other provisions in the bill include rules implementing the Food Safety Modernization Act's standards to reduce food contaminants like salmonella, and that would help prevent 1.75 million cases of illness.

Another thing that would be interrupted, another rules process, strengthening chemical facility accident prevention standards in response to the 2013 fertilizer explosion in West, Texas, that resulted in the deaths of 12 volunteer firefighters and two other individuals.

Another interruption would be preventing the manufacture and distribution of tainted and counterfeit prescription drugs.

Also impacted would be the implementation of the Justice Department's national standards to prevent, detect, and respond to prison rape.

Another interruption would be adjusting the reimbursement rates to Medicare providers for end-stage renal disease and setting payments to primary care physicians under the Vaccines for Children Program.

It would also stop the establishment of meal requirements for the National School Lunch Program under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

It would prevent implementation of the Labor Department's standards for H–2B aliens in the United States.

For all of those reasons, Madam Chair, I oppose this legislation, and I would ask my colleagues to do the same.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time, and I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation.

Let's begin by reviewing the facts: $1.8 trillion plus—and that is just Federal Government regulations, mind you. That is not State government regulations or local government regulations. $1.8 trillion, one-eighth of the total economic production of our country, is spent on government regulations. Some of those regulations are necessary, and this law by no means eliminates the regulations. It puts them through a process whereby we will know that the regulations are needed and are done in the most cost-effective way and in the most commonsense way.

What will be the result of that? Lower costs for goods and services; lower taxes for Americans who face, right now, an average per-family cost of $11,500 a year in higher costs of goods and services and higher taxes as a result of regulatory burdens. So imagine if some of that money were reduced what the savings would be. Imagine what it would do to job creation in our country.

We have talked a lot about manufacturing here today. Last year, for the first time in history, manufacturing in the United States reached $2 trillion in production—$2 trillion. It sounds remarkable until you consider that regulations cost $1.86 trillion—just Federal Government regulations almost wiping out the entire economic production of the manufacturing sector of our economy if all those regulations apply to manufacturing, which, of course, they do not.

But consider the impact on individuals. Consider the impact upon Rob James, the city councilman in Avon Lake, Ohio, who is experiencing reduced revenues coming in to meet basic obligations like education and emergency services because regulations of power plants with unnecessary ideologically driven anti-fossil fuel burdensome regulations are expected to destroy jobs in Avon Lake.

Consider the job loss in the business of Mr. Allen Puckett and his brick manufacturing company in Mississippi who expects to have to lay off two-thirds of his employees because of the second round of sue-and-settle brick-making emissions regulation where somebody sues, and the regulatory agency makes a settlement of that in a friendly case that Mr. Puckett and his employees didn't even know about the process where the suit was being brought and couldn't enter into it and say this is what is going to happen if you have to implement these regulations.

Or consider the impact on the cost of buying a home, one of the basic parts of the American Dream, when Mr. Karl Harris of Wichita, Kansas, says that one-quarter of the cost—one-quarter of the cost of a home today is in the form of regulation, the cost of those regulations.

With this legislation in place, businesses across America and workers across America will experience an increase in their profitability and an increase in their wages. We don't need to have government interference in the marketplace with regard to wages. They would rise on their own if the government would take practical steps in reviewing regulations before they are implemented in this country.

Finally, let me say that this is all about the individual and their freedom. Government regulation suppresses freedom of ideas and of implementing new ways of doing things. Yes, we need to have regulations to protect safety in the workplace. Yes, we need to have regulations to protect the environment, but they need to be commonsense regulations that are going about doing what needs to be done and no more, and are going about doing what needs to be done in the most effective way, and they are going about doing what needs to be done in a way that the people who are going to be impacted by those regulations, who are going to see their businesses lost, their workers lose their jobs and not even have any notice that this is going to occur.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 2804, the "Achieving Less Excess in Regulation and Requiring Transparency Act of 2014," also known as the so-called ALERRT Act.

I oppose this bill for numerous reasons, the most of important of which is that it would jeopardize critical public health and safety regulatory protections.

For example, the bill requires agencies to consider potential costs and benefits associated with proposed and final rules "[N]withstanding any other provision of law."

This "supermandate" would effectively trump all other statutes—such as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Occupational Safety and Health Act—that prohibit or limit the use of cost information in setting health and safety standards.

In addition, title II of the bill would require agencies and federal courts to consider whether a rule has "significant adverse effects on . . . the ability of United States-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises in domestic and export markets." The practical effect of this definition is that it will require agencies and the courts to consider the business and regulatory environments of other nations.

Consider, for example, a proposed rule that imposes heightened clean air requirements on American steel manufacturers.

H.R. 2804 would necessarily require consideration of whether this regulation—which could potentially result in higher compliance costs—could make American steel products less competitive in a country, such as China, that has a much less stringent regulatory regime.

While the economic analysis under this requirement may be deceptively simple, its dangerous ramifications for public health cannot be underestimated. Chinese officials have only recently begun to acknowledge the health hazard risks presented by extensive air pollution that affects its cities, including its capital.

The end result is that the public health of Americans and the safety of the environment will be compromised so that American manufacturers can better compete with their foreign counterparts.

This is a shortsighted regulatory ''race to the bottom'' that prioritizes profits over saving lives.

Another fundamental flaw with H.R. 2804 is that it will greatly lengthen—not shorten—the already time-consuming process by which federal rules are promulgated.

Avoiding undue delay in rulemaking is important because strong regulation is vital to protecting Americans in nearly every aspect of their lives.

On average, it already takes between 4 to 8 years for an agency to promulgate a new rule.

But, instead of streamlining the rulemaking process, the bill extensively adds numerous procedural hurdles to this process.

Title II of the bill, for example, adds more than 60 additional procedural steps to the rulemaking process.

Not only that, title II re-institutes a long-discredited rulemaking process that requires ''trial-type'' procedures. Known as formal rulemaking, this time-consuming process was widely-rejected decades ago as being highly ineffective.

Recently proposed regulations that could be impacted by this and other provisions in the bill include rules: implementing the Food Safety Modernization Act's standards to reduce food contaminants like salmonella and that would help prevent 1.75 million illnesses; ''strengthening chemical facility accident prevention standards in response to the 2013 fertilizer explosion in West, Texas that resulted in the deaths of 12 volunteer firefighters and 2 other individuals; preventing the manufacture and distribution of tainted and counterfeit prescription drugs; implementing the Justice Department's National Standards to prevent, detect, and respond to prison rape; adjusting the reimbursement rates to Medicare providers for end-stage renal diseases; setting payments to primary care physicians under the Vaccines for Children Program; establishing meal requirements for the National School Lunch Program under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010; implementing Labor Department Standards for H–2B Aliens in the United States; establishing the subsistence allowance for veterans under the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program; and setting the Patent and Trademark Office's fees for patents.

And, this is just a small sample of the many kinds of protections that this bill would jeopardize. I could go on and on.

This also explains why more than 150 consumer groups, environmental organizations, labor unions, and other entities, strenuously oppose this bill. These organizations include: The AFL–CIO, The Alliance for Justice; The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; The American Lung Association; The Consumer Federation of America; Consumers Union; The International Brotherhood of Teamsters; The UAW; The League of Conservation Voters; The National Women's Law Center; The Natural Resources Defense Council; People for the American Way; Public Citizen; the Sierra Club; Service Employees International Union; the Union of Concerned Scientists; and the United Steelworkers; just to name a few.

Likewise, the Administration issued a strongly worded veto threat against this bill. It warns that the bill ''would impose unneeded and costly analytical and procedural requirements on agencies that would prevent them from performing their statutory duties.''

Finally, H.R. 2804 will give well-funded, anti-regulatory interests even more opportunities to derail rulemaking.

Agencies often spend many months, if not years, to perfect theses rules based on feedback from these sources and their own expertise.

Under the bill, however, well-funded regulated industries could exert even more influence over federal rulemaking than they already do.

For instance, the bill's less deferential standard of judicial review gives additional opportunities for anti-regulatory interests to engage in dilatory tactics that can substantially slow down an already slow rulemaking process.

As Public Citizen, a nonprofit consumer advocacy organization representing consumer interests, warns: ''This new and inappropriate role for the courts is a recipe for more activist judges, increased litigation, endless delays, and more rather than less uncertainty for regulated parties and the public.''

Similarly, the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service has expressed concerns about the provision's potential to make the rulemaking process more lengthy and costly.

The American people deserve better.

Accordingly, I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this seriously flawed bill.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113–38. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

H.R. 2804

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Achieving Less Excess in Regulation and Requiring Transparency Act of 2014'' or as the ''ALERRT Act of 2014''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—ALL ECONOMIC REGULATIONS ARE TRANSPARENT ACT

Sec. 101. Short title.
Sec. 102. Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs publication of information relating to rules.

TITLE II—REGULATORY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Sec. 201. Short title.
Sec. 202. Definitions.
Sec. 203. Rule making.
Sec. 204. Agency guidance; procedures to issue major guidance; presidential authority to issue guidelines for issuance of guidance.
Sec. 205. Hearings; presiding employees; powers and duties; burden of proof; evidence; record as basis of decision.
Sec. 206. Actions reviewable.
Sec. 207. Scope of review.
Sec. 208. Added definition.
Sec. 209. Effective date.

TITLE III—REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS ACT

Sec. 301. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 302. Clarification and expansion of rules covered by the Regulatory Flexibility Act.
Sec. 303. Expansion of report of regulatory agenda.
Sec. 304. Requirements providing for more detailed analyses.
Sec. 305. Repeal of waiver and delay authority; additional powers of the Chief Counsel for Advocacy.
Sec. 306. Procedures for gathering comments.
Sec. 307. Periodic review of rules.
Sec. 308. Judicial review of compliance with the requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act available after publication of the final rule.
Sec. 309. Jurisdiction of court of appeals over rules implementing the Regulatory Flexibility Act.
Sec. 310. Establishment and approval of small business concern size standards by Chief Counsel for Advocacy.
Sec. 311. Clerical amendments.
Sec. 312. Agency preparation of guides.
Sec. 313. Comptroller General report.

TITLE IV—SUNSHINE FOR REGULATORY DECREES AND SETTLEMENTS ACT

Sec. 401. Short title.
Sec. 402. Definitions.
Sec. 403. Consent decree and settlement reform.
Sec. 404. Motions to modify consent decrees.
Sec. 405. Effective date.

TITLE I—ALL ECONOMIC REGULATIONS ARE TRANSPARENT ACT

SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''All Economic Regulations are Transparent Act of 2014'' or the ''ALERT Act of 2014''.

SEC. 102. OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION RELATING TO RULES.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after chapter 6, the following new chapter:

''CHAPTER 6A—OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION RELATING TO RULES

''Sec.
''651. Agency monthly submission to Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.
''652. Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs Publications.
''653. Requirement for rules to appear in agency-specific monthly publication.
''654. Definitions.

''§ 651. Agency monthly submission to Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs

''On a monthly basis, the head of each agency shall submit to the Administrator of

the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (referred to in this chapter as the 'Administrator'), in such a manner as the Administrator may reasonably require, the following information:

''(1) For each rule that the agency expects to propose or finalize during the following year:

''(A) A summary of the nature of the rule, including the regulation identifier number and the docket number for the rule.

''(B) The objectives of and legal basis for the issuance of the rule, including—

''(i) any statutory or judicial deadline; and

''(ii) whether the legal basis restricts or precludes the agency from conducting an analysis of the costs or benefits of the rule during the rule making, and if not, whether the agency plans to conduct an analysis of the costs or benefits of the rule during the rule making.

''(C) Whether the agency plans to claim an exemption from the requirements of section 553 pursuant to section 553(b)(B).

''(D) The stage of the rule making as of the date of submission.

''(E) Whether the rule is subject to review under section 610.

''(2) For any rule for which the agency expects to finalize during the following year and has issued a general notice of proposed rule making—

''(A) an approximate schedule for completing action on the rule;

''(B) an estimate of whether the rule will cost—

''(i) less than $50,000,000;

''(ii) $50,000,000 or more but less than $100,000,000;

''(iii) $100,000,000 or more but less than $500,000,000;

''(iv) $500,000,000 or more but less than $1,000,000,000;

''(v) $1,000,000,000 or more but less than $5,000,000,000;

''(vi) $5,000,000,000 or more but less than $10,000,000,000; or

''(vii) $10,000,000,000 or more; and

''(C) any estimate of the economic effects of the rule, including any estimate of the net effect that the rule will have on the number of jobs in the United States, that was considered in drafting the rule. If such estimate is not available, a statement affirming that no information on the economic effects, including the effect on the number of jobs, of the rule has been considered.

''§ 652. Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs Publications

''(a) AGENCY-SPECIFIC INFORMATION PUBLISHED MONTHLY.—Not later than 30 days after the submission of information pursuant to section 651, the Administrator shall make such information publicly available on the Internet.

''(b) CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT OF AGENCY RULE MAKING PUBLISHED ANNUALLY.—

''(1) PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER.—Not later than October 1 of each year, the Administrator shall publish in the Federal Register, for the previous year the following:

''(A) The information that the Administrator received from the head of each agency under section 651.

''(B) The number of rules and a list of each such rule—

''(i) that was proposed by each agency, including, for each such rule, an indication of whether the issuing agency conducted an analysis of the costs or benefits of the rule; and

''(ii) that was finalized by each agency, including for each such rule an indication of whether—

''(I) the issuing agency conducted an analysis of the costs or benefits of the rule;

''(II) the agency claimed an exemption from the procedures under section 553 pursuant to section 553(b)(B); and

''(III) the rule was issued pursuant to a statutory mandate or the rule making is committed to agency discretion by law.

''(C) The number of agency actions and a list of each such action taken by each agency that—

''(i) repealed a rule;

''(ii) reduced the scope of a rule;

''(iii) reduced the cost of a rule; or

''(iv) accelerated the expiration date of a rule.

''(D) The total cost (without reducing the cost by any offsetting benefits) of all rules proposed or finalized, and the number of rules for which an estimate of the cost of the rule was not available.

''(2) PUBLICATION ON THE INTERNET.—Not later than October 1 of each year, the Administrator shall make publicly available on the Internet the following:

''(A) The analysis of the costs or benefits, if conducted, for each proposed rule or final rule issued by an agency for the previous year.

''(B) The docket number and regulation identifier number for each proposed or final rule issued by an agency for the previous year.

''(C) The number of rules and a list of each such rule reviewed by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget for the previous year, and the authority under which each such review was conducted.

''(D) The number of rules and a list of each such rule for which the head of an agency completed a review under section 610 for the previous year.

''(E) The number of rules and a list of each such rule submitted to the Comptroller General under section 801.

''(F) The number of rules and a list of each such rule for which a resolution of disapproval was introduced in either the House of Representatives or the Senate under section 802.

''§ 653. Requirement for rules to appear in agency-specific monthly publication

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), a rule may not take effect until the information required to be made publicly available on the Internet regarding such rule pursuant to section 652(a) has been so available for not less than 6 months.

''(b) EXCEPTIONS.—The requirement of subsection (a) shall not apply in the case of a rule—

''(1) for which the agency issuing the rule claims an exception under section 553(b)(B); or

''(2) which the President determines by Executive Order should take effect because the rule is—

''(A) necessary because of an imminent threat to health or safety or other emergency;

''(B) necessary for the enforcement of criminal laws;

''(C) necessary for national security; or

''(D) issued pursuant to any statute implementing an international trade agreement.

''§ 654. Definitions

''In this chapter, the terms 'agency', 'agency action', 'rule', and 'rule making' have the meanings given those terms in section 551.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of chapters for part I of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to chapter 5, the following:

''6. The Analysis of Regulatory Functions	601
''6A. Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs Publication of Information Relating to Rules	651''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(1) AGENCY MONTHLY SUBMISSION TO THE OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS.—The first submission required pursuant to section 651 of title 5, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall be submitted not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this title, and monthly thereafter.

(2) CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT OF AGENCY RULE MAKING.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (b) of section 652 of title 5, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take effect on the date that is 60 days after the date of the enactment of this title.

(B) DEADLINE.—The first requirement to publish or make available, as the case may be, under subsection (b) of section 652 of title 5, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall be the first October 1 after the effective date of such subsection.

(C) FIRST PUBLICATION.—The requirement under section 652(b)(2)(A) of title 5, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall include for the first publication, any analysis of the costs or benefits conducted for a proposed or final rule, for the 10 years before the date of the enactment of this title.

(3) REQUIREMENT FOR RULES TO APPEAR IN AGENCY-SPECIFIC MONTHLY PUBLICATION.—Section 653 of title 5, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take effect on the date that is 8 months after the date of the enactment of this title.

TITLE II—REGULATORY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Regulatory Accountability Act of 2014''.

SEC. 202. DEFINITIONS.

Section 551 of title 5, United States Code, 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) 'major rule' means any rule that the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs determines is likely to impose—

''(A) an annual cost on the economy of $100,000,000 or more, adjusted annually for inflation;

''(B) a major increase in costs or prices for consumers, individual industries, Federal, State, local, or tribal government agencies, or geographic regions;

''(C) significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or on the ability of United States-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises in domestic and export markets; or

''(D) significant impacts on multiple sectors of the economy;

''(16) 'high-impact rule' means any rule that the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs determines is likely to impose an annual cost on the economy of $1,000,000,000 or more, adjusted annually for inflation;

''(17) 'guidance' means an agency statement of general applicability and future effect, other than a regulatory action, that sets forth a policy on a statutory, regulatory or technical issue or an interpretation of a statutory or regulatory issue;

''(18) 'major guidance' means guidance that the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs finds is likely to lead to—

''(A) an annual cost on the economy of $100,000,000 or more, adjusted annually for inflation;

''(B) a major increase in costs or prices for consumers, individual industries, Federal, State, local or tribal government agencies, or geographic regions;

''(C) significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or on the ability of United States-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises in domestic and export markets; or

''(D) significant impacts on multiple sectors of the economy;

''(19) the 'Information Quality Act' means section 515 of Public Law 106–554, the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2001, and guidelines issued by the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs or other agencies pursuant to the Act; and

''(20) the 'Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs' means the office established under section 3503 of chapter 35 of title 44 and any successor to that office.''.

SEC. 203. RULE MAKING.

(a) Section 553(a) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking ''(a) This section applies'' and inserting ''(a) APPLICABILITY.—This section applies''.

(b) Section 553 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking subsections (b) through (e) and inserting the following:

''(b) RULE MAKING CONSIDERATIONS.—In a rule making, an agency shall make all preliminary and final factual determinations based on evidence and consider, in addition to other applicable considerations, the following:

''(1) The legal authority under which a rule may be proposed, including whether a rule making is required by statute, and if so, whether by a specific date, or whether the agency has discretion to commence a rule making.

''(2) Other statutory considerations applicable to whether the agency can or should propose a rule or undertake other agency action.

''(3) The specific nature and significance of the problem the agency may address with a rule (including the degree and nature of risks the problem poses and the priority of addressing those risks compared to other matters or activities within the agency's jurisdiction), whether the problem warrants new agency action, and the countervailing risks that may be posed by alternatives for new agency action.

''(4) Whether existing rules have created or contributed to the problem the agency may address with a rule and whether those rules could be amended or rescinded to address the problem in whole or part.

''(5) Any reasonable alternatives for a new rule or other response identified by the agency or interested persons, including not only responses that mandate particular conduct or manners of compliance, but also—

''(A) the alternative of no Federal response;

''(B) amending or rescinding existing rules;

''(C) potential regional, State, local, or tribal regulatory action or other responses that could be taken in lieu of agency action; and

''(D) potential responses that—

''(i) specify performance objectives rather than conduct or manners of compliance;

''(ii) establish economic incentives to encourage desired behavior;

''(iii) provide information upon which choices can be made by the public; or

''(iv) incorporate other innovative alternatives rather than agency actions that specify conduct or manners of compliance.

''(6) Notwithstanding any other provision of law—

''(A) the potential costs and benefits associated with potential alternative rules and other responses considered under section 553(b)(5), including direct, indirect, and cumulative costs and benefits and estimated impacts on jobs (including an estimate of the net gain or loss in domestic jobs), economic growth, innovation, and economic competitiveness;

''(B) means to increase the cost-effectiveness of any Federal response; and

''(C) incentives for innovation, consistency, predictability, lower costs of enforcement and compliance (to government entities, regulated entities, and the public), and flexibility.

''(c) ADVANCE NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE MAKING FOR MAJOR RULES, HIGH-IMPACT RULES, AND RULES INVOLVING NOVEL LEGAL OR POLICY ISSUES.—In the case of a rule making for a major rule or high-impact rule or a rule that involves a novel legal or policy issue arising out of statutory mandates, not later than 90 days before a notice of proposed rule making is published in the Federal Register, an agency shall publish advance notice of proposed rule making in the Federal Register. In publishing such advance notice, the agency shall—

''(1) include a written statement identifying, at a minimum—

''(A) the nature and significance of the problem the agency may address with a rule, including data and other evidence and information on which the agency expects to rely for the proposed rule;

''(B) the legal authority under which a rule may be proposed, including whether a rule making is required by statute, and if so, whether by a specific date, or whether the agency has discretion to commence a rule making;

''(C) preliminary information available to the agency concerning the other considerations specified in subsection (b); and

''(D) in the case of a rule that involves a novel legal or policy issue arising out of statutory mandates, the nature of and potential reasons to adopt the novel legal or policy position upon which the agency may base a proposed rule;

''(2) solicit written data, views or argument from interested persons concerning the information and issues addressed in the advance notice; and

''(3) provide for a period of not fewer than 60 days for interested persons to submit such written data, views, or argument to the agency.

''(d) NOTICES OF PROPOSED RULE MAKING; DETERMINATIONS OF OTHER AGENCY COURSE.—(1) Before it determines to propose a rule, and following completion of procedures under subsection (c), if applicable, the agency shall consult with the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. If the agency thereafter determines to propose a rule, the agency shall publish a notice of proposed rule making, which shall include—

''(A) a statement of the time, place, and nature of public rule making proceedings;

''(B) reference to the legal authority under which the rule is proposed;

''(C) the terms of the proposed rule;

''(D) a description of information known to the agency on the subject and issues of the proposed rule, including but not limited to—

''(i) a summary of information known to the agency concerning the considerations specified in subsection (b);

''(ii) a summary of additional information the agency provided to and obtained from interested persons under subsection (c);

''(iii) a summary of any preliminary risk assessment or regulatory impact analysis performed by the agency; and

''(iv) information specifically identifying all data, studies, models, and other evidence or information considered or used by the agency in connection with its determination to propose the rule;

''(E)(i) a reasoned preliminary determination of need for the rule based on the information described under subparagraph (D); and

''(ii) an additional statement of whether a rule is required by statute;

''(F) a reasoned preliminary determination that the benefits of the proposed rule meet the relevant statutory objectives and justify the costs of the proposed rule (including all costs to be considered under subsection (b)(6)), based on the information described under subparagraph (D);

''(G) a discussion of—

''(i) the alternatives to the proposed rule, and other alternative responses, considered by the agency under subsection (b);

''(ii) the costs and benefits of those alternatives (including all costs to be considered under subsection (b)(6));

''(iii) whether those alternatives meet relevant statutory objectives; and

''(iv) why the agency did not propose any of those alternatives; and

''(H)(i) a statement of whether existing rules have created or contributed to the problem the agency seeks to address with the proposed rule; and

''(ii) if so, whether or not the agency proposes to amend or rescind any such rules, and why.

All information provided to or considered by the agency, and steps to obtain information by the agency, in connection with its determination to propose the rule, including any preliminary risk assessment or regulatory impact analysis prepared by the agency and all other information prepared or described by the agency under subparagraph (D) and, at the discretion of the President or the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, information provided by that Office in consultations with the agency, shall be placed in the docket for the proposed rule and made accessible to the public by electronic means and otherwise for the public's use when the notice of proposed rule making is published.

''(2)(A) If the agency undertakes procedures under subsection (c) and determines thereafter not to propose a rule, the agency shall, following consultation with the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, publish a notice of determination of other agency course. A notice of determination of other agency course shall include information required by paragraph (1)(D) to be included in a notice of proposed rule making and a description of the alternative response the agency determined to adopt.

''(B) If in its determination of other agency course the agency makes a determination to amend or rescind an existing rule, the agency need not undertake additional proceedings under subsection (c) before it publishes a notice of proposed rule making to amend or rescind the existing rule.

All information provided to or considered by the agency, and steps to obtain information by the agency, in connection with its determination of other agency course, including but not limited to any preliminary risk assessment or regulatory impact analysis prepared by the agency and all other information that would be required to be prepared or described by the agency under paragraph (1)(D) if the agency had determined to publish a notice of proposed rule making and, at the discretion of the President or the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, information provided by that Office in consultations with the agency, shall be placed in the docket for the determination and made accessible to the public by electronic means and otherwise for the public's use

when the notice of determination is published.

''(3) After notice of proposed rule making required by this section, the agency shall provide interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making through submission of written data, views, or arguments with or without opportunity for oral presentation, except that—

''(A) if a hearing is required under paragraph (4)(B) or subsection (e), opportunity for oral presentation shall be provided pursuant to that requirement; or

''(B) when other than under subsection (e) of this section rules are required by statute or at the discretion of the agency to be made on the record after opportunity for an agency hearing, sections 556 and 557 shall apply, and paragraph (4), the requirements of subsection (e) to receive comment outside of the procedures of sections 556 and 557, and the petition procedures of subsection (e)(6) shall not apply.

The agency shall provide not fewer than 60 days for interested persons to submit written data, views, or argument (or 120 days in the case of a proposed major or high-impact rule).

''(4)(A) Within 30 days of publication of notice of proposed rule making, a member of the public may petition for a hearing in accordance with section 556 to determine whether any evidence or other information upon which the agency bases the proposed rule fails to comply with the Information Quality Act.

''(B)(i) The agency may, upon review of the petition, determine without further process to exclude from the rule making the evidence or other information that is the subject of the petition and, if appropriate, withdraw the proposed rule. The agency shall promptly publish any such determination.

''(ii) If the agency does not resolve the petition under the procedures of clause (i), it shall grant any such petition that presents a prima facie case that evidence or other information upon which the agency bases the proposed rule fails to comply with the Information Quality Act, hold the requested hearing not later than 30 days after receipt of the petition, provide a reasonable opportunity for cross-examination at the hearing, and decide the issues presented by the petition not later than 60 days after receipt of the petition. The agency may deny any petition that it determines does not present such a prima facie case.

''(C) There shall be no judicial review of the agency's disposition of issues considered and decided or determined under subparagraph (B)(ii) until judicial review of the agency's final action. There shall be no judicial review of an agency's determination to withdraw a proposed rule under subparagraph (B)(i) on the basis of the petition.

''(D) Failure to petition for a hearing under this paragraph shall not preclude judicial review of any claim based on the Information Quality Act under chapter 7 of this title.

''(e) HEARINGS FOR HIGH-IMPACT RULES.—Following notice of a proposed rule making, receipt of comments on the proposed rule, and any hearing held under subsection (d)(4), and before adoption of any high-impact rule, the agency shall hold a hearing in accordance with sections 556 and 557, unless such hearing is waived by all participants in the rule making other than the agency. The agency shall provide a reasonable opportunity for cross-examination at such hearing. The hearing shall be limited to the following issues of fact, except that participants at the hearing other than the agency may waive determination of any such issue:

''(1) Whether the agency's asserted factual predicate for the rule is supported by the evidence.

''(2) Whether there is an alternative to the proposed rule that would achieve the relevant statutory objectives at a lower cost (including all costs to be considered under subsection (b)(6)) than the proposed rule.

''(3) If there is more than one alternative to the proposed rule that would achieve the relevant statutory objectives at a lower cost than the proposed rule, which alternative would achieve the relevant statutory objectives at the lowest cost.

''(4) Whether, if the agency proposes to adopt a rule that is more costly than the least costly alternative that would achieve the relevant statutory objectives (including all costs to be considered under subsection (b)(6)), the additional benefits of the more costly rule exceed the additional costs of the more costly rule.

''(5) Whether the evidence and other information upon which the agency bases the proposed rule meets the requirements of the Information Quality Act.

''(6) Upon petition by an interested person who has participated in the rule making, other issues relevant to the rule making, unless the agency determines that consideration of the issues at the hearing would not advance consideration of the rule or would, in light of the nature of the need for agency action, unreasonably delay completion of the rule making. An agency shall grant or deny a petition under this paragraph within 30 days of its receipt of the petition.

No later than 45 days before any hearing held under this subsection or sections 556 and 557, the agency shall publish in the Federal Register a notice specifying the proposed rule to be considered at such hearing, the issues to be considered at the hearing, and the time and place for such hearing, except that such notice may be issued not later than 15 days before a hearing held under subsection (d)(4)(B).

''(f) FINAL RULES.—(1) The agency shall adopt a rule only following consultation with the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to facilitate compliance with applicable rule making requirements.

''(2) The agency shall adopt a rule only on the basis of the best reasonably obtainable scientific, technical, economic, and other evidence and information concerning the need for, consequences of, and alternatives to the rule.

''(3)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the agency shall adopt the least costly rule considered during the rule making (including all costs to be considered under subsection (b)(6)) that meets relevant statutory objectives.

''(B) The agency may adopt a rule that is more costly than the least costly alternative that would achieve the relevant statutory objectives only if the additional benefits of the more costly rule justify its additional costs and only if the agency explains its reason for doing so based on interests of public health, safety or welfare that are clearly within the scope of the statutory provision authorizing the rule.

''(4) When it adopts a final rule, the agency shall publish a notice of final rule making. The notice shall include—

''(A) a concise, general statement of the rule's basis and purpose;

''(B) the agency's reasoned final determination of need for a rule to address the problem the agency seeks to address with the rule, including a statement of whether a rule is required by statute and a summary of any final risk assessment or regulatory impact analysis prepared by the agency;

''(C) the agency's reasoned final determination that the benefits of the rule meet the relevant statutory objectives and justify the rule's costs (including all costs to be considered under subsection (b)(6));

''(D) the agency's reasoned final determination not to adopt any of the alternatives to the proposed rule considered by the agency during the rule making, including—

''(i) the agency's reasoned final determination that no alternative considered achieved the relevant statutory objectives with lower costs (including all costs to be considered under subsection (b)(6)) than the rule; or

''(ii) the agency's reasoned determination that its adoption of a more costly rule complies with subsection (f)(3)(B);

''(E) the agency's reasoned final determination—

''(i) that existing rules have not created or contributed to the problem the agency seeks to address with the rule; or

''(ii) that existing rules have created or contributed to the problem the agency seeks to address with the rule, and, if so—

''(I) why amendment or rescission of such existing rules is not alone sufficient to respond to the problem; and

''(II) whether and how the agency intends to amend or rescind the existing rule separate from adoption of the rule;

''(F) the agency's reasoned final determination that the evidence and other information upon which the agency bases the rule complies with the Information Quality Act; and

''(G)(i) for any major rule or high-impact rule, the agency's plan for review of the rule no less than every ten years to determine whether, based upon evidence, there remains a need for the rule, whether the rule is in fact achieving statutory objectives, whether the rule's benefits continue to justify its costs, and whether the rule can be modified or rescinded to reduce costs while continuing to achieve statutory objectives; and

''(ii) review of a rule under a plan required by clause (i) of this subparagraph shall take into account the factors and criteria set forth in subsections (b) through (f) of section 553 of this title.

All information considered by the agency in connection with its adoption of the rule, and, at the discretion of the President or the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, information provided by that Office in consultations with the agency, shall be placed in the docket for the rule and made accessible to the public for the public's use no later than when the rule is adopted.

''(g) EXCEPTIONS FROM NOTICE AND HEARING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) Except when notice or hearing is required by statute, the following do not apply to interpretive rules, general statements of policy, or rules of agency organization, procedure, or practice:

''(A) Subsections (c) through (e).

''(B) Paragraphs (1) through (3) of subsection (f).

''(C) Subparagraphs (B) through (H) of subsection (f)(4).

''(2)(A) When the agency for good cause, based upon evidence, finds (and incorporates the finding and a brief statement of reasons therefor in the rules issued) that compliance with subsection (c), (d), or (e) or requirements to render final determinations under subsection (f) of this section before the issuance of an interim rule is impracticable or contrary to the public interest, including interests of national security, such subsections or requirements to render final determinations shall not apply to the agency's adoption of an interim rule.

''(B) If, following compliance with subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the agency adopts an interim rule, it shall commence proceedings that comply fully with subsections (d) through (f) of this section immediately upon publication of the interim rule, shall treat the

publication of the interim rule as publication of a notice of proposed rule making and shall not be required to issue supplemental notice other than to complete full compliance with subsection (d). No less than 270 days from publication of the interim rule (or 18 months in the case of a major rule or high-impact rule), the agency shall complete rule making under subsections (d) through (f) of this subsection and take final action to adopt a final rule or rescind the interim rule. If the agency fails to take timely final action, the interim rule will cease to have the effect of law.

''(C) Other than in cases involving interests of national security, upon the agency's publication of an interim rule without compliance with subsections (c), (d), or (e) or requirements to render final determinations under subsection (f) of this section, an interested party may seek immediate judicial review under chapter 7 of this title of the agency's determination to adopt such interim rule. The record on such review shall include all documents and information considered by the agency and any additional information presented by a party that the court determines necessary to consider to assure justice.

''(3) When the agency for good cause finds (and incorporates the finding and a brief statement of reasons therefor in the rules issued) that notice and public procedure thereon are unnecessary, including because agency rule making is undertaken only to correct a de minimis technical or clerical error in a previously issued rule or for other noncontroversial purposes, the agency may publish a rule without compliance with subsections (c), (d), (e), or (f)(1)–(3) and (f)(4)(B)–(F). If the agency receives significant adverse comment within 60 days after publication of the rule, it shall treat the notice of the rule as a notice of proposed rule making and complete rule making in compliance with subsections (d) and (f).

''(h) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HEARINGS.—When a hearing is required under subsection (e) or is otherwise required by statute or at the agency's discretion before adoption of a rule, the agency shall comply with the requirements of sections 556 and 557 in addition to the requirements of subsection (f) in adopting the rule and in providing notice of the rule's adoption.

''(i) DATE OF PUBLICATION OF RULE.—The required publication or service of a substantive final or interim rule shall be made not less than 30 days before the effective date of the rule, except—

''(1) a substantive rule which grants or recognizes an exemption or relieves a restriction;

''(2) interpretive rules and statements of policy; or

''(3) as otherwise provided by the agency for good cause found and published with the rule.

''(j) RIGHT TO PETITION.—Each agency shall give an interested person the right to petition for the issuance, amendment, or repeal of a rule.

''(k) RULE MAKING GUIDELINES.—(1)(A) The Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs shall establish guidelines for the assessment, including quantitative and qualitative assessment, of the costs and benefits of proposed and final rules and other economic issues or issues related to risk that are relevant to rule making under this title. The rigor of cost-benefit analysis required by such guidelines shall be commensurate, in the Administrator's determination, with the economic impact of the rule.

''(B) To ensure that agencies use the best available techniques to quantify and evaluate anticipated present and future benefits, costs, other economic issues, and risks as accurately as possible, the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs shall regularly update guidelines established under paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection.

''(2) The Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs shall also issue guidelines to promote coordination, simplification and harmonization of agency rules during the rule making process and otherwise. Such guidelines shall assure that each agency avoids regulations that are inconsistent or incompatible with, or duplicative of, its other regulations and those of other Federal agencies and drafts its regulations to be simple and easy to understand, with the goal of minimizing the potential for uncertainty and litigation arising from such uncertainty.

''(3) To ensure consistency in Federal rule making, the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs shall—

''(A) issue guidelines and otherwise take action to ensure that rule makings conducted in whole or in part under procedures specified in provisions of law other than those of subchapter II of this title conform to the fullest extent allowed by law with the procedures set forth in section 553 of this title; and

''(B) issue guidelines for the conduct of hearings under subsections 553(d)(4) and 553(e) of this section, including to assure a reasonable opportunity for cross-examination. Each agency shall adopt regulations for the conduct of hearings consistent with the guidelines issued under this subparagraph.

''(4) The Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs shall issue guidelines pursuant to the Information Quality Act to apply in rule making proceedings under sections 553, 556, and 557 of this title. In all cases, such guidelines, and the Administrator's specific determinations regarding agency compliance with such guidelines, shall be entitled to judicial deference.

''(l) INCLUSION IN THE RECORD OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION.—The agency shall include in the record for a rule making, and shall make available by electronic means and otherwise, all documents and information prepared or considered by the agency during the proceeding, including, at the discretion of the President or the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, documents and information communicated by that Office during consultation with the Agency.

''(m) MONETARY POLICY EXEMPTION.—Nothing in subsection (b)(6), subparagraphs (F) and (G) of subsection (d)(1), subsection (e), subsection (f)(3), and subparagraphs (C) and (D) of subsection (f)(5) shall apply to rule makings that concern monetary policy proposed or implemented by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System or the Federal Open Market Committee.''.

SEC. 204. AGENCY GUIDANCE; PROCEDURES TO ISSUE MAJOR GUIDANCE; PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORITY TO ISSUE GUIDELINES FOR ISSUANCE OF GUIDANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 553 the following new section:

''§ 553a. Agency guidance; procedures to issue major guidance; authority to issue guidelines for issuance of guidance

''(a) Before issuing any major guidance, or guidance that involves a novel legal or policy issue arising out of statutory mandates, an agency shall—

''(1) make and document a reasoned determination that—

''(A) assures that such guidance is understandable and complies with relevant statutory objectives and regulatory provisions (including any statutory deadlines for agency action);

''(B) summarizes the evidence and data on which the agency will base the guidance;

''(C) identifies the costs and benefits (including all costs to be considered during a rule making under section 553(b) of this title) of conduct conforming to such guidance and assures that such benefits justify such costs; and

''(D) describes alternatives to such guidance and their costs and benefits (including all costs to be considered during a rule making under section 553(b) of this title) and explains why the agency rejected those alternatives; and

''(2) confer with the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs on the issuance of such guidance to assure that the guidance is reasonable, understandable, consistent with relevant statutory and regulatory provisions and requirements or practices of other agencies, does not produce costs that are unjustified by the guidance's benefits, and is otherwise appropriate.

Upon issuing major guidance, or guidance that involves a novel legal or policy issue arising out of statutory mandates, the agency shall publish the documentation required by subparagraph (1) by electronic means and otherwise.

''(b) Agency guidance—

''(1) is not legally binding and may not be relied upon by an agency as legal grounds for agency action;

''(2) shall state in a plain, prominent and permanent manner that it is not legally binding; and

''(3) shall, at the time it is issued or upon request, be made available by the issuing agency to interested persons and the public by electronic means and otherwise.

Agencies shall avoid the issuance of guidance that is inconsistent or incompatible with, or duplicative of, the agency's governing statutes or regulations, with the goal of minimizing the potential for uncertainty and litigation arising from such uncertainty.

''(c) The Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs shall have authority to issue guidelines for use by the agencies in the issuance of major guidance and other guidance. Such guidelines shall assure that each agency avoids issuing guidance documents that are inconsistent or incompatible with, or duplicative of, the law, its other regulations, or the regulations of other Federal agencies and drafts its guidance documents to be simple and easy to understand, with the goal of minimizing the potential for uncertainty and litigation arising from such uncertainty.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 553 the following new item:

''553a. Agency guidance; procedures to issue major guidance; authority to issue guidelines for issuance of guidance.''.

SEC. 205. HEARINGS; PRESIDING EMPLOYEES; POWERS AND DUTIES; BURDEN OF PROOF; EVIDENCE; RECORD AS BASIS OF DECISION.

Section 556 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking subsection (e) and inserting the following:

''(e)(1) The transcript of testimony and exhibits, together with all papers and requests filed in the proceeding, constitutes the exclusive record for decision in accordance with section 557 and shall be made available to the parties and the public by electronic means and, upon payment of lawfully prescribed costs, otherwise. When an agency decision rests on official notice of a material

fact not appearing in the evidence in the record, a party is entitled, on timely request, to an opportunity to show the contrary.

''(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1) of this subsection, in a proceeding held under this section pursuant to section 553(d)(4) or 553(e), the record for decision shall also include any information that is part of the record of proceedings under section 553.

''(f) When an agency conducts rule making under this section and section 557 directly after concluding proceedings upon an advance notice of proposed rule making under section 553(c), the matters to be considered and determinations to be made shall include, among other relevant matters and determinations, the matters and determinations described in subsections (b) and (f) of section 553.

''(g) Upon receipt of a petition for a hearing under this section, the agency shall grant the petition in the case of any major rule, unless the agency reasonably determines that a hearing would not advance consideration of the rule or would, in light of the need for agency action, unreasonably delay completion of the rule making. The agency shall publish its decision to grant or deny the petition when it renders the decision, including an explanation of the grounds for decision. The information contained in the petition shall in all cases be included in the administrative record. This subsection shall not apply to rule makings that concern monetary policy proposed or implemented by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System or the Federal Open Market Committee.''.

SEC. 206. ACTIONS REVIEWABLE.

Section 704 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''Agency action made'' and inserting ''(a) Agency action made''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following: ''Denial by an agency of a correction request or, where administrative appeal is provided for, denial of an appeal, under an administrative mechanism described in subsection (b)(2)(B) of the Information Quality Act, or the failure of an agency within 90 days to grant or deny such request or appeal, shall be final action for purposes of this section.

''(b) Other than in cases involving interests of national security, notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, upon the agency's publication of an interim rule without compliance with section 553(c), (d), or (e) or requirements to render final determinations under subsection (f) of section 553, an interested party may seek immediate judicial review under this chapter of the agency's determination to adopt such rule on an interim basis. Review shall be limited to whether the agency abused its discretion to adopt the interim rule without compliance with section 553(c), (d), or (e) or without rendering final determinations under subsection (f) of section 553.''.

SEC. 207. SCOPE OF REVIEW.

Section 706 of title 5, United States Code is amended—

(1) by striking ''To the extent necessary'' and inserting ''(a) To the extent necessary'';

(2) in paragraph (2)(A) of subsection (a) (as designated by paragraph (1) of this section), by inserting after ''in accordance with law'' the following: ''(including the Information Quality Act)''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) The court shall not defer to the agency's—

''(1) interpretation of an agency rule if the agency did not comply with the procedures of section 553 or sections 556–557 of chapter 5 of this title to issue the interpretation;

''(2) determination of the costs and benefits or other economic or risk assessment of the action, if the agency failed to conform to guidelines on such determinations and assessments established by the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs under section 553(k);

''(3) determinations made in the adoption of an interim rule; or

''(4) guidance.

''(c) The court shall review agency denials of petitions under section 553(e)(6) or any other petition for a hearing under sections 556 and 557 for abuse of agency discretion.''.

SEC. 208. ADDED DEFINITION.

Section 701(b) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''and'' at the end;

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

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) 'substantial evidence' means such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion in light of the record considered as a whole, taking into account whatever in the record fairly detracts from the weight of the evidence relied upon by the agency to support its decision.''.

SEC. 209. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by this title to—

(1) sections 553, 556, and 704 of title 5, United States Code;

(2) subsection (b) of section 701 of such title;

(3) paragraphs (2) and (3) of section 706(b) of such title; and

(4) subsection (c) of section 706 of such title,

shall not apply to any rule makings pending or completed on the date of enactment of this title.

TITLE III—REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS ACT

SEC. 301. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

This title may be cited as the ''Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2014''.

SEC. 302. CLARIFICATION AND EXPANSION OF RULES COVERED BY THE REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ACT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 601 of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(2) RULE.—The term 'rule' has the meaning given such term in section 551(4) of this title, except that such term does not include a rule pertaining to the protection of the rights of and benefits for veterans or a rule of particular (and not general) applicability relating to rates, wages, corporate or financial structures or reorganizations thereof, prices, facilities, appliances, services, or allowances therefor or to valuations, costs or accounting, or practices relating to such rates, wages, structures, prices, appliances, services, or allowances.''.

(b) INCLUSION OF RULES WITH INDIRECT EFFECTS.—Section 601 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(9) ECONOMIC IMPACT.—The term 'economic impact' means, with respect to a proposed or final rule—

''(A) any direct economic effect on small entities of such rule; and

''(B) any indirect economic effect (including compliance costs and effects on revenue) on small entities which is reasonably foreseeable and results from such rule (without regard to whether small entities will be directly regulated by the rule).''.

(c) INCLUSION OF RULES WITH BENEFICIAL EFFECTS.—

(1) INITIAL REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS.—Subsection (c) of section 603 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking the first sentence and inserting ''Each initial regulatory flexibility analysis shall also contain a detailed description of alternatives to the proposed rule which minimize any adverse significant economic impact or maximize any beneficial significant economic impact on small entities.''.

(2) FINAL REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS.—The first paragraph (6) of section 604(a) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking ''minimize the significant economic impact'' and inserting ''minimize the adverse significant economic impact or maximize the beneficial significant economic impact''.

(d) INCLUSION OF RULES AFFECTING TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS.—Paragraph (5) of section 601 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''and tribal organizations (as defined in section 4(l) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b(l))),'' after ''special districts,''.

(e) INCLUSION OF LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS AND FORMAL RULEMAKING.—

(1) INITIAL REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS.—Subsection (a) of section 603 of title 5, United States Code, is amended in the first sentence—

(A) by striking ''or'' after ''proposed rule,''; and

(B) by inserting ''or publishes a revision or amendment to a land management plan,'' after ''United States,''.

(2) FINAL REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS.—Subsection (a) of section 604 of title 5, United States Code, is amended in the first sentence—

(A) by striking ''or'' after ''proposed rulemaking,''; and

(B) by inserting ''or adopts a revision or amendment to a land management plan,'' after ''section 603(a),''.

(3) LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN DEFINED.—Section 601 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(10) LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'land management plan' means—

''(i) any plan developed by the Secretary of Agriculture under section 6 of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604); and

''(ii) any plan developed by the Secretary of the Interior under section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712).

''(B) REVISION.—The term 'revision' means any change to a land management plan which—

''(i) in the case of a plan described in subparagraph (A)(i), is made under section 6(f)(5) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(5)); or

''(ii) in the case of a plan described in subparagraph (A)(ii), is made under section 1610.5–6 of title 43, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation).

''(C) AMENDMENT.—The term 'amendment' means any change to a land management plan which—

''(i) in the case of a plan described in subparagraph (A)(i), is made under section 6(f)(4) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(4)) and with respect to which the Secretary of Agriculture prepares a statement described in section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)); or

''(ii) in the case of a plan described in subparagraph (A)(ii), is made under section 1610.5–5 of title 43, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation) and with respect to which the Secretary of the Interior prepares a statement described in section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)).''.

(f) INCLUSION OF CERTAIN INTERPRETIVE RULES INVOLVING THE INTERNAL REVENUE LAWS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 603 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking the period at the end and inserting ''or a recordkeeping requirement, and without regard to whether such requirement is imposed by statute or regulation.''.

(2) COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.—Paragraph (7) of section 601 of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(7) COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.—The term 'collection of information' has the meaning given such term in section 3502(3) of title 44.''.

(3) RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENT.—Paragraph (8) of section 601 of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(8) RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENT.—The term 'recordkeeping requirement' has the meaning given such term in section 3502(13) of title 44.''.

(g) DEFINITION OF SMALL ORGANIZATION.—Paragraph (4) of section 601 of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(4) SMALL ORGANIZATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'small organization' means any not-for-profit enterprise which, as of the issuance of the notice of proposed rulemaking—

''(i) in the case of an enterprise which is described by a classification code of the North American Industrial Classification System, does not exceed the size standard established by the Administrator of the Small Business Administration pursuant to section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632) for small business concerns described by such classification code; and

''(ii) in the case of any other enterprise, has a net worth that does not exceed $7,000,000 and has not more than 500 employees.

''(B) LOCAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.—In the case of any local labor organization, subparagraph (A) shall be applied without regard to any national or international organization of which such local labor organization is a part.

''(C) AGENCY DEFINITIONS.—Subparagraphs (A) and (B) shall not apply to the extent that an agency, after consultation with the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration and after opportunity for public comment, establishes one or more definitions for such term which are appropriate to the activities of the agency and publishes such definitions in the Federal Register.''.

SEC. 303. EXPANSION OF REPORT OF REGULATORY AGENDA.

Section 602 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking '', and'' at the end and inserting ''; '';

(B) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4); and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

''(3) a brief description of the sector of the North American Industrial Classification System that is primarily affected by any rule which the agency expects to propose or promulgate which is likely to have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities; and''; and

(2) in subsection (c), to read as follows:

''(c) Each agency shall prominently display a plain language summary of the information contained in the regulatory flexibility agenda published under subsection (a) on its website within 3 days of its publication in the Federal Register. The Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration shall compile and prominently display a plain language summary of the regulatory agendas referenced in subsection (a) for each agency on its website within 3 days of their publication in the Federal Register.''.

SEC. 304. REQUIREMENTS PROVIDING FOR MORE DETAILED ANALYSES.

(a) INITIAL REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS.—Subsection (b) of section 603 of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(b) Each initial regulatory flexibility analysis required under this section shall contain a detailed statement—

''(1) describing the reasons why action by the agency is being considered;

''(2) describing the objectives of, and legal basis for, the proposed rule;

''(3) estimating the number and type of small entities to which the proposed rule will apply;

''(4) describing the projected reporting, recordkeeping, and other compliance requirements of the proposed rule, including an estimate of the classes of small entities which will be subject to the requirement and the type of professional skills necessary for preparation of the report and record;

''(5) describing all relevant Federal rules which may duplicate, overlap, or conflict with the proposed rule, or the reasons why such a description could not be provided;

''(6) estimating the additional cumulative economic impact of the proposed rule on small entities beyond that already imposed on the class of small entities by the agency or why such an estimate is not available; and

''(7) describing any disproportionate economic impact on small entities or a specific class of small entities.''.

(b) FINAL REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 604(a) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in paragraph (4), by striking ''an explanation'' and inserting ''a detailed explanation'';

(B) in each of paragraphs (4), (5), and the first paragraph (6), by inserting ''detailed'' before ''description''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(7) describing any disproportionate economic impact on small entities or a specific class of small entities.''.

(2) INCLUSION OF RESPONSE TO COMMENTS ON CERTIFICATION OF PROPOSED RULE.—Paragraph (2) of section 604(a) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''(or certification of the proposed rule under section 605(b))'' after ''initial regulatory flexibility analysis''.

(3) PUBLICATION OF ANALYSIS ON WEBSITE.—Subsection (b) of section 604 of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(b) The agency shall make copies of the final regulatory flexibility analysis available to the public, including placement of the entire analysis on the agency's website, and shall publish in the Federal Register the final regulatory flexibility analysis, or a summary thereof which includes the telephone number, mailing address, and link to the website where the complete analysis may be obtained.''.

(c) CROSS-REFERENCES TO OTHER ANALYSES.—Subsection (a) of section 605 of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(a) A Federal agency shall be treated as satisfying any requirement regarding the content of an agenda or regulatory flexibility analysis under section 602, 603, or 604, if such agency provides in such agenda or analysis a cross-reference to the specific portion of another agenda or analysis which is required by any other law and which satisfies such requirement.''.

(d) CERTIFICATIONS.—Subsection (b) of section 605 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting ''detailed'' before ''statement'' the first place it appears; and

(2) by inserting ''and legal'' after ''factual''.

(e) QUANTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Section 607 of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 607. Quantification requirements

''In complying with sections 603 and 604, an agency shall provide—

''(1) a quantifiable or numerical description of the effects of the proposed or final rule and alternatives to the proposed or final rule; or

''(2) a more general descriptive statement and a detailed statement explaining why quantification is not practicable or reliable.''.

SEC. 305. REPEAL OF WAIVER AND DELAY AUTHORITY; ADDITIONAL POWERS OF THE CHIEF COUNSEL FOR ADVOCACY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 608 is amended to read as follows:

''§ 608. Additional powers of Chief Counsel for Advocacy

''(a)(1) Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration shall, after opportunity for notice and comment under section 553, issue rules governing agency compliance with this chapter. The Chief Counsel may modify or amend such rules after notice and comment under section 553. This chapter (other than this subsection) shall not apply with respect to the issuance, modification, and amendment of rules under this paragraph.

''(2) An agency shall not issue rules which supplement the rules issued under subsection (a) unless such agency has first consulted with the Chief Counsel for Advocacy to ensure that such supplemental rules comply with this chapter and the rules issued under paragraph (1).

''(b) Notwithstanding any other law, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration may intervene in any agency adjudication (unless such agency is authorized to impose a fine or penalty under such adjudication), and may inform the agency of the impact that any decision on the record may have on small entities. The Chief Counsel shall not initiate an appeal with respect to any adjudication in which the Chief Counsel intervenes under this subsection.

''(c) The Chief Counsel for Advocacy may file comments in response to any agency notice requesting comment, regardless of whether the agency is required to file a general notice of proposed rulemaking under section 553.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 611(a)(1) of such title is amended by striking ''608(b),''.

(2) Section 611(a)(2) of such title is amended by striking ''608(b),''.

(3) Section 611(a)(3) of such title is amended—

(A) by striking subparagraph (B); and

(B) by striking ''(3)(A) A small entity'' and inserting the following:

''(3) A small entity''.

SEC. 306. PROCEDURES FOR GATHERING COMMENTS.

Section 609 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking subsection (b) and all that follows through the end of the section and inserting the following:

''(b)(1) Prior to publication of any proposed rule described in subsection (e), an agency making such rule shall notify the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration and provide the Chief Counsel with—

''(A) all materials prepared or utilized by the agency in making the proposed rule, including the draft of the proposed rule; and

''(B) information on the potential adverse and beneficial economic impacts of the proposed rule on small entities and the type of small entities that might be affected.

''(2) An agency shall not be required under paragraph (1) to provide the exact language of any draft if the rule—

''(A) relates to the internal revenue laws of the United States; or

''(B) is proposed by an independent regulatory agency (as defined in section 3502(5) of title 44).

''(c) Not later than 15 days after the receipt of such materials and information under subsection (b), the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration shall—

''(1) identify small entities or representatives of small entities or a combination of both for the purpose of obtaining advice, input, and recommendations from those persons about the potential economic impacts of the proposed rule and the compliance of the agency with section 603; and

''(2) convene a review panel consisting of an employee from the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, an employee from the agency making the rule, and in the case of an agency other than an independent regulatory agency (as defined in section 3502(5) of title 44), an employee from the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of the Office of Management and Budget to review the materials and information provided to the Chief Counsel under subsection (b).

''(d)(1) Not later than 60 days after the review panel described in subsection (c)(2) is convened, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration shall, after consultation with the members of such panel, submit a report to the agency and, in the case of an agency other than an independent regulatory agency (as defined in section 3502(5) of title 44), the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of the Office of Management and Budget.

''(2) Such report shall include an assessment of the economic impact of the proposed rule on small entities, including an assessment of the proposed rule's impact on the cost that small entities pay for energy, an assessment of the proposed rule's impact on start-up costs for small entities, and a discussion of any alternatives that will minimize adverse significant economic impacts or maximize beneficial significant economic impacts on small entities.

''(3) Such report shall become part of the rulemaking record. In the publication of the proposed rule, the agency shall explain what actions, if any, the agency took in response to such report.

''(e) A proposed rule is described by this subsection if the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of the Office of Management and Budget, the head of the agency (or the delegatee of the head of the agency), or an independent regulatory agency determines that the proposed rule is likely to result in—

''(1) an annual effect on the economy of $100,000,000 or more;

''(2) a major increase in costs or prices for consumers, individual industries, Federal, State, or local governments, tribal organizations, or geographic regions;

''(3) significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or on the ability of United States-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises in domestic and export markets; or

''(4) a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

''(f) Upon application by the agency, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration may waive the requirements of subsections (b) through (e) if the Chief Counsel determines that compliance with the requirements of such subsections are impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest.

''(g) A small entity or a representative of a small entity may submit a request that the agency provide a copy of the report prepared under subsection (d) and all materials and information provided to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration under subsection (b). The agency receiving such request shall provide the report, materials and information to the requesting small entity or representative of a small entity not later than 10 business days after receiving such request, except that the agency shall not disclose any information that is prohibited from disclosure to the public pursuant to section 552(b) of this title.''.

SEC. 307. PERIODIC REVIEW OF RULES.

Section 610 of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 610. Periodic review of rules

''(a) Not later than 180 days after the enactment of this section, each agency shall publish in the Federal Register and place on its website a plan for the periodic review of rules issued by the agency which the head of the agency determines have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. Such determination shall be made without regard to whether the agency performed an analysis under section 604. The purpose of the review shall be to determine whether such rules should be continued without change, or should be amended or rescinded, consistent with the stated objectives of applicable statutes, to minimize any adverse significant economic impacts or maximize any beneficial significant economic impacts on a substantial number of small entities. Such plan may be amended by the agency at any time by publishing the revision in the Federal Register and subsequently placing the amended plan on the agency's website.

''(b) The plan shall provide for the review of all such agency rules existing on the date of the enactment of this section within 10 years of the date of publication of the plan in the Federal Register and for review of rules adopted after the date of enactment of this section within 10 years after the publication of the final rule in the Federal Register. If the head of the agency determines that completion of the review of existing rules is not feasible by the established date, the head of the agency shall so certify in a statement published in the Federal Register and may extend the review for not longer than 2 years after publication of notice of extension in the Federal Register. Such certification and notice shall be sent to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration and the Congress.

''(c) The plan shall include a section that details how an agency will conduct outreach to and meaningfully include small businesses (including small business concerns owned and controlled by women, small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans, and small business concerns owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals (as such terms are defined in the Small Business Act)) for the purposes of carrying out this section. The agency shall include in this section a plan for how the agency will contact small businesses and gather their input on existing agency rules.

''(d) Each agency shall annually submit a report regarding the results of its review pursuant to such plan to the Congress, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, and, in the case of agencies other than independent regulatory agencies (as defined in section 3502(5) of title 44) to the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of the Office of Management and Budget. Such report shall include the identification of any rule with respect to which the head of the agency made a determination described in paragraph (5) or (6) of subsection (e) and a detailed explanation of the reasons for such determination.

''(e) In reviewing a rule pursuant to subsections (a) through (d), the agency shall amend or rescind the rule to minimize any adverse significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities or disproportionate economic impact on a specific class of small entities, or maximize any beneficial significant economic impact of the rule on a substantial number of small entities to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the stated objectives of applicable statutes. In amending or rescinding the rule, the agency shall consider the following factors:

''(1) The continued need for the rule.

''(2) The nature of complaints received by the agency from small entities concerning the rule.

''(3) Comments by the Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman and the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration.

''(4) The complexity of the rule.

''(5) The extent to which the rule overlaps, duplicates, or conflicts with other Federal rules and, unless the head of the agency determines it to be infeasible, State, territorial, and local rules.

''(6) The contribution of the rule to the cumulative economic impact of all Federal rules on the class of small entities affected by the rule, unless the head of the agency determines that such calculations cannot be made and reports that determination in the annual report required under subsection (d).

''(7) The length of time since the rule has been evaluated or the degree to which technology, economic conditions, or other factors have changed in the area affected by the rule.

''(f) The agency shall publish in the Federal Register and on its website a list of rules to be reviewed pursuant to such plan. The agency shall include in the publication a solicitation of public comments on any further inclusions or exclusions of rules from the list, and shall respond to such comments. Such publication shall include a brief description of the rule, the reason why the agency determined that it has a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities (without regard to whether it had prepared a final regulatory flexibility analysis for the rule), and request comments from the public, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, and the Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman concerning the enforcement of the rule.''.

SEC. 308. JUDICIAL REVIEW OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ACT AVAILABLE AFTER PUBLICATION OF THE FINAL RULE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (1) of section 611(a) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking ''final agency action'' and inserting ''such rule''.

(b) JURISDICTION.—Paragraph (2) of such section is amended by inserting ''(or which would have such jurisdiction if publication of the final rule constituted final agency action)'' after ''provision of law,''.

(c) TIME FOR BRINGING ACTION.—Paragraph (3) of such section is amended—

(1) by striking ''final agency action'' and inserting ''publication of the final rule''; and

(2) by inserting '', in the case of a rule for which the date of final agency action is the

same date as the publication of the final rule,'' after ''except that''.

(d) INTERVENTION BY CHIEF COUNSEL FOR ADVOCACY.—Subsection (b) of section 612 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting before the first period ''or agency compliance with section 601, 603, 604, 605(b), 609, or 610''.

SEC. 309. JURISDICTION OF COURT OF APPEALS OVER RULES IMPLEMENTING THE REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ACT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2342 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (6), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (7), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (7) the following new paragraph:

''(8) all final rules under section 608(a) of title 5.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Paragraph (3) of section 2341 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

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

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

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(F) the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, when the final rule is under section 608(a) of title 5.''.

(c) AUTHORIZATION TO INTERVENE AND COMMENT ON AGENCY COMPLIANCE WITH ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE.—Subsection (b) of section 612 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''chapter 5, and chapter 7,'' after ''this chapter,''.

SEC. 310. ESTABLISHMENT AND APPROVAL OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN SIZE STANDARDS BY CHIEF COUNSEL FOR ADVOCACY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (A) of section 3(a)(2) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(a)(2)(A)) is amended to read as follows:

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In addition to the criteria specified in paragraph (1)—

''(i) the Administrator may specify detailed definitions or standards by which a business concern may be determined to be a small business concern for purposes of this Act or the Small Business Investment Act of 1958; and

''(ii) the Chief Counsel for Advocacy may specify such definitions or standards for purposes of any other Act.''.

(b) APPROVAL BY CHIEF COUNSEL.—Clause (iii) of section 3(a)(2)(C) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(a)(2)(C)(iii)) is amended to read as follows:

''(iii) except in the case of a size standard prescribed by the Administrator, is approved by the Chief Counsel for Advocacy.''.

(c) INDUSTRY VARIATION.—Paragraph (3) of section 3(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(a)(3)) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''or Chief Counsel for Advocacy, as appropriate'' before ''shall ensure''; and

(2) by inserting ''or Chief Counsel for Advocacy'' before the period at the end.

(d) JUDICIAL REVIEW OF SIZE STANDARDS APPROVED BY CHIEF COUNSEL.—Section 3(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(9) JUDICIAL REVIEW OF STANDARDS APPROVED BY CHIEF COUNSEL.—In the case of an action for judicial review of a rule which includes a definition or standard approved by the Chief Counsel for Advocacy under this subsection, the party seeking such review shall be entitled to join the Chief Counsel as a party in such action.''.

SEC. 311. CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 601 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period; and

(B) by striking ''(1) the term'' and inserting the following:

''(1) AGENCY.—The term'';

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period; and

(B) by striking ''(3) the term'' and inserting the following:

''(3) SMALL BUSINESS.—The term'';

(3) in paragraph (5)—

(A) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period; and

(B) by striking ''(5) the term'' and inserting the following:

''(5) SMALL GOVERNMENTAL JURISDICTION.—The term''; and

(4) in paragraph (6)—

(A) by striking ''; and'' and inserting a period; and

(B) by striking ''(6) the term'' and inserting the following:

''(6) SMALL ENTITY.—The term''.

(b) INCORPORATIONS BY REFERENCE AND CERTIFICATIONS.—The heading of section 605 of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 605. Incorporations by reference and certifications''.

(c) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections for chapter 6 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking the item relating to section 605 and inserting the following new item:

''605. Incorporations by reference and certifications.'';

(2) by striking the item relating to section 607 and inserting the following new item:

''607. Quantification requirements.'';

and

(3) by striking the item relating to section 608 and inserting the following:

''608. Additional powers of Chief Counsel for Advocacy.''.

(d) OTHER CLERICAL ADENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 6.—Chapter 6 of title 5, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(1) In section 603, by striking subsection (d).

(2) In section 604(a) by striking the second paragraph (6).

SEC. 312. AGENCY PREPARATION OF GUIDES.

Section 212(a)(5) the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (5 U.S.C. 601 note) is amended to read as follows:

''(5) AGENCY PREPARATION OF GUIDES.—The agency shall, in its sole discretion, taking into account the subject matter of the rule and the language of relevant statutes, ensure that the guide is written using sufficiently plain language likely to be understood by affected small entities. Agencies may prepare separate guides covering groups or classes of similarly affected small entities and may cooperate with associations of small entities to distribute such guides. In developing guides, agencies shall solicit input from affected small entities or associations of affected small entities. An agency may prepare guides and apply this section with respect to a rule or a group of related rules.''.

SEC. 313. COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.

Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this title, the Comptroller General of the United States shall complete and publish a study that examines whether the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration has the capacity and resources to carry out the duties of the Chief Counsel under this title and the amendments made by this title.

TITLE IV—SUNSHINE FOR REGULATORY DECREES AND SETTLEMENTS ACT

SEC. 401. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Sunshine for Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act of 2014''.

SEC. 402. DEFINITIONS.

In this title—

(1) the terms ''agency'' and ''agency action'' have the meanings given those terms under section 551 of title 5, United States Code;

(2) the term ''covered civil action'' means a civil action—

(A) seeking to compel agency action;

(B) alleging that the agency is unlawfully withholding or unreasonably delaying an agency action relating to a regulatory action that would affect the rights of—

(i) private persons other than the person bringing the action; or

(ii) a State, local, or tribal government; and

(C) brought under—

(i) chapter 7 of title 5, United States Code; or

(ii) any other statute authorizing such an action;

(3) the term ''covered consent decree'' means—

(A) a consent decree entered into in a covered civil action; and

(B) any other consent decree that requires agency action relating to a regulatory action that affects the rights of—

(i) private persons other than the person bringing the action; or

(ii) a State, local, or tribal government;

(4) the term ''covered consent decree or settlement agreement'' means a covered consent decree and a covered settlement agreement; and

(5) the term ''covered settlement agreement'' means—

(A) a settlement agreement entered into in a covered civil action; and

(B) any other settlement agreement that requires agency action relating to a regulatory action that affects the rights of—

(i) private persons other than the person bringing the action; or

(ii) a State, local, or tribal government.

SEC. 403. CONSENT DECREE AND SETTLEMENT REFORM.

(a) PLEADINGS AND PRELIMINARY MATTERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In any covered civil action, the agency against which the covered civil action is brought shall publish the notice of intent to sue and the complaint in a readily accessible manner, including by making the notice of intent to sue and the complaint available online not later than 15 days after receiving service of the notice of intent to sue or complaint, respectively.

(2) ENTRY OF A COVERED CONSENT DECREE OR SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.—A party may not make a motion for entry of a covered consent decree or to dismiss a civil action pursuant to a covered settlement agreement until after the end of proceedings in accordance with paragraph (1) and subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (2) of subsection (d) or subsection (d)(3)(A), whichever is later.

(b) INTERVENTION.—

(1) REBUTTABLE PRESUMPTION.—In considering a motion to intervene in a covered civil action or a civil action in which a covered consent decree or settlement agreement has been proposed that is filed by a person who alleges that the agency action in dispute would affect the person, the court shall presume, subject to rebuttal, that the interests of the person would not be represented adequately by the existing parties to the action.

(2) STATE, LOCAL, AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS.—In considering a motion to intervene in a covered civil action or a civil action in which a covered consent decree or settlement agreement has been proposed that is filed by a State, local, or tribal government, the court shall take due account of whether the movant—

(A) administers jointly with an agency that is a defendant in the action the statutory provisions that give rise to the regulatory action to which the action relates; or

(B) administers an authority under State, local, or tribal law that would be preempted by the regulatory action to which the action relates.

(c) SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATIONS.—Efforts to settle a covered civil action or otherwise reach an agreement on a covered consent decree or settlement agreement shall—

(1) be conducted pursuant to the mediation or alternative dispute resolution program of the court or by a district judge other than the presiding judge, magistrate judge, or special master, as determined appropriate by the presiding judge; and

(2) include any party that intervenes in the action.

(d) PUBLICATION OF AND COMMENT ON COVERED CONSENT DECREES OR SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days before the date on which a covered consent decree or settlement agreement is filed with a court, the agency seeking to enter the covered consent decree or settlement agreement shall publish in the Federal Register and online—

(A) the proposed covered consent decree or settlement agreement; and

(B) a statement providing—

(i) the statutory basis for the covered consent decree or settlement agreement; and

(ii) a description of the terms of the covered consent decree or settlement agreement, including whether it provides for the award of attorneys' fees or costs and, if so, the basis for including the award.

(2) PUBLIC COMMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An agency seeking to enter a covered consent decree or settlement agreement shall accept public comment during the period described in paragraph (1) on any issue relating to the matters alleged in the complaint in the applicable civil action or addressed or affected by the proposed covered consent decree or settlement agreement.

(B) RESPONSE TO COMMENTS.—An agency shall respond to any comment received under subparagraph (A).

(C) SUBMISSIONS TO COURT.—When moving that the court enter a proposed covered consent decree or settlement agreement or for dismissal pursuant to a proposed covered consent decree or settlement agreement, an agency shall—

(i) inform the court of the statutory basis for the proposed covered consent decree or settlement agreement and its terms;

(ii) submit to the court a summary of the comments received under subparagraph (A) and the response of the agency to the comments;

(iii) submit to the court a certified index of the administrative record of the notice and comment proceeding; and

(iv) make the administrative record described in clause (iii) fully accessible to the court.

(D) INCLUSION IN RECORD.—The court shall include in the court record for a civil action the certified index of the administrative record submitted by an agency under subparagraph (C)(iii) and any documents listed in the index which any party or amicus curiae appearing before the court in the action submits to the court.

(3) PUBLIC HEARINGS PERMITTED.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—After providing notice in the Federal Register and online, an agency may hold a public hearing regarding whether to enter into a proposed covered consent decree or settlement agreement.

(B) RECORD.—If an agency holds a public hearing under subparagraph (A)—

(i) the agency shall—

(I) submit to the court a summary of the proceedings;

(II) submit to the court a certified index of the hearing record; and

(III) provide access to the hearing record to the court; and

(ii) the full hearing record shall be included in the court record.

(4) MANDATORY DEADLINES.—If a proposed covered consent decree or settlement agreement requires an agency action by a date certain, the agency shall, when moving for entry of the covered consent decree or settlement agreement or dismissal based on the covered consent decree or settlement agreement, inform the court of—

(A) any required regulatory action the agency has not taken that the covered consent decree or settlement agreement does not address;

(B) how the covered consent decree or settlement agreement, if approved, would affect the discharge of the duties described in subparagraph (A); and

(C) why the effects of the covered consent decree or settlement agreement on the manner in which the agency discharges its duties is in the public interest.

(e) SUBMISSION BY THE GOVERNMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For any proposed covered consent decree or settlement agreement that contains a term described in paragraph (2), the Attorney General or, if the matter is being litigated independently by an agency, the head of the agency shall submit to the court a certification that the Attorney General or head of the agency approves the proposed covered consent decree or settlement agreement. The Attorney General or head of the agency shall personally sign any certification submitted under this paragraph.

(2) TERMS.—A term described in this paragraph is—

(A) in the case of a covered consent decree, a term that—

(i) converts into a nondiscretionary duty a discretionary authority of an agency to propose, promulgate, revise, or amend regulations;

(ii) commits an agency to expend funds that have not been appropriated and that have not been budgeted for the regulatory action in question;

(iii) commits an agency to seek a particular appropriation or budget authorization;

(iv) divests an agency of discretion committed to the agency by statute or the Constitution of the United States, without regard to whether the discretion was granted to respond to changing circumstances, to make policy or managerial choices, or to protect the rights of third parties; or

(v) otherwise affords relief that the court could not enter under its own authority upon a final judgment in the civil action; or

(B) in the case of a covered settlement agreement, a term—

(i) that provides a remedy for a failure by the agency to comply with the terms of the covered settlement agreement other than the revival of the civil action resolved by the covered settlement agreement; and

(ii) that—

(I) interferes with the authority of an agency to revise, amend, or issue rules under the procedures set forth in chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code, or any other statute or Executive order prescribing rulemaking procedures for a rulemaking that is the subject of the covered settlement agreement;

(II) commits the agency to expend funds that have not been appropriated and that have not been budgeted for the regulatory action in question; or

(III) for such a covered settlement agreement that commits the agency to exercise in a particular way discretion which was committed to the agency by statute or the Constitution of the United States to respond to changing circumstances, to make policy or managerial choices, or to protect the rights of third parties.

(f) REVIEW BY COURT.—

(1) AMICUS.—A court considering a proposed covered consent decree or settlement agreement shall presume, subject to rebuttal, that it is proper to allow amicus participation relating to the covered consent decree or settlement agreement by any person who filed public comments or participated in a public hearing on the covered consent decree or settlement agreement under paragraph (2) or (3) of subsection (d).

(2) REVIEW OF DEADLINES.—

(A) PROPOSED COVERED CONSENT DECREES.—For a proposed covered consent decree, a court shall not approve the covered consent decree unless the proposed covered consent decree allows sufficient time and incorporates adequate procedures for the agency to comply with chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code, and other applicable statutes that govern rulemaking and, unless contrary to the public interest, the provisions of any Executive order that governs rulemaking.

(B) PROPOSED COVERED SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS.—For a proposed covered settlement agreement, a court shall ensure that the covered settlement agreement allows sufficient time and incorporates adequate procedures for the agency to comply with chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code, and other applicable statutes that govern rulemaking and, unless contrary to the public interest, the provisions of any Executive order that governs rulemaking.

(g) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Each agency shall submit to Congress an annual report that, for the year covered by the report, includes—

(1) the number, identity, and content of covered civil actions brought against and covered consent decrees or settlement agreements entered against or into by the agency; and

(2) a description of the statutory basis for—

(A) each covered consent decree or settlement agreement entered against or into by the agency; and

(B) any award of attorneys fees or costs in a civil action resolved by a covered consent decree or settlement agreement entered against or into by the agency.

SEC. 404. MOTIONS TO MODIFY CONSENT DECREES.

If an agency moves a court to modify a covered consent decree or settlement agreement and the basis of the motion is that the terms of the covered consent decree or settlement agreement are no longer fully in the public interest due to the obligations of the agency to fulfill other duties or due to changed facts and circumstances, the court shall review the motion and the covered consent decree or settlement agreement de novo.

SEC. 405. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This title shall apply to—

(1) any covered civil action filed on or after the date of enactment of this title; and

(2) any covered consent decree or settlement agreement proposed to a court on or after the date of enactment of this title.

The CHAIR. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those

printed in House Report 113–361. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. JOHNSON OF GEORGIA

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 113–361.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. As the designee of Mr. CARTWRIGHT, I am offering amendment No. 1.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 3, after line 4, the table of sections is amended to read as follows:

''Sec.
''651. Agency monthly submission to Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs.
''652. Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs Publications.
''653. Definitions.''.

Page 8, strike line 21, and all that follows through page 9, line 15.

Page 9, line 16, strike ''**654**'' and insert ''**653**''.

Page 11, strike lines 3 through 7.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 487, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, this amendment simply strikes the moratorium provisions in title I of the bill. Madam Chair, a regulatory moratorium makes absolutely no sense. Cass Sunstein, the former head of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, has observed:

> A moratorium would not be a scalpel or a machete; it would be more like a nuclear bomb, in the sense that it would prevent regulations that cost very little and have very significant economic and public health benefits.

□ 1800

This is yet another iteration of an attempt by the majority to obstruct at all costs and stop all regulations. In the last Congress, we considered H.R. 4078, which would have imposed a moratorium for ''any quarter'' where the Bureau of Labor Statistics average of monthly unemployment rates is equal to or less than 6 percent. Although the Republican-controlled House passed the bill, it of course died in the Senate.

A moratorium threatens key health and safety regulations. During the 104th Congress, the House passed the Regulatory Transition Act of 1995, a bill that imposed a regulatory moratorium pending the institution of a risk analysis and assessment regime. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Democrats, in their dissent to the reported bill, observed that the legislation was ''ill-conceived'' and that it had ''unknown consequences.'' In particular, they noted:

> The bill ignores the interests of the average American. There is no effort in this bill to sort out the good from the bad. It is a one-size-fits-all solution. The bill will threaten key health and safety regulations, such as improved meat and poultry inspection procedures, while also halting regulations favored by business, such as rules at the FCC to allocate portions of the spectrum for new telephone systems.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment that would strike the bill's pernicious moratorium provision.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN). The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chair, as Federal regulatory agencies attempt to pile more and more regulatory burdens on America's struggling workers, families and small businesses, the least we can ask is that they be transparent about it. What could be more transparent than requiring them, the regulators, on a monthly basis, online, to update the public with real-time information about what new regulations are coming and how much they will cost?

Once they have that information, affected individuals and job creators will be able to plan and budget meaningfully for new costs they may have to absorb. If they are denied that information, they will only be blindsided. That is not fair.

Title I of the ALERRT Act makes sure this information is provided to the public. To provide a strong incentive to agencies to honor its requirements, title I prohibits new regulations from becoming effective unless agencies provide transparent information online for 6 months preceding the regulations' issuance.

The amendment seeks to eliminate that incentive. Without an incentive like that in existing law, what have we seen from the Obama administration? Repeated failures to make disclosures required by statute and executive order, including the administration's yearlong hiding of the ball on new regulations during the 2012 election cycle. I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, the majority is pursuing this legislation in complete disregard of various recent examples of regulatory failure. These include the Massey coal mine explosion in West Virginia which took the lives of 29 miners. In fact, next month will mark the 1-year anniversary of that explosion. The explosion of BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico that stemmed from lax regulation of oil drilling platforms is also a prominent example. The home foreclosure crisis, the 2008 financial crisis, and the ensuing Great Recession, all of which stemmed from the fact that regulators under the Bush administration lacked the direction, resources, and authority to confront the highly reckless behavior of the private sector, and particularly the lending and financial service industries.

It was a direct response to these regulatory failures in the financial realm that Congress passed the Dodd-Frank Act and other measures during the 111th Congress, and Republicans have tried to repeal those measures and have tried to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Of the 58 bills that were passed out of this so-called do-nothing Congress in the first year of this session, not one of them was a jobs bill; not one job created. Do we set ourselves up again for the kind of regulatory Wild Wild West that got us into trouble in the first place?

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), the chairman of the subcommittee.

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Chair, let me say this: the gentleman from Georgia has talked about these regulations all being necessary, but the President himself on the campaign trail said we need to repeal unnecessary Federal regulations. He stood right here in the House when he gave two State of the Unions and said we need to eliminate some of our Federal regulations, and he charged the Congress to do that. It has been part of his agenda. It has been part of what he has campaigned on and what he has brought to the Congress as his State of the Union message, and that is exactly what this bill does.

He said regulations aren't abstract ideas. They cost money. In certain cases, the benefit is simply not there. We are not talking about endangering public health. We are talking about regulations that endanger jobs unnecessarily.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, I think everyone can agree that the Federal agencies need the resources to be able to go back and review and rescind and repeal any unnecessary regulations, but we have been busy cutting government for the last 3 years. This legislation before us won't cut any regulations, but it certainly will keep any regulations from coming forward. I think that would accomplish the objective of the Republicans here, which is to protect Big Business.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time, and just say that the fact of the matter is that the provision in the bill that this amendment attacks is a very straightforward provision that just provides for transparency. It doesn't stop any of the regulations the gentleman from Georgia referenced; it simply says if you do the regulations, tell us about them ahead of time so as you move toward the final implementation, the last 6 months before it goes

into effect, the public gets to see it, the media gets to see it, the businesses that are impacted get to see it, the workers who may lose their jobs get to see it. That allows them to prepare for it, and it allows them to comment. It allows them to try to change the law. It is simply a fair way to enter into regulations. It is a commonsense provision that should be kept in the bill, and the amendment should be defeated.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON).

The amendment was rejected.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. MURPHY OF FLORIDA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 113–361.

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

In the bill, strike title II and title IV, and redesignate provisions and conform the table of contents accordingly.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 487, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MURPHY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Madam Chair, as a former small businessman, I am acutely aware of the strain unnecessary regulations have on businesses. While I strongly support the underlying bill's goal of reducing the regulatory burden on American companies, truly smart regulatory reform would preserve government's ability to enforce clean air laws, food safety, and consumer protections. It would not pile on duplicative procedural hurdles on already inefficient agencies, gumming up government bureaucracy and obstructing agencies' most basic functions.

Too often, the debate up here is about more regulations versus fewer regulations, but we should be focused on smarter regulations.

We should all be able to agree that government has a role to play in clean water for Americans, an issue the people in the Treasure Coast are all too familiar with.

We should all be able to agree that when a consumer walks through the door of a bank looking for a mortgage, that government has a role to play in protecting that consumer, but these regulations should help the public without unnecessarily hindering business, our Nation's economic engine. We must both protect Americans and enable commerce. The business community is not against all regulation, they are against excessively burdensome regulation.

In my district, business owners believe that protecting the environment and clean water standards is not antigrowth. In fact, it is pro-jobs.

When I recently toured the family-run Armellini trucking company in my district, the Armellinis were not against truck safety standards. They do the right thing by their workers, and they abide by safe driving rules. They want regulations to ensure that others do the same. What they are against are new truck safety standards that hinder growth without actually making trucking any safer.

Smarter regulations should protect good businesses from bad actors.

I will give another example. Denny Hudson runs Seacoast Bank, a small community bank in Stuart, Florida. Like many small financial institutions, Seacoast weathered the financial crisis because they were not involved in risky financial behavior. They expected mortgages to be repaid on time, and they wanted the small businesses they supported to succeed.

After the financial crisis of 2008 nearly took down the global economy, most people agreed that government regulators needed to better protect our financial system, but if new regulations keep community banks like Seacoast from getting creditworthy young families into their first home, or providing capital to new small businesses, that is a problem.

My amendment is simple. While recognizing the goal of the underlying legislation to improve the regulatory process, my amendment maintains the government's responsibility to protect the environment, consumer health, and workplace safety. I propose removing costly hurdles that would make government less efficient, while protecting the right of the American people to hold their government accountable when it fails to protect their health, safety, and civil rights.

My colleagues across the aisle frequently complain about too much bureaucracy. We should not compound the problem by creating duplicative government processes. Let's examine the effectiveness of regulations already in place.

Senator KING introduced a bipartisan bill that would do exactly that. It would establish a process to identify and either strike or improve outdated and obsolete regulations. We should be doing the same thing in this body. At a time when we should be doing more with less, can we really afford to increase spending with more government bureaucracy?

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment to improve the underlying bill, save the partisan fight over controversial sections for another day, streamline the regulatory process, and save 70 million taxpayer dollars. I thank my colleagues.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLATTE. America's small businesses, workers, and families are being crushed by an annual regulatory burden that in 2012 amounted to $15,000 per household. That is an expense bigger than any family expense except for housing, and the number of new costly regulations just keeps growing and growing.

□ 1815

In response, titles II and IV of the bill, which this amendment seeks to strike, those two titles write into statute best practices into rulemaking that help to lower costs, avoid unnecessary regulation, and keep pro-regulatory special interests from abusing the courts to force new costly regulations upon the public.

They do all of this without denying the ability of agencies to issue new regulations that are sensible to fulfill statutory mandates.

Why is this so important that the bill do that? Because although these are best practices, they are too often honored in the breach or not at all because they are not yet written into statute.

The amendment substantially guts the bill; denies important protections to American workers, families, and job creators; and unjustifiably prolongs the time during which regulatory agencies can operate without adequate checks and balances.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MURPHY).

The amendment was rejected.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. ROTHFUS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in House Report 113–361.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 12, after line 19, insert the following (and redesignate accordingly):

''(17) 'negative-impact on jobs and wages rule' means any rule that the agency that made the rule or the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs determines is likely to—

''(A) in one or more sectors of the economy that has a 6-digit code under the North American Industry Classification System, reduce employment not related to new regulatory compliance by 1 percent or more annually during the 1-year, 5-year, or 10-year period after implementation;

''(B) in one or more sectors of the economy that has a 6-digit code under the North American Industry Classification System, reduce average weekly wages for employment not related to new regulatory compliance by 1 percent or more annually during the 1-year, 5-year, or 10-year period after implementation;

''(C) in any industry area (as such term is defined in the Current Population Survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) in which the most recent annual unemployment rate for the industry area is greater than 5 percent, as determined by the Bureau

of Labor Statistics in the Current Population Survey, reduce employment not related to new regulatory compliance during the first year after implementation; or

''(D) in any industry area in which the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects in the Occupational Employment Statistics program that the employment level will decrease by 1 percent or more, further reduce employment not related to new regulatory compliance during the first year after implementation;''.

Page 16, line 16, insert after ''domestic jobs),'' the following: ''wages,''.

Page 16, line 25, insert after ''HIGH-IMPACT RULES'' the following: ''NEGATIVE-IMPACT ON JOBS AND WAGES RULES,''.

Page 17, line 2, strike ''a major rule or high-impact rule'' and insert the following: ''a major rule, a high-impact rule, a negative-impact on jobs and wages rule,''.

Page 29, line 13, strike ''and''.

Page 29, line 14, strike ''major rule or high-impact rule,'' and insert the following: ''major rule, high-impact rule, or negative-impact on jobs and wages rule,''.

Page 30, line 2, strike the period at the end and insert ''; and''.

Page 30, after line 2, insert the following:

''(H) for any negative-impact on jobs and wages rule, a statement that the head of the agency that made the rule approved the rule knowing about the findings and determination of the agency or the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs that qualified the rule as a negative impact on jobs and wages rule.''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 487, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Madam Chairman, Americans face a regulatory burden with staggering costs to our economy and with substantial impacts on family budgets.

A recent paper by the Competitive Enterprise Institute estimates that the cost of Federal regulations to the economy exceeds $1.8 trillion. The American Action Forum predicts that $143 billion in new regulations may be finalized this year.

These figures are very troubling. That is why the bill we are considering is so important. H.R. 2804 reforms the regulatory process and will help promote the economic growth we so desperately need to get our economy booming again and add jobs.

The amendment that I offer today with my friend, Mr. BARR, is simple and one that I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support.

If a regulation decreases employment or wages by 1 percent or more in an industry, it will be subject to heightened review and additional transparency requirements.

The amendment also requires agency heads to certify that they knowingly approved a rule that will result in lost jobs or reduced wages.

The principle is simple: If Federal bureaucrats are going to implement rules that take wages or jobs from Americans, they should take responsibility for their decisions.

It is important that Washington bureaucrats think through the impacts, the costs, and the burdens that red tape imposes on American families and communities. Bureaucratic elites are regulating solid, good-paying jobs right out of existence.

At a time when wages are stagnant for many American workers and when we so desperately need to grow the economy and add jobs, this is unbelievable.

On February 7, with my hardhat secured and my headlamp on, I had the privilege of traveling underground to learn more about the work and operations of the Madison mine in Nanty Glo, Pennsylvania. Miners like these work hard every day to power our electric grid and to supply our steel mills.

But their way of life is being purposefully regulated out of existence. Dan, the mine electrician, recently asked me what is going to be done to curb the President's war on coal. He wrote: As a mine electrician in your district, my men are asking me questions like: Is this ever going to end, or are we all going to be looking for new jobs?

My friends, this problem extends well beyond the coalfields of Pennsylvania or Kentucky. Regulations cost each household almost $14,700. That is almost 30 percent of an average Pennsylvania family's annual income.

Complying with this mountain of paperwork will also cost families and businesses almost 10.4 billion hours this year. Who thinks that this is the most productive use of their time?

Madam Chairman, the American people cannot afford more lost jobs and further reduced wages. Every lost job means one less person helping with the taxes needed to support Social Security, Medicare, and other critical programs for veterans, health care, education, and national defense.

I urge my colleagues to support the Rothfus-Barr amendment and the underlying bill.

Madam Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR), my friend.

Mr. BARR. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman and my friend from Pennsylvania for yielding. I appreciate the hard work that both he and his staff have put into this important amendment, which I had the pleasure to join him in introducing.

As I indicated earlier in the debate on the underlying legislation, in Kentucky, the overregulation of the Kentucky coal industry has really taken a toll. Under President Obama, Appalachian Kentucky has lost about 7,000 jobs in just 5 years, putting coal industry employment in the Commonwealth to its lowest level since records were first kept in 1927.

This amendment would strengthen the underlying regulatory reform legislation by holding accountable those agencies that go after already suffering workers like Kentucky and Pennsylvania coal miners.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Rothfus amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chairman, this amendment would add an additional level of analysis in the regulatory process that examines whether or not regulations have a negative impact on jobs and wages.

Adding this additional requirement that is highly speculative and analytical would further slow down the rulemaking process, adding more red tape.

I invite the gentleman to support my amendment, amendment No. 9, which we will get to shortly, that would exclude from the bill any rule, consent decree, or settlement agreement that would result in net job creation or have greater benefits than costs.

I would also hope that my friends on both sides of the aisle would have a desire to improve the economy and take actions to foster job growth, instead of adding more red tape to the regulatory process.

To the extent that regulations have anything to do with jobs, H.R. 2804's proponents should overwhelmingly support my amendment No. 9, which exempts from the bill all rules that OMB determines would result in net job creation.

With respect to regulations stifling job creation, the evidence, Madam Chairman, is to the contrary. If anything, regulations can promote job growth and put Americans back to work.

For instance, the BlueGreen Alliance notes:

> Studies on the direct impact of regulations on job growth have found that most regulations result in modest job growth or have no effect, and economic growth has consistently surged forward in concert with these health and safety protections. The Clean Air Act is a shining example, given that the economy has grown 204 percent and private sector job creation has expanded 86 percent since its passage in 1970.

In reference to the Clean Air Act, the Office of Management and Budget observed that 40 years of success with this measure have demonstrated that strong environmental protections and strong economic growth go hand-in-hand.

Regulations create valuable jobs and research across industries. For example, a pending regulation limiting the amount of airborne mercury will not just reduce the amount of seriously toxic pollutants, but create as many as 45,000 temporary jobs and possibly 8,000 permanent jobs, as The New York Times noted last month.

Heightened vehicle emissions standards have spurred clean vehicle research, development, and production efforts that in turn have already generated more than 150,000 jobs at 504 facilities in 43 States across the United States of America.

The majority's own witness clearly debunked the myth that regulations stymie job creation during his testimony at a Judiciary Committee hearing held in the last Congress on an antiregulatory bill.

Christopher DeMuth, with the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, stated in his prepared testimony:

The ''focus on jobs . . . can lead to confusion in regulatory debates'' and that the employment effects of regulation, while important, ''are indeterminant.''

The claim by the bill's proponents, namely, that regulatory uncertainty creates a disincentive for businesses to add jobs, was rejected by Bruce Bartlett, a senior policy analyst in the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations.

He observed:

Regulatory uncertainty is a canard invented by Republicans that allows them to use current economic problems to pursue an agenda supported by the business community, year in and year out. In other words, it is a simple case of political opportunism, not a serious effort to deal with high employment.

That was Bruce Bartlett.

Leading scholars, such as Wake Forest Law Professor Sidney Shapiro has testified:

All of the available evidence contradicts the claim that regulatory uncertainty is deterring business development and investment.

Scant demand, not regulations, drives hiring choices.

In sum, there is no credible evidence that regulations depress job creation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Madam Chairman, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Madam Chairman, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), the chairman.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for yielding.

I strongly support the amendment that he and the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR) have offered. I urge my colleagues to support it as well, which protects America's workers.

I support the amendment.

Those who suffer the most from over-reaching regulations are workers who lose their jobs or see their wages cut on account of regulations that cost too much. Displaced workers suffer lower earnings once they find new work. That earnings gap persists over the long-term. Blue collar workers are the hardest hit.

Those who take too long to find new work are more likely to leave the labor force and retire. These workers, their families, and this country cannot afford to lose good work, good workers and good wages to needless regulatory excess. This amendment makes sure that agencies better analyze the potential impacts of new regulations on jobs and wages. And it makes sure that agencies come clean with the American people when they impose new regulations that they know will impose real adverse impacts on jobs and wages.

It will protect America's workers and families—and give voters the information they need to hold agencies and their enablers accountable when agencies recklessly destroy jobs and wages.

I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to pass this amendment. It is a good amendment. It will shine a light on the process of the regulatory elites here in Washington, D.C., and the impact it is having on our jobs and on our wages.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Madam Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. BRADY OF TEXAS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 4 printed in House Report 113–361.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 17, line 23, strike ''; and'' and insert the following: '';''.

Page 18, line 4, insert ''and'' after ''rule;'';

Page 18, insert after line 4 the following:

''(E) an achievable objective for the rule and metrics by which the agency will measure progress toward that objective;''.

Page 19, line 20, strike ''and''.

Page 19, line 22, insert ''and'' after ''statute;''.

Page 19, insert after line 22 the following:

''(iii) an achievable objective for the rule and metrics by which the agency will measure progress toward that objective;''.

Page 29, line 13, strike ''and''.

Page 29, insert after line 13 the following:

''(G) the agency's reasoned final determination that the rule meets the objectives that the agency identified in subsection (d)(1)(E)(iii) or that other objectives are more appropriate in light of the full administrative record and the rule meets those objectives;

''(H) the agency's reasoned final determination that it did not deviate from the metrics the agency included in subsection (d)(1)(E)(iii) or that other metrics are more appropriate in light of the full administrative record and the agency did not deviate from those metrics; and''.

Page 29, line 14, strike ''(G)(i) for any major rule'' and insert the following: ''(I)(i) for any major rule''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 487, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Madam Chairman, we are going through a very disappointing economic recovery. Millions of people can't find full-time work; millions more have given up looking for work; and our local businesses are just drowning in red tape.

They often ask: Doesn't anyone in Washington consider the impact on our local businesses and the economy from all this new red tape before they put it in place? Well, sadly not often enough.

In 2012, the Federal Government imposed 3,708 new Federal rules. Guess how many of them had a cost benefit analysis? Simply ask the question: How does this affect the economy? The answer is 14—14 out of more than 3,000.

I applaud Chairman GOODLATTE's commitment to reforming the way this government conducts red tape. I have an amendment that complements his efforts, one drawn from my own Sound Regulation Act, which I think is helpful as we move this reform through.

The point here is this: When a Federal agency sets out to adopt new rules and red tape, the agency has a responsibility to state clearly the achievable objective of those rules or regulations. After all, our citizens have the right to know what their Federal Government intends to accomplish with this red tape.

□ 1830

The agency also has the responsibility to tell the American people up front what metrics it is going to use to measure the progress toward that objective. No more manipulative statistics. No more fuzzy math. When the agency publishes the final rule, it has the responsibility to certify to the American people that the rule actually meets the objective the agency originally identified. It is just common sense.

My amendment says to regulators: Tell us your objective. Tell us how you are going to meet it and measure it. Then tell us you actually did what you promised.

It is common sense, and it may just help put this painful recovery behind us.

Madam Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), the chairman of the committee.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding, and I strongly support his amendment.

Madam Chairman, one of the simplest, most effective, and most commonsense measures we can take to make sure agencies issue smarter regulations is to require them to do just what this amendment requires: identify achievable objectives for new regulations when they propose them; identify metrics by which they will measure whether those objectives are achieved; and at the end of their rulemakings, live by their own, stated objectives and whether the metrics say the proposed regulations can achieve them.

That is plain, simple, commonsense decisionmaking that American families and businesses live by every day. It is high time that Federal agencies be required to live by these standards, too.

I urge my colleagues to support the gentleman from Texas' amendment.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, this amendment reminds me of how things used to be when I was a young parent and I had my children at home. When it came time for my favorite TV program, I would tell them to go upstairs and clean up their room again.

They would say, Daddy, we already cleaned up the room, and I would say, Go clean it up again.

Then when they would scamper upstairs, I would put the TV on and watch my program in peace. So it gave them some busy work.

That is pretty much what this amendment does. It creates an additional requirement in the rulemaking process for an agency to articulate achievable objectives and metrics indicating progress toward those objectives.

This amendment piles on the bill's numerous mandatory new rulemaking requirements, and it implies that agencies issue rules that lack an achievable objective, notwithstanding the fact that regulations already go through an extensive public notice and comment period as well as being subjected to judicial review.

The bill would impose unneeded and costly analytical and procedural requirements on agencies that would prevent them from performing their statutory responsibilities. It would also create needless regulatory and legal uncertainty, increase costs for businesses and State, local, and tribal governments, and it would impede commonsense protections for the American public.

That is why, Madam Chair, there are more than 150 consumer groups, environmental organizations, labor unions, and other entities that are strenuously opposed to this bill. These organizations include the AFL–CIO, the Alliance for Justice, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the American Lung Association, the Consumer Federation of America, the Consumers Union, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the UAW, the League of Conservation Voters, the National Women's Law Center, the National Resources Defense Council, People For the American Way, Public Citizen, the Sierra Club, the Service Employees International Union, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and the United Steelworkers, just to name a few.

Likewise, the administration has issued a strongly worded veto threat against this bill. It warns that the bill would impose unneeded and costly analytical and procedural requirements on agencies that would prevent them from performing their statutory duties.

For those reasons, I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Madam Chair, very briefly, my friend from Georgia is a good man. I am surprised there aren't regulations about when you can send your kids up to clean their rooms again.

Look, this is just saying to Washington: tell us what your goal is—how you are going to measure it and if you achieve it—before you put this red tape on our local businesses. It is common sense and, frankly, long overdue. I urge strong support for this amendment.

Madam Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MR. RIGELL

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 5 printed in House Report 113–361.

Mr. RIGELL. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 53, line 24, strike ''and''.

Page 54, line 3, after ''entitites'' the following: ''; and''.

Page 54, line 3, insert before the first period the following:

''(8) describing any impairment of the ability of small entities to have access to credit''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 487, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. RIGELL) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. RIGELL. I would like to thank my fellow Virginian, Chairman GOODLATTE, for his leadership on the underlying bill. I also want to thank Mr. GRAVES, the chairman of the House Committee on Small Business, for working with me and my staff on advancing my amendment.

Madam Chairman, I think my amendment is noteworthy first for its brevity, as it is only 14 words long in total, yet it packs a powerful and much-needed punch because it addresses a central issue to job creation, which is a shared value and a shared objective in this House: increasing access to credit and, in some cases, not prohibiting access to credit.

This is not a theoretical issue for me. I have been a businessman for 30 years and an entrepreneur for about 23 years, and I know the great joy of looking into an applicant and fellow American's eyes and saying these incredible words: ''You're hired.'' Those are life-changing words.

One of the reasons that I could say those words to those who applied at our company was that a local lender, a small local bank, was able to lend me the money I needed to start my business and to grow my business. Yet those very same small lenders—those small banks in Virginia's Second Congressional District—are reeling. They are reeling from waves of new regulations, nearly all of which are overly burdensome and so many of which are not needed at all. They should never have been written. The result is that some banks are hiring, but they are not hiring loan officers; they are hiring compliance officers.

From my own experience, Madam Chairman, and from my own deliberate and intentional listening to the small businesses and lenders of Virginia's Second Congressional District, I have come to a conclusion which is clear, which is irrefutable in my mind, and which is deeply troubling. That is that the actions of this body collectively and of the administration have made it more difficult—not easier but more difficult—for small businesses to get the credit they need to grow their businesses and to hire more people.

This cannot be reconciled with the words that President Obama shared in this very Chamber in his State of the Union speech in 2012. It was a statement that should have been the basis for common ground. He noted correctly that most new jobs and businesses, like my own, were created in startups and small businesses.

He said this:

> Let's pass an agenda that helps small businesses succeed. Tear down regulations that prevent aspiring entrepreneurs from getting the financing to grow.

H.R. 2804 does just that. It is a significant and meaningful step forward in that area.

That is why I have come to the House floor this evening. What a privilege it is to be here, to be a strong voice for the hardworking men and women across this country who are laboring under an increasing level of burden from the Federal Government—one that should get out of the way, yet it continues to put roadblock after roadblock after roadblock in the way of hardworking Americans who are trying to create jobs. They have mortgages on their homes. They have signed these loans personally. I understand the burden and the challenges that are faced by small business owners. One reason I sought this office was to be as strong a voice as I could be for those who, if you unleash them, are the most powerful job-creating engine the world has ever known—small business owners in America.

That is what H.R. 2804 does, and I think my amendment strengthens that. I appreciate the opportunity to speak in favor of this, and I ask my colleagues for their careful consideration of my amendment because I think, in doing so, they will vote in the affirmative. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 2804 and for my amendment.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chair, this amendment harkens me back to the time when my kids were young and when I was trying to make sure that they would not jump into something where one of their schoolmates might be being bullied, and then they would jump in on the part of the bully or would just participate in the antagonism against the victim, and I told them not to pile on.

This amendment is a classic case of piling on. It would add an eighth requirement for the initial regulatory flexibility analysis specified by the bill. The agency would have to provide a detailed statement describing any impairment of the ability of small entities to have access to credit. The bill already requires agencies to consider all indirect costs, which would include this issue. This amendment would allow yet another ground for a regulated entity to challenge a rulemaking.

Title III does nothing to help small businesses and other small entities reduce compliance costs or to ensure agency compliance with the RFA. Instead, this amendment would impose another unnecessary burden on agencies. This is just another piling on of the already burdensome new rulemaking requirements.

This amendment as well as the bill ignore the fact that the small businesses, like their larger counterparts, can substantially impact the health and safety of their workers as well as that of the general public. Small businesses, like all businesses, provide services and goods that affect our lives and carry the same risks of harm as the services and goods that large businesses provide. It makes no difference to someone who is breathing dirty air or drinking poisoned water whether the hazards come from a small or a large business.

Speaking of business, the American Sustainable Business Council is a growing national coalition of businesses and business organizations committed to advancing policies that support a vibrant and sustainable economy. The American Sustainable Business Council, through its partner organizations, represents over 200,000 businesses and more than 325,000 business professionals, including industry associations, local and State Chambers of Commerce, micro enterprises, social enterprises, green and sustainable businesses, local livable economy groups, women and minority business leaders, and investors and investor networks.

While some inside the beltway claim that regulations are holding back our economic recovery, the American Sustainable Business Council has a different view. It, along with other small business organizations, released a February 2012 poll of small business owners which found that small businesses don't see regulations as a major concern. Its polling confirmed that small business owners value regulations if they are well-constructed and fairly enforced.

□ 1845

They found that small business owners believe certain governmental regulations play an important role: 86 percent of them believe some regulation is necessary for a modern economy; 93 percent of respondents believe their business can live with some regulation if it is fair and manageable; 78 percent of small employers agree regulations are important in protecting small businesses from unfair competition and to help level the playing field with big businesses; 79 percent of small business owners support having clean air and water in the community in order to keep their family, employees, and customers healthy.

Madam Chair, I include the letter from the American Sustainable Business Council in the RECORD, and I yield back the balance of my time.

AMERICAN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS COUNCIL,
Washington, DC, February 25, 2014.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: I write you today to urge you to oppose the mini-omnibus bill of four flawed regulatory proposals (packaged into H.R. 2804) and H.R. 899, the Unfunded Mandates Transparency and Information Act. Votes on these bills are expected this week. These bills hurt small and medium sized businesses by halting the regulatory process that levels the playing group for these businesses to compete, creates incentives for innovation and protects our customers and employees.

The package of Anti-Regulatory policies these bills represent constitutes a shift away from forty years of regulatory precedent that protects the public against a range of market imperfections. These policies will also lead to a more chaotic and less competitive market. And finally, the bills will have the unintended consequence of shifting the burden of proof for environmental, health and safety issues back to taxpayers and away from powerful corporate interests. Eroding the operational capacity of regulatory agencies to do their job, as these bills appear designed to do, will not foster productive growth among small and mid-sized firms. Instead these actions will allow the largest firms to further dominate the marketplace.

Also if enacted, this package of bills would open the door for more problems like the financial and mortgage crisis of 2008. This would, in our view, would further damage our economy, stifle consumer demand and put small companies out of business.

The American Sustainable Business Council (ASBC) is a growing national coalition of businesses and business organizations committed to advancing policies that support a vibrant and sustainable economy. ASBC, through its partner organizations, represents over 200,000 businesses and more than 325,000 business professionals, including industry associations, local and state chambers of commerce, micro-enterprise, social enterprise, green and sustainable business, local living economy groups, woman and minority business leaders, and investor networks.

While some inside the Beltway claim that regulations are holding back our economic recovery, ASBC has a different view. ASBC, along with other small business organizations, released in February 2012 a poll of small business owners which found that small businesses don't see regulations as a major concern.

Our polling confirmed that small business owners value regulations if they are well-constructed and fairly enforced:

Small business owners believe certain government regulations play an important role

86% believe some regulation is necessary for a modern economy and 93% of respondents believe their business can live with some regulation if it is fair and manageable.

78% of small employers agree regulations are important in protecting small businesses from i unfair competition and to level the playing field with big business.

79% of small business owners support having clean air and water in their community in order to keep their family, employees and customers healthy.

61% support standards that move the country towards energy efficiency and clean energy.

Supporting the ASBC 2012 poll is a Wells Fargo/Gallup poll of small businesses conducted this past October, which found that only seven percent mentioned regulations as being an important challenge.

Given the important role regulations play yet there still may be a small percentage of businesses having difficulty with them, the answer is not H.R. 2804 and H.R. 899. Instead we believe the solution lies in expanding the capacity of the regulatory agencies to provide assistance to small businesses in compliance. Increasing the number of agency ombudsmen and/or ombudsmen within the SBA and giving them the resources to be more proactive as well as responsive will target federal dollars to specific areas of concern. Our experience has been that the ombudsmen process works well.

Blocking, weakening or delaying critical standards and safeguards will not address existing needed regulations that a small number of small businesses have trouble with compliance. It will only worsen the uneven economic playing field that leaves many small and medium sized businesses at a competitive disadvantage. It also inhibits innovation in new technologies that can create good, sustainable jobs and create safer products, workplaces and communities.

We call on the House of Representatives to reject this package of anti-regulatory policies.

Sincerely

DAVID LEVINE,
CEO.

FRANK KNAPP,
Co-chair, ASBC Action Fund & CEO, South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. RIGELL. Madam Chair, I would just state to my friend and colleague that the only piling on, as I see it, are the regulations that are continuing to burden the small business owners.

I yield the remainder of my time to the gentleman from Virginia, Chairman GOODLATTE, my friend and colleague.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I strongly support his amendment.

Madam Chair, title III of the ALERRT Act makes important reforms to assure that agencies identify whether their new regulations will have significant adverse effects on small businesses. One of the most important adverse effects is to identify whether

these new regulations will make it harder for small businesses to obtain credit.

Small businesses create the majority of the new jobs in our economy, yet without access to credit, how can they do that? How can they even survive? The gentleman's amendment makes sure that agencies do identify whether new regulations will make it harder for a substantial number of small businesses to obtain credit. It is a reform that is long overdue and especially important as our country struggles to achieve a real and durable job recovery.

I thank the gentleman for his amendment and urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. RIGELL. Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. RIGELL).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MR. TIPTON

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 6 printed in House Report 113–361.

Mr. TIPTON. Madam Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 66, line 1, strike ''The agency'' and insert ''Each year, each agency''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 487, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. TIPTON. Madam Chairman, I would like to thank Chairman GRAVES and Chairman GOODLATTE for all of their work.

I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, I rise today in support of my amendment to title III, the Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act, which will ensure that a requirement under current law, the Regulatory Flexibility Act, or RFA, remains intact.

As the 1970s came to a close, Congress took note of the challenges that small businesses were facing. They were struggling to run their businesses while complying with an increasing number of complicated regulations. This led to the passage of the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, which was designed to improve agency rulemaking. Under statute, the Federal Government agencies looking to regulate the private sector must evaluate the costs of doing so on small businesses, and where the costs are found to be significant, seek less burdensome alternatives to their proposed actions.

A key piece of the RFA is section 610, the ''look-back'' provision, which requires agencies to periodically evaluate the necessity of every existing regulation that has ''significant'' economic impact on a substantial number of small businesses and determine whether those regulations should be amended or rescinded to minimize burdens on small businesses. As a part of the section 610 review process, agencies must annually publish the list of regulations they plan to review in the Federal Register. This amendment makes a technical correction to the text of title III to ensure this current annual publication requirement remains in place. It is an entirely appropriate exercise for the agencies to review old regulations and weed out ones that are outdated, ineffective, or overly burdensome.

Ten years is a lifetime in terms of our private sector's ability to radically transform marketplaces. Reviewing the actual impacts of existing regulations every 10 years just makes sense. Understanding real-world consequences of a regulation on small businesses and taking into account changes in other areas of Federal, State, or local law that may affect the necessity of the regulations are just a few of the reasons that make these reviews absolutely essential.

The regulatory burden for small businesses has not lightened since the passage of RFA. In fact, agencies have been so busy issuing new regulations that they have sometimes failed to comply with already existing requirements to annually publish their list of regulations to be reviewed and then to review them. This simply isn't acceptable.

This amendment will relieve Federal agencies of any ambiguity as to whether or not this annual publication requirement still exists and ensure that small businesses can continue to make their voices heard after a regulation has become implemented.

I urge Members to vote ''yes'' on this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, though I am in support of this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. It is to my horror that I would agree to this amendment, but it simply corrects a drafting error. So we do not oppose this amendment. It makes a thoroughly flawed bill slightly less thoroughly flawed.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TIPTON. Madam Chair, I thank the gentleman for his support of this amendment. It speaks to a very important point. We have got to make sure that the agencies are actually doing what the law is requiring. This clarification simply achieves that.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TIPTON. I yield to the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I support his commonsense amendment and urge my colleagues to join in making it unanimous.

Mr. TIPTON. Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. TIPTON) having assumed the chair, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2804) to amend title 5, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to publish information about rules on the Internet, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE ROSA L. DELAURO, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable ROSA L. DELAURO, Member of Congress:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
February 25, 2014

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have received a subpoena, issued by the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, purporting to require that I produce certain documents, at least some of which relate to official functions, and appear to testify at a deposition on similar matters in a particular civil case.

After consulting with the Office of General Counsel, I will make the determinations required by Rule VIII.

Sincerely,

ROSA L. DELAURO,
Member of Congress.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 4303, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Trustees of Gallaudet University:

Mr. YODER, Kansas
Mr. BUTTERFIELD, North Carolina

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE BRITISH-AMERICAN INTERPALIAMENTARY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276,

and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following Member on the part of the House to the British-American Interparliamentary Group:

Mr. ROE, Tennessee

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WILLIAMS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all of those associated with leadership who have allowed us to have this time tonight to discuss Black History Month.

As you are aware, Black History Month has not always been a month. It started out as a week. The father of Black History Week, which evolved into Black History Month, was Mr. Carter G. Woodson. In fact, he is renowned for not only his having started this time and made it a part of the annual events that we celebrate, but he is also known for his writings.

I would like to read an excerpt from his book, ''The Mis-Education of the Negro.'' Dr. Woodson encapsulated a significant point with this passage that I shall read.

He indicates:

> When you control a man's thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him to stand here or go yonder. He will find his proper place and he will stay in it.
>
> You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary.

Dr. Carter G. Woodson wrote this in 1933. In 1933, he was trying to call to the attention of our country the plight of the American Negro. The plight was one that involved the mentality of the American Negro. He was calling to our attention how education was appropriate for the American Negro to become the independent person that could do for himself and take care of himself and live a life that was based upon his fulfilling his role in the American Dream. This was in 1933.

I am honored today that we have a resolution that we have filed with the House, H. Res. 481. This resolution recognizes the significance of Black History Month.

□ 1900

This resolution has been signed onto by all of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus, as well as other Members of Congress. This resolution extols the virtues of Africans who were brought to the Americas, a people who, under harsh circumstances, were able to not only survive, but also thrive.

It really goes into much of what we call the greatest story that has yet to be told, a story of people who came to the Americas involuntarily, and who have done exceedingly well in this country. We still have a long way to go, but, thank God, we have come as far as we have.

This year, we are celebrating the civil rights in America as a theme for Black History Month, civil rights in America, and we would like to start by talking about the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

However, before you can really understand completely the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it is important to get some sense what the times were like in 1964, to get some understanding of what it was like to live in the United States of America in 1964.

This is not being done to shame anyone. It is not being done to cause persons to have some sort of guilty reflections. This is being done so as to help us commemorate some things and celebrate some others. It is important to understand the times that we lived in.

I lived during these times, and I would like to start with April 12, 1963, and then I would like to walk us up through some events that will bring us to the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

It was April 12, 1963, that Dr. King was arrested in Birmingham, Alabama. He was there to work with others to integrate a city that was deeply segregated. In so doing, he was informed by some members of the clergy and others that he was taking inappropriate action, he was acting too soon, that the time was not ripe for what he was doing in Birmingham, Alabama.

As a result of being there and protesting, Dr. King was arrested. He was taken to jail, stayed in jail for 9 days, and while in jail, he wrote his famous ''Letter from Birmingham Jail'' in response to a statement that was published by some other members of the clergy. If you have not read the ''Letter from Birmingham Jail,'' I beg that you read it because it will help you better understand the times, and understand why Dr. King had to do what he was doing.

The ''Letter from Birmingham Jail'' is one of the greatest pieces of American literature that I have been exposed to, and I beg you to please take the opportunity to read it.

Let's move forward to June 11, 1963. This is when Governor George Wallace stood in the door at the University of Alabama to block the entry of Vivian Malone and James Hood. These were two students who were enrolling. In so doing, he caused the President, at that time, President Kennedy, to federalize the Alabama National Guard so that these two students could make their way into the University of Alabama.

These were the times that I lived in. These were events that occurred leading up to the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, also the Public Accommodations Act of 1964.

June 21, 1964. Three civil rights workers were in Mississippi—Schwerner, Goodman and Chaney. They lost their lives in Mississippi registering people to vote. When they died, it caused the country to grieve, understanding that three people who but only tried to register people to vote had lost their lives at the hands of the KKK.

These were the times that I lived in.

August 28, 1963. Dr. King called for a march on Washington, and that march took place. That march was one of the greatest events in the history of the civil rights movement. 200,000 to 300,000 people assembled, and this is when Dr. King gave his famous ''I Have a Dream'' speech.

They also had a list of demands, a list of demands that included a number 8 on a list of 10. Number eight was a minimum wage of $2 an hour. That minimum wage of $2 an hour, adjusted for inflation, would be more than $13 an hour today. The minimum wage was a part of the reason why we had the March on Washington, and I am so proud that Dr. King stood his ground, so as to help us develop that minimum wage that he wanted to have as a living wage.

There is before the House now H.R. 1010, a bill that would produce a living wage because it indexes the minimum wage to the Consumer Price Index. It would move the minimum wage from $7.25 an hour to $10.10 an hour increments, not all at once.

It would also help persons who are tip workers, who are making currently $2.13 an hour. It would raise their wages, and would also continue to index their wages, so that they would find themselves being able to, hopefully, live above the poverty line while working full time.

In this, the richest country in the world, a country where 1 out of every 60 persons is a millionaire—and I don't begrudge anyone who is a millionaire, a country where 1 of every 11 households is worth $1 million, and I salute those who are worth millions of dollars, but in this country, where we have so much wealth, I don't believe we ought to have people who work full time and live below the poverty line, and find that employers are subsidized so that these workers can be paid a wage that is at or near a poverty level and receive other subsidies from the government to help them make it in America.

So I am honored that Dr. King pushed for a wage of $2 an hour at that time, which would be more than $13 an hour today.

Moving forward to September 15 of 1963, a tragic occurrence at the 16th Street Baptist Church. This is when four babies—I say they were babies—Addie was 14, Cynthia was 14, Carole was 14, and Denise was 11. They all lost their lives in church, in church, four babies, four young girls.

These were the times that I lived in. These were the times that preceded the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1964 and 1965.

November 22, 1963. A President of the United States of America decided to come to Texas, and while in Texas, the President was assassinated. The Honorable John F. Kennedy lost his life in

my home State. I was born in Louisiana, but Texas is my home State at this time.

When he lost his life, the country went into mourning. It was a sad day for this country to have a President assassinated, and this country found that it was necessary to move forward, however.

Another person became President, and that, of course, was the Honorable Lyndon Johnson, who was from the State of Texas, and it was Lyndon Johnson who, on July 2, 1964, signed the Civil Rights Act.

Now, this Civil Rights Act of 1964 is one that brought great benefits to persons of my generation because it dealt with public accommodation, and it integrated, or desegregated public accommodations, hotels, restaurants, places that we frequent now and we take for granted the opportunity to go into these places.

In my lifetime, we could not enter the front door of places that we now take for granted, that these things have always been this way. Many do, not all, but those of us who are of my ilk, we remember what it was like.

I can remember when we would travel across country, Mr. Speaker. We knew that there were certain places that we could stop, and we knew that there were certain places that we dare not stop under any circumstances at all, and we would make sure that we had enough fuel to make it from one stop to the next.

We knew that there were certain places that we could eat, and there were places where we would have to go to the back door, and we would, when we arrived at these places, always be courteous and kind to the people that greeted us, and a good many of them were courteous and kind to us, but there were many who were not.

I remember once, when we were traveling across country and we wanted some water, and we stopped at a service station, and the operator, I don't know that the person was the owner so I shall use the term operator, said, yes, you may have water, but you will have to drink it out of an oil can. You can take that can and you can clean it up as best you can and you can drink your water from that can.

These were the times that I lived in, the times that the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Public Accommodations Act addressed.

I can remember the ''Colored'' water fountain. Whenever we went out someplace near my home, and if we wanted water, we had to drink from a ''Colored'' water fountain. That ''Colored'' water fountain was usually not nearly as clean as the ''White'' water fountain.

I can remember having to sit in the back of the bus. I traveled from Texas to California, and I remember sitting in the back of the bus, and when I got to someplace near California, they allowed me to sit near the front of the bus. It was the first time in my life that I had actually had an opportunity to sit near the front of the bus.

I remember having to sit in the balcony of the movie. We were not allowed, in my lifetime, to sit at the first level. We always were required to go into the balcony of the movie.

Back of the bus, balcony of the movie, and then arrested and placed in the bottom of a jail. This is the era that I grew up in that preceded the signing of the Public Accommodations Act, the Voting Rights Act of 1964.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am sure you can understand that I have great appreciation for the Voting Rights Act. The Voting Rights Act means more to me than a simple document with words on it. This document may have been written in ink, but it was signed in the blood of Schwerner, Goodman, and Chaney; signed in the blood of those babies that lost their lives at the 16th Street Baptist Church. Written in ink, but signed in blood, and it means something to people of my generation.

So I am proud tonight, and I am honored that the leadership has allowed us to have this time to talk about the Civil Rights Act in this country, the means by which we have integrated ourselves.

I am proud that my country has come a long way. Make no mistake about it: we have come a very long way in this country, and if anybody says we haven't come a long way, I would challenge them. I would challenge them because I lived through segregation.

I know what segregation looked like. I saw it on signs that said ''Colored'' and ''White.''

□ 1915

I know what it smells like. I went to the back door and to bathrooms that were not clean. I know what it felt like because I was pushed and shoved and told where to go and what to do.

These were the times that I lived in. But thank God, we have come a long way, and we no longer live in the times that preceded the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1964.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored that I have another Member here who is going to say a few words about civil rights; and then I have another Member who has something special that he will call to our attention; and then I will return; and I am going to say a little bit tonight about the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

But before I do this, I will yield to another Member from the great State of Texas, a district that includes the city of El Paso, Texas' 16th Congressional District, the Honorable BETO O'ROURKE.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor to join my colleague from the State of Texas in this Special Order hour today to recognize our history in this country when it comes to achieving civil rights and perseverance in the face of adversity and some of our shameful past that has been turned, through the very hard work—the blood, the sweat, and the tears referenced by my colleague—into victories and triumphs, victories that are not yet complete, victories that we are still working on, but victories, nonetheless.

And I thought it might be appropriate at this time to share a little bit about the community that I represent, El Paso, Texas, and its role in this struggle to achieve civil rights, human rights, and equality for all men under the law.

I will begin with one of my favorite stories about El Paso. It is the story of the 1949 Bowie Bears high school baseball team. This was a team that was made up of members who lived in the Segundo Barrio of El Paso, all Mexican American members, all members who lived in what would be seen today as extreme levels of poverty, who played baseball with balls that were made of scrap pieces of clothing, gloves that were stitched together in their own homes, and who won the city championship and won the regional championship.

And as they traveled by bus in 1949 on those country highways to our capital in Austin, Texas, they were denied the ability to stay at motels. ''No Mexicans or dogs allowed.''

They were unable to eat in restaurants. They had to eat in the kitchens or eat outside on the bus. The night before the championship game in Austin, Texas—against an Austin, Texas, high school team—they slept under the bleachers in the field that they were going to play on, instead of being able to stay in a hotel or motel in that city; and they went on to win the first high school State baseball championship in Texas.

Not too long after that, in 1955, El Paso became the first city in the State of Texas to integrate its public schools; and as my colleague from Texas has pointed out, up until that point, there were separate schools for Black children, there were separate schools for White children, and not too long before that, separate schools for Mexican American children.

So in 1955, that school board in El Paso, Texas, made a very important decision to integrate schools. They were the first in Texas, one of the first in the former Confederacy.

In 1957, El Paso elected the first Mexican American mayor of a major U.S. city, Raymond Telles. And then, Mr. Speaker, on June 7, 1962, the El Paso City Council, under the leadership of Alderman Bert Williams, passed the first city ordinance of any major city in the former Confederacy outlawing segregation in hotels, motels, restaurants, and theaters; these places of public accommodation that my colleague has so eloquently described that were segregated and, in many cases, were barred to African Americans and, in some cases, in El Paso in earlier years, to Mexican Americans.

President Kennedy, in a speech that following year, in 1963, a speech which was titled a ''Special Message to the

Congress on Civil Rights and Job Opportunities,'' recognized this achievement in Texas, El Paso, where we were the first community in the former Confederacy to desegregate those places of public accommodation.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would draw our attention to the 1966 Texas Western Miners, a college basketball team that fielded the first all-Black starting five to compete for a national title game.

Those five young men not only won the national championship against some of the longest of odds versus Kentucky, but in doing so, they effectively ended segregation in intercollegiate athletics and did a lot to further end discrimination more broadly in the United States.

So I would just join with my colleague and associate, myself, with his comments about the Voting Rights Act and the need to persevere in the face of adversity, to recognize those triumphs that we have achieved so far, but not to claim victory until we are assured that everyone is treated equally under the law, that everyone has access to the ballot box, and that we truly are a country that treats everyone equally under the Constitution.

So I hope that, as a representative of El Paso, Texas, a community that has such a proud history of leading in Texas and leading in the former Confederacy, in leading in the U.S. on important civil rights, human rights, and equality issues, that I will be able to join you, Mr. GREEN, in this fight and join this Congress in doing the right thing.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I thank you for your excellent recitation, and you have already become a part of this Congress, of course, but also of the fight. You have really hit the ground running.

I want to salute you and let your constituents know that they can be proud of what you have accomplished in a very short time in the Congress of the United States of America.

Thank you for spending time with us this evening.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Thank you.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would like to know how much time I have remaining because I would also like to yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON) at the end of my commentary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 35 minutes remaining.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I assure you, Mr. GRAYSON, that I will have time for you.

I would like to now move forward to 1965—1965 and persons who assembled at a church near the Edmund Pettus Bridge. If you have not seen the Edmund Pettus Bridge, I would beg that you take an opportunity to see the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

Remember now, we are talking about civil rights in the United States of America. We talked about the Voting Rights Act of 1964. I am moving forward to 1965. I have mentioned persons assembled at a church. I have mentioned the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

These persons assembled at this church because they were going to march from Selma to Montgomery, a peaceful march. When they approached the Edmund Pettus Bridge, they knew that on the other side of that bridge were men with clubs, some on horses.

They knew that their fate was uncertain, but they marched on; and when they approached these men—I can remember the Honorable JOHN LEWIS, a Member of Congress from Georgia—he tells this story: He says that they were beating them, and he thought that he was going to die. They were beaten all the way back to the church where they started. This was in 1965, a year after the 1964 Voting Rights Act was signed.

Well, Dr. King came to Montgomery, Alabama, to Selma, Alabama; and Dr. King proceeded with the march. This was after the time that we call ''Bloody Sunday.'' Dr. King came, and they marched from Selma to Montgomery.

But now, this is where the story gets interesting because there is a person that I have labeled ''the greatest unsung hero of the civil rights movement,'' barring none, the greatest unsung hero of the civil rights movement, a person who is known to very few people, a person who made it possible for Dr. King and the marchers to move from Selma to Montgomery without having to confront the constabulary that engaged in a brutal act previously and may have done a similar thing.

This man, the greatest unsung hero of the civil rights movement, was a Republican. This man was not of African ancestry. He was an Anglo. This man was appointed to a Federal judgeship by President Eisenhower. This man signed the order for them to march from Selma to Montgomery.

Now, you might say: Well, signing an order is no big deal. It was then. Remember the times. It was a big deal to sign that order. In fact, for more than a decade, he had to be protected by U.S. marshals, the Honorable Frank M. Johnson, a district court judge.

But the story of Frank M. Johnson doesn't really start with the Edmund Pettus Bridge. It actually starts with Rosa Parks. When Rosa Parks took that seat and ignited the spark that started the civil rights movement, Rosa Parks went to jail that night.

There is a White side to Black history. Rosa Parks' bail was posted by Ms. Virginia Durr and her husband. A White woman posted the bail to get Rosa Parks out of jail. There is a White side to Black history.

But let's get back to Frank M. Johnson. They decided that they would not ride the bus; and for over a year, they provided alternative transportation; and they boycotted. And in so doing, in boycotting, they brought this to the attention of not only the United States, but also to the world.

But here is the other side: The boycott was effective. It was an order from Frank M. Johnson, as a part of a three-judge panel, concluding that that segregation was unconstitutional based upon Brown v. Board of Education, which had been decided about a year earlier. Frank M. Johnson signed the order along with two other judges.

Frank M. Johnson went on to sign orders integrating schools, voting rights—his history is replete with orders that he signed to change the face of the South. Paraphrasing Dr. King, Frank M. Johnson gave meaning to the word ''justice,'' a White Republican Federal judge.

I mention these things tonight because I want people to know that Black history is American history and that it includes people of all hues and genders and persuasions; and it is a history that, quite frankly, we cannot forget.

There are some aspects of it that we are not proud of, but it is a history that is ours, and we can never, ever ignore our history. Just as we cannot ignore what happened at Pearl Harbor, just as we cannot ignore what happened on 9/11, we cannot ignore many of the things that happened in the history of African Americans.

So with Frank M. Johnson having allowed the marchers to move forward by signing this order, later on, the same President, Lyndon Johnson, signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

I am probably in Congress because of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 because it provided a means by which districts could be drawn with consideration given to population, as opposed to geography.

That Voting Rights Act, section 5, is what allowed a good many people who are right here in this Congress today to be here, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and section 5 of it.

□ 1930

As you know, section 5 has been made impotent by the evisceration of section 4. Section 4 was declared unconstitutional. One of the things that I have learned in my years on the planet is that while I don't always agree with the judiciary, I do respect the judiciary. I didn't agree with the decision to declare section 4 unconstitutional, but I respect the opinion, and, as a result, I will do what I can to correct it here in the Halls of Congress.

I think that we have a great opportunity here to do something to strengthen the Voting Rights Act, the same Voting Rights Act that Mr. JOHN LEWIS marched to bring into being and that people lost their lives to bring into being. That same Voting Rights Act can be strengthened and be made useful and viable for a good many people.

So I will conclude with this. But I do want one more evidence of how much time I have remaining.

Mr. Speaker, can you give me one more count on the time? And I will come to my conclusion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 27 minutes remaining.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. GRAYSON, I assure you, you will have ample time.

I want to conclude with this: I believe that this is a great country. Notwithstanding all that I have explained about Black history, this is a great country, and I love my country. I believe that this is a country that has allowed me privileges and opportunities that I probably could not have enjoyed in another place. So let me share this brief vignette with you.

I was not born into riches, obviously, based upon the stories that I have told, but from very poor parents. My father could neither read nor write.

I remember going to work with my father one day. I have no idea as to why I was there. My father was a mechanic's helper. He was not a mechanic. He was a helper. He was the person who would clean up the wet spot on the floor. He was the person who would fetch the tools and do the things that were required that many people would not do. And I heard them address my father by a name that I was not familiar with. They called him ''Secretary.'' And as any child would, I suppose, I made an inquiry: Why do they call you Secretary? He explained to me that they were making fun of him, that they were aware that he could not read and that he could not write, and they were making fun of him.

I said: Well, why would you do this? Why would you let them make fun of you like this? Why would you let them do this to you?

It hurt as a young child to see your father being made fun of because he could not read and he could not write.

By the way, it was not his choice. It wasn't his choice to be a person who could not read or write.

But my father's answer is really what this story is all about. When I said to him: Why would you let them do this to you? He said to me, after having told me many more things, but he said to me: I do it, and I accept it because I want you to be able to read and write.

And isn't it wonderful that the son of a secretary can now stand in the well of the House of Representatives in the United States of America and read and write laws for the United States of America?

I thank you for the time, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful to all who made it possible for us to have this hour. And I believe that ours is the best country in the world. I believe that it really doesn't get much better than the United States of America. There are things that we need to do and things that we need to correct. But on a bad day, it is good to live in the USA. On a bad day, when your dog that you reared from a pup wants to bite you, on a bad day when your spouse wants to desert you, if you have to have your dog bite you and your spouse desert you, have it happen in the United States of America.

God bless you, and I yield to Mr. GRAYSON.

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, today is a sad anniversary. Twenty years ago today, the brilliant comedian, Bill Hicks, died of cancer at the age of 32. Hicks' comedy has been an inspiration to me and millions of others. He has been voted the fourth greatest stand-up comedian of all time. And if Hicks were alive to hear that, he would complain bitterly about losing out to Gandhi, Einstein, and Stalin.

In honor of Bill Hicks, I would like to try to yield this platform to him. This is how Bill Hicks ended his own performances. He would say to the audience:

> You have been fantastic. I hope you have enjoyed the show. There is a point to my act. Is there a point to my act? Let's find a point. I would say the point of my act—and I have to—but the point is this:
>
> The world is a ride like an amusement park. And when you choose to go on it, you think it is real because that is how powerful our minds are. And the ride goes up and down, and it goes round and round. It has thrills and chills, and it is very brightly colored, and it is very loud and it is fun. For a while.
>
> Some people have been on the ride for a long time, and they begin to question: ''Is it real or is it a ride?'' And other people, they have remembered, and they come back to us, and they say: ''Hey, don't worry. Don't be afraid, ever. Because it is just a ride.'' And we kill those people. We kill those people.
>
> We tell them: ''Shut him up. We have a lot invested in this ride. Shut him up. Look at the furrows of worry. Look at my big bank account and my family. This has to be real.''
>
> This can't be just be a ride. But it is just a ride. And we always kill those good guys who try to tell us that it is just a ride. Have you ever noticed that? And we let the demons run amok.
>
> But it doesn't matter because it is just a ride, and we can change it any time we want. It is only a choice. No effort. No worry. No job. No savings and money. It is just a ride.
>
> It is a choice, right now, between fear and love. The eyes of fear want you to put bigger locks on your doors and buy guns and close yourself off. The eyes of love instead see all of us as one.
>
> Here is what we can do to change the world right now into a better ride. Take all the money that we spend on weapons and defense each year and, instead, spend it on feeding, clothing, and educating the poor of this world which we could do many times over—not just one human being, but all of us, no one excluded. And then we can explore space together, both inner and outer, forever in peace.
>
> Thank you very much. You have been great. I hope you enjoyed it. You are fantastic. Thank you very much.

Bill Hicks wrote his own eulogy, and that was how he ended his act. This is what he said in his own final words in his own eulogy:

> I left here in love, in laughter, and in truth. And wherever truth, love, and laughter abide, I am there in spirit.

Rest in peace, Bill Hicks.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I yield back.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. WESTMORELAND (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today after 2:30 p.m. on account of attending a visitation for a funeral.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 39 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, February 26, 2014, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4812. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of General Keith B. Alexander, United States Army, and his advancement on the retired list in the grade of general; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4813. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General William N. Phillips, United States Army, and his advancement on the retired list in the grade of lieutenant general; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4814. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's report on assistance provided for sporting events during calendar year 2013; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4815. A letter from the Chairman and President, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to Kenya Airways of Nairobi, Kenya; to the Committee on Financial Services.

4816. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report entitled, ''The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) Mandated Evaluation of Express Lane Eligibility: Final Findings''; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4817. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Acetochlor; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0829; FRL-9904-19] received January 22, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4818. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Delaware; Attainment Plan for the Philadelphia-Wilmington, Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Delaware Nonattainment Area for the 1997 Annual Fine Particulate Matter Standard; Correction [EPA-R03-OAR-2010-0141; 9905-88-Region 3] received January 30, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4819. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Texas; Approval of Texas Motor Vehicle Rule Revisions [EPA-R06-OAR-2006-0885; FRL-9906-03-Region 6] received January 30, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4820. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Utah; Revisions to Utah Administrative Code-Permit: New and Modified Sources [EPA-R08-OAR-2013-0395; FRL-9904-24-Region 8] received January 30, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4821. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Utah; Revisions to Utah Rule R307-107; General Requirements; Breakdown [EPA-R08-OAR-2012-0746; FRL-9902-49-Region 8] received January 30, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4822. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of State Implementation Plans; Utah; Prevention of Significant Deterioration; Greenhouse Gas Permitting Authority and Tailoring Rule [EPA-R08-OAR-2012-0300; FRL-9903-27-Region 8] received January 30, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4823. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Cyantraniliprole; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0668; FRL-9388-7] received January 30, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4824. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Diflubenzuron; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0515; FRL-9904-27] received January 30, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4825. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Significant New Use Rule on Certain Chemical Substances [EPA-HQ-OPPT-2012-0182; FRL-9399-1] (RIN: 2070-AJ00) received January 30, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4826. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — alpha-Alkyl-w-Hydroxypoly (Oxypropylene) and/or Poly (Oxyethylene) Polymers Where the Alkyl Chain Contains a Minimum of Six Carbons etc.; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2013-0210; FRL-9394-2] received January 30, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4827. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting the Agency's reports containing the September 30, 2013, status of loans and guarantees issued under Section 25(a)(11) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4828. A letter from the Director, National Legislative Division, American Legion, transmitting the financial statement and independent audit of The American Legion, proceedings of the 95th Annual National Convention of the American Legion, held in Houston, Texas from August 23 — August 29, 2013, and a report on the Organization's activities for the year preceding the Convention; (H. Doc. No. 113—93); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed.

4829. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a semi-annual report to Congress on the continued compliance of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan with the Trade Act's freedom of emigration provisions, as required under the Jackson-Vanik Amendment; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4830. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a report concerning the operations and status of the Government Securities Investment Fund (G-Fund) of the Federal Employees Retirement System during the debt issuance suspension period; jointly to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform and Ways and Means.

4831. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a report covering the operation and status of the relevant federal fund accounts; jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means and Oversight and Government Reform.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Ms. FOXX: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 492. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 899) to provide for additional safeguards with respect to imposing Federal mandates, and for other purposes (Rept. 113–362). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. BECERRA (for himself, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. SCHWARTZ, and Mr. CROWLEY):

H.R. 4090. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to improve the Social Security Administration's ability to fight fraud, prevent errors, and protect the Social Security Trust Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. POE of Texas:

H.R. 4091. A bill to authorize Members of Congress to bring an action for declaratory and injunctive relief in response to a written statement by the President or any other official in the executive branch directing officials of the executive branch to not enforce a provision of law; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SIRES, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. HOLT, Mr. PETERS of California, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. POCAN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. SABLAN, and Mr. HONDA):

H.R. 4092. A bill to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to establish the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy as the lead Federal agency for coordinating Federal, State, and local assistance provided to promote the energy retrofitting of schools; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 4093. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to raise the prime and subcontract goals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 4094. A bill to direct the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to develop and implement a plan to improve the quality of data reported on bundled and consolidated contracts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. RUNYAN (for himself and Ms. TITUS):

H.R. 4095. A bill to increase, effective as of December 1, 2014, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. RUNYAN (for himself and Ms. TITUS):

H.R. 4096. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for annual cost-of-living adjustments to be made automatically by law each year in the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MCDERMOTT:

H.R. 4097. A bill to ensure that proper information gathering and planning are undertaken to secure the preservation and recovery of the salmon and steelhead of the Columbia River Basin in a manner that protects and enhances local communities, ensures effective expenditure of Federal resources, and maintains reasonably priced, reliable power, to direct the Secretary of Commerce to seek scientific analysis of Federal efforts to restore salmon and steelhead listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on Natural Resources, and Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. BARR, Mr. RAHALL, and Mr. ROE of Tennessee):

H.R. 4098. A bill to amend the Horse Protection Act to provide increased protection for horses participating in shows, exhibitions, or sales, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BRALEY of Iowa:

H.R. 4099. A bill to make supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2014 for the tree and wood pests activities of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and for certain forest health management and urban and community forestry activities of the Forest Service; to the Committee on Appropriations, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, and Mr. CRAWFORD):

H.R. 4100. A bill to amend the Water Resources Development Act of 1992 to permit the collection of user fees by non-Federal entities in connection with the challenge cost-sharing program for management of recreation facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mrs. ELLMERS:

H.R. 4101. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to ensure that a TRICARE beneficiary receives written notice of any change to benefits received by the beneficiary under the TRICARE program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. MILLER of Florida (for himself and Mrs. WALORSKI):

H.R. 4102. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify that the estate of a deceased veteran may receive certain accrued benefits upon the death of the veteran, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. NADLER:

H.R. 4103. A bill to amend title 17, United States Code, to secure the rights of visual artists to copyright, to provide for resale royalties, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. POE of Texas (for himself and Mr. KEATING):

H. Res. 491. A resolution affirming the support of the United States for Georgia's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. BECERRA:

H.R. 4090.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, to ''provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.''

By Mr. POE of Texas:

H.R. 4091.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 3 Section 1

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 4092.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 (relating to the power of Congress to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.)

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 4093.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution, which provides Congress with the ability to enact legislation necessary and proper to effectuate its purposes in taxing and spending.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 4094.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution, which provides Congress with the ability to enact legislation necessary and proper to effectuate its purposes in taxing and spending.

By Mr. RUNYAN:

H.R. 4095.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. RUNYAN:

H.R. 4096.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. MCDERMOTT:

H.R. 4097.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

H.R. 4098.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3. The Congress shall have Power To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. BRALEY of Iowa:

H.R. 4099.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. COTTON:

H.R. 4100.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 4, Section 3, Clause 2—The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States.

By Mrs. ELLMERS:

H.R. 4101.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The authority to enact this bill is derived from, but may not be limited to, Clause 12 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the United States Constitution to raise and support Armies.

By Mr. MILLER of Florida:

H.R. 4102.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I. Section 8.

By Mr. NADLER:

H.R. 4103.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, sec. 8, cl. 3 (commerce clause), cl. 8 (copyright clause), and cl. 18 (necessary and proper clause).

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 38: Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. TERRY, and Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H.R. 164: Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. MARINO, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. COLE, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, and Mr. GINGREY of Georgia.

H.R. 223: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.

H.R. 259: Mr. GOODLATTE.

H.R. 281: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 303: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska and Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H.R. 401: Ms. JENKINS.

H.R. 485: Ms. WATERS.

H.R. 533: Mr. DAINES.

H.R. 543: Ms. BROWN of Florida.

H.R. 580: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 594: Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. KEATING, Mr. SIRES, Mr. LANCE, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, and Mr. DOYLE.

H.R. 645: Mr. DOYLE and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 647: Mr. COSTA and Mr. HASTINGS of Washington.

H.R. 713: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 718: Mr. LAMBORN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. PITTENGER.

H.R. 741: Mr. GARDNER.

H.R. 794: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 812: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.

H.R. 921: Ms. BROWN of Florida.

H.R. 946: Mr. ROYCE.

H.R. 962: Mr. FITZPATRICK.

H.R. 964: Ms. PINGREE of Maine.

H.R. 1010: Mr. BERA of California and Mr. PERLMUTTER.

H.R. 1015: Mr. TIERNEY.

H.R. 1252: Mr. HUFFMAN and Mr. TIERNEY.

H.R. 1339: Mr. TERRY.

H.R. 1477: Mr. DEUTCH.

H.R. 1515: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

H.R. 1518: Mr. WITTMAN.

H.R. 1528: Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. WITTMAN, and Ms. LEE of California.

H.R. 1551: Mr. JORDAN and Mr. BARR.

H.R. 1553: Mr. FOSTER, Mr. QUIGLEY, and Mr. ENYART.

H.R. 1573: Mr. LEWIS.

H.R. 1619: Mr. MARCHANT.

H.R. 1658: Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 1696: Mr. RIBBLE.

H.R. 1717: Mr. HUNTER and Mrs. ELLMERS.

H.R. 1723: Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 1726: Mr. LUETKEMEYER.

H.R. 1732: Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 1738: Ms. KUSTER, Mr. PIERLUISI, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. COURTNEY, and Mr. VEASEY.

H.R. 1751: Mr. DELANEY.

H.R. 1812: Mr. TAKANO.

H.R. 1838: Mr. PASCRELL.

H.R. 1851: Mr. CUELLAR.

H.R. 1915: Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. RANGEL, and Ms. MOORE.

H.R. 1918: Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. MCDERMOTT, and Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 1920: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 1995: Ms. ESTY.

H.R. 2005: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 2028: Mr. HOLT and Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H.R. 2078: Mr. KIND.

H.R. 2109: Mr. CONYERS.

H.R. 2220: Mr. OLSON.

H.R. 2305: Mr. OLSON and Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois.

H.R. 2315: Mr. BOUSTANY and Mr. NOLAN.

H.R. 2328: Mr. BARBER.

H.R. 2468: Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. ISRAEL, and Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 2548: Mr. KENNEDY, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. CONYERS, and Mr. HIGGINS.

H.R. 2577: Mr. RIBBLE.

H.R. 2656: Ms. CHU.

H.R. 2663: Mr. CICILLINE.

H.R. 2710: Mrs. BACHMANN.

H.R. 2725: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 2772: Mr. KIND.

H.R. 2790: Mr. CONNOLLY.

H.R. 2794: Mr. GARDNER.

H.R. 2818: Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 2841: Mr. BARBER, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. SCHWARTZ, and Mr. HINOJOSA.

H.R. 2854: Mr. NEUGEBAUER.

H.R. 2874: Ms. MCCOLLUM and Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 2935: Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 2996: Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. NEAL, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. KEATING, Mr. VARGAS, and Mr. CARNEY.

H.R. 3040: Mr. PERLMUTTER.

H.R. 3116: Mr. CICILLINE.

H.R. 3196: Mrs. BLACKBURN.

H.R. 3240: Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. HONDA, and Mr. COOK.

H.R. 3318: Mr. POLIS, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. GARCIA, and Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.

H.R. 3335: Mr. LUMMIS and Mr. RIGELL.

H.R. 3361: Mr. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 3367: Mr. GOODLATTE.

H.R. 3382: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 3408: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York and Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas.

H.R. 3467: Mr. DINGELL, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. NOLAN.

H.R. 3469: Mr. FLORES, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. SALMON, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. FARR, Mr. YODER, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, and Mrs. HARTZLER.

H.R. 3471: Ms. ESHOO, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. NADLER, and Mr. PETERS of Michigan.

H.R. 3488: Mr. STEWART.

H.R. 3505: Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 3529: Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. PAULSEN, and Mrs. BACHMANN.

H.R. 3556: Mr. MCNERNEY, Ms. CHU, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, and Mrs. LOWEY.

H.R. 3571: Mr. FARR, Mr. REED, Mr. HOLT, Ms. TITUS, and Mr. BERA of California.

H.R. 3602: Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. CHU, Ms. MENG, and Mr. BECERRA.

H.R. 3649: Ms. JACKSON LEE and Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 3655: Mr. HONDA, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. PIERLUISI, Mr. RUSH, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. CLARKE of New York, and Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H.R. 3658: Mrs. BLACK, Ms. NORTON, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. HALL, Mr. OLSON, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. CONAWAY, Mrs. NOEM, and Mr. FLORES.

H.R. 3680: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 3687: Mr. FLORES, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. ELLMERS, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. SALMON, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. STEWART, and Mr. HARTZLER.

H.R. 3698: Mr. RUSH and Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 3707: Mr. BERA of California, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. LATHAM, Mr. HALL, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. PIERLUISI, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. RUSH, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. VARGAS, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.

H.R. 3708: Mr. GIBSON, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. LATTA, and Mr. BUCSHON.

H.R. 3710: Ms. ESHOO, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Mrs. BUSTOS.

H.R. 3725: Mr. YOHO, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, and Mr. JONES.

H.R. 3757: Ms. KUSTER, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. SINEMA, and Ms. DUCKWORTH.

H.R. 3761: Mr. MCKINLEY.

H.R. 3774: Ms. ESTY and Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California.

H.R. 3802: Mr. BISHOP of Utah.

H.R. 3826: Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. MESSER, and Mrs. NOEM.

H.R. 3829: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. KINGSTON and Mr. GOSAR.

H.R. 3836: Mr. TERRY, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. HARPER, Mr. MATHESON, and Ms. GRANGER.

H.R. 3857: Mr. HARPER.

H.R. 3861: Mr. ENYART.

H.R. 3862: Mr. JOYCE.

H.R. 3877: Mr. LATHAM and Mr. CONNOLLY.

H.R. 3954: Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. BASS, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HORSFORD, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MOORE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. VEASEY, and Ms. WATERS.

H.R. 3973: Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. TIPTON, and Mr. KLINE.

H.R. 3982: Ms. PINGREE of Maine and Mr. LEWIS.

H.R. 3986: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 3991: Mr. KIND, and Mr. WELCH, Mr. LATHAM, and Mr. MEADOWS.

H.R. 3992: Mr. MORAN, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. PETERSON, and Mr. CALVERT.

H.R. 3994: Mr. PEARCE.

H.R. 3998: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 4006: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.

H.R. 4008: Mr. BENTIVOLIO.

H.R. 4012: Mr. NUNNELEE.

H.R. 4015: Mr. O'ROURKE, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. TERRY, Mr. FARR, Mr. SESSIONS, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. FLORES, and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 4022: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 4026: Ms. WATERS.

H.R. 4031: Mr. JONES, Mr. SOUTHERLAND, and Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas.

H.R. 4033: Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. CONYERS, and Mr. RIBBLE.

H.R. 4041: Mr. POCAN, Mr. FARR, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. PETERS of Michigan, and Mr. MCDERMOTT.

H.R. 4051: Mr. POCAN, Mr. LATHAM, and Mr. NOLAN.

H.R. 4056: Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan.

H.R. 4066: Mr. MULVANEY.

H.R. 4070: Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, Mrs. ELLMERS, Mr. OLSON, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. NUNNELEE, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. SALMON, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. BARTON, Mr. GOHMERT, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. DESJARLAIS, and Mr. MEADOWS.

H.R. 4079: Mr. JEFFRIES.

H. Res. 221: Ms. SPEIER and Mr. HONDA.

H. Res. 283: Mr. DOGGETT.

H. Res. 365: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, and Mr. CASTRO of Texas.

H. Res. 418: Mr. TAKANO and Mr. MEADOWS.

H. Res. 464: Mr. POCAN, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. WELCH, Mr. BERA of California, and Ms. DELAURO.

H. Res. 480: Mr. TONKO and Ms. NORTON.

H. Res. 482: Ms. GABBARD and Ms. BORDALLO.

H. Res. 488: Mr. DUFFY, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. KEATING, Mr. COTTON, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and Ms.FRANKEL of Florida.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

The amendment to be offered by Representative CUMMINGS, or a designee, to H.R. 899, the Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act of 2013, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2014 No. 32

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God our shield, we rejoice in the beauty of Your salvation. Let the people of the Earth look to You with reverential awe. Lord, look with favor upon our Senators today, delivering them from fear and guiding them around the obstacles that hinder their progress. Unite them for the common good of this great land. Manifest Your purposes to them, making clear Your plans and guiding them with Your love. Give them the wisdom to have confidence in Your power, as You inspire them to use their talents as instruments of liberation and healing. Enable them to go from strength to strength, as they fulfill Your purpose for their lives.

We pray in Your merciful 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. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 26, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 2 hours. The Republicans will control the first half, the majority the final half.

Following that morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1982, the veterans benefits bill postcloture.

I hope we can reach an agreement to begin consideration of amendments on the bill today. I will have more to say about that in just a minute.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, over the last many months millions of Americans have signed up for affordable health insurance, many for the first time ever, many for the first time in many years.

Millions of young people have stayed on their parents' insurance plans while they pursue higher education to start their first jobs.

Millions of senior citizens have saved money on prescriptions—these prescription bills, they average about $1,200 they have saved, each senior—and tens of millions of women have access to free preventive care.

Across the country, Americans who were once denied insurance because they suffered from something like cancer or something as simple as acne were able to buy affordable, quality health insurance they could afford and they could trust.

Despite all that good news, there are plenty of horror stories being told. All of them are untrue, but they are being told all over America.

The leukemia patient whose insurance policy was canceled and would die without her medication—Mr. President, that is an ad being paid for by two billionaire brothers that is absolutely false; or the woman whose insurance policy went up $700 a month—ads paid for around America by the multibillionaire Koch brothers, and the ad is false.

We heard about the evils of ObamaCare, about the lives it is ruining in the Republican stump speeches and in ads paid for by oil magnets, the Koch brothers.

But those tales turned out to be just that—tales, stories made up from whole cloth, lies, distorted by the Republicans to grab headlines or make political advertisements.

Mr. President, these two brothers are trying to buy America. They not only funnel money through their Americans for Prosperity, they funnel money into all kinds of organizations to do the same thing that they are doing. They are trying to buy America. I do not believe America is for sale. But we will see. But do not take my word for all this. How about taking the word of a Noble Prize-winning economist who wrote last week in the New York Times:

What the right wants are struggling average Americans, preferably women, facing financial devastation from health reform. So those are the tales they're telling, even though they haven't been able to come up with any real examples.

Paul Krugman writes, Republicans are ''just making [this] stuff up.'' It is easy to do if you have billions of dollars to spend and you are trying to buy America.

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

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But, Mr. President, we have our own stories to tell—true stories—true stories of average Americans whose lives have changed for the better because of the Affordable Care Act, true stories of families that can rest easier knowing insurance companies can never again put profits first and people second.

Take the story of a couple from Henderson, NV. I went to high school there. Their names are Jane and Brett Thomas. These are real stories. This story is true.

Jane wrote to me recently to say she is ''ecstatic''—that is her word—to be saving $1,200 every month on a top-of-the-line family insurance plan thanks to ObamaCare.

For years Jane was locked into her job as a school teacher because she, Brett, and their two teenage children needed guaranteed health insurance, and it cost a lot.

But Jane was able to quit her teaching job to spend more time with her children and help her husband at the family small business. Jane says the Affordable Care Act has literally changed her life and the lives of her loved ones. This is what she wrote:

> Everyone on the news keeps talking of all the people the law has hurt.

An editorial comment from me: Koch brothers' lies.

I will go back and start over:

> Everyone on the news keeps talking of all the people the law has hurt, but I thought I should share our joy. The best part is our insurance covers so much more and pays better on every front. . . . I can't thank you and your colleagues enough for fighting for people like me and my family.

Republicans may need tall tales and outright lies to convince people that ObamaCare is bad for them, but Democrats do not have to make things up. We have the support of lots of people, including a Nobel Prize-winning economist, not ''OilCare'' magnets who are trying to benefit their businesses by spreading lies about things that do not matter to them.

Millions of real Americans, like Jane and Brett Thomas, are benefiting from ObamaCare every day. Their premiums are lower. Their prescriptions are cheaper. They cannot be denied a policy or discriminated against. Their benefits cannot be cut off because they get sick or reach some arbitrary cap that some insurance executive dreamed up. They are no longer locked into jobs they do not love or do not need because they cannot get insurance anywhere else.

The Koch brothers are spending hundreds of millions of dollars telling Americans that ObamaCare is bad for them. It is easy to do if you have no conscience and are willing to lie, like they are, through the ads they are promoting. But the Koches should stick to what they know—the oil business—the oil business—where they have made their multibillions of dollars. The truth is simply more powerful than any myth, any legend or any false political ad.

GROUNDHOG YEAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I said I would talk about what we are doing here today. You talk about ''Groundhog Day.'' This is groundhog year. The Republicans in the Senate refuse to allow anything to take place.

Prior to our noon break yesterday—every Tuesday Republicans meet and Democrats meet—one of the senior Republicans came to me and said: Harry, are you going to have amendments? I said: Of course we are going to have amendments. We have talked about amendments on the veterans bill. I have had Republicans come to me and say: Let's try relevant amendments. So I said: Fine. Come up with some. They said: How many? I said: I don't care.

The first amendment is what they have been doing all along. They offer an amendment that has nothing to do with this bill, the veterans bill. It is partisanship at its best. It is obstruction at its best.

We got cloture on this bill. Virtually everybody voted to allow us to start debate on this bill. But that is only a subterfuge. The Republicans obviously have no intent of doing anything for the veterans as outlined in this bill.

The chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee has worked for months coming up with a bill that is good—a bipartisan proposal. Republican proposals are in this bill.

One of the Republican Senators here came and talked for some length yesterday about ways he would like to improve the bill. Offer amendments. He is not going to be allowed to do that.

The bill advanced yesterday should be bipartisan—a measure that would help the veterans who have given so much to defend our country. As I indicated to my friend, the Republican Senator, before their lunch: Sure, let's look at relevant amendments. Why not? It is the right thing to do. But the first amendment the Republicans demand is an unrelated issue on Iran.

Everyone knows that there are negotiations taking place between the United States, the European Union, and others to prevent Iran from having a nuclear capacity. I have said many times—I will repeat it here today—we will not let Iran have nuclear capabilities. The sanctions that we have put in place have brought them to the bargaining table.

You would think that if there was any validity to what the Republicans are trying to do, the organization that is more supportive of Israel than any organization I know—AIPAC—said publicly they do not want a vote on this now—publicly. They do not always put stuff out in the press, but that is what they said.

The audacity of what they are doing is an effort to stall, obstruct, as they have done. This is, I repeat, not ''Groundhog Day,'' not groundhog month—groundhog year. The Republicans have been doing this on every issue. It does not matter if it is an issue that 90 percent of the American people support.

Republicans say they want to help veterans—a strange way of showing it. We introduced a bill that would do just that. Republicans immediately inject partisan politics into the mix, insisting on amendments that have nothing to do with helping veterans.

So I am terribly disappointed again—not surprised. What are we doing here today? Nothing, nothing.

Under the rules, they have 30 hours postcloture and they can sit around and do nothing. That is what they do all the time. We have spent months and months sitting around doing nothing because of procedural roadblocks put up by the Republicans.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

IRAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, there is a broad bipartisan majority in the Senate that would like to vote on Iran sanctions. The dilemma we have here is that the majority leader does not want this vote to occur. So I would like to start this morning with a few words about an issue that should be of grave concern to all of us; that is, the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran.

It is no exaggeration to say that this is one of the significant foreign policy challenges of our time and one we simply have to get right. That is why a strong bipartisan majority has sought to pass legislation in the Senate that puts teeth into the negotiations that have followed November's interim agreement. The challenge we have had is the majority leader does not want us to vote on it. It could be that he is afraid it will actually pass. Republican Senators—and hopefully some Democratic Senators as well—are going to continue to press the majority leader to allow a vote on this legislation before these negotiations end.

The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act is a perfectly reasonable bill. This is a Menendez-Kirk bill. It does not disrupt ongoing negotiations. It simply provides an incentive for Iran to keep its commitment under the interim agreement. It says that if Iran does not keep its word, then it will face even tougher sanctions at the end of this 6-month period. In other words, it does not disrupt the negotiations at all, even though the big—sort of the high leader, the Supreme Leader in Iran says he is not paying any attention to these talks. Nevertheless, it does not disrupt these talks, which seem to be going nowhere.

But it does say at the end of the 6-month period: You are going to get tougher sanctions if nothing comes of the discussions. It puts teeth into the talks that are already taking place. It is a recognition of the success we have already had as a result of prior sanctions. After all, there is a good reason

to believe sanctions are what brought the Iranians to the table in the first place. They were hurting. So it stands to reason that if the Iranians break the interim deal, they should get tougher sanctions. If nothing happens, we should send a message: You cannot keep talking forever. Something will happen at the end of the interim period.

That is especially true given the fact that we are actually running out of tools here short of the use of force. This bill is the best mechanism we have to keep the Iranians at the table until we get the right outcome and to ensure they are sticking to their end of the agreement. We should not fall victim to Iran's efforts at public diplomacy.

Let me repeat that a strong bipartisan majority in both Houses of Congress agrees with this approach, so there is simply no good reason for the majority leader to prevent a vote on this crucial legislation. He is gridlocking the Senate, preventing the Senate from working its will on a bill that enjoys broad bipartisan support, makes elementary good sense, and is the best hope we have to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. There is no excuse for muzzling the Congress on an issue of this importance to our national security, to the security of Israel, our closest ally in the Middle East, and to international stability more broadly.

I know many active members of AIPAC—the majority leader mentioned AIPAC. They want to have this vote. They will be coming to Washington next week from all over the country. I will bet this is a vote they want to have.

This is a rare issue that should unite both parties in common purpose. There is no question that it would if the majority leader would simply drop his reflexive deference to a President whose foreign policy is focused on withdrawing from our overseas commitments, a foreign policy that at worst poses a serious threat to our own security and that of our allies.

So once again I call on the majority leader to allow the Congress, allow the Senate to serve its purpose and express itself in our Nation's policy toward Iran. Let our constituents speak on this all-important issue on which so many of us in both parties actually agree.

In the Joint Plan of Action, the President made clear that he opposes additional sanctions. Why don't we let Congress speak? Let Congress have a voice. Let's stand together for a forward-deployed, ready, and lethal force that makes our commitments real in the eyes of friend and foe alike. Let's hold Iran accountable—actually hold them accountable. Let's do the right thing—approve this legislation and send it to the President's desk. The clock is ticking. The time to act is now.

CHANGE IN POLICY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Earlier this year I came to the floor to pose a simple question about President Obama's final years in office: Did he want to be remembered as a hero to the left or as a champion for the middle class? That is the question. I asked the question this way because for the past several years the left has basically had its run of this White House. During that period the politically connected and the already powerful have clearly prospered. But what about the middle class? They feel as though they have been shut out altogether as household income has plummeted and families who were struggling to pay the bills have gotten left behind by a President and a party who claimed to act in their name.

So I wanted to know: Did the President plan to continue down the same ideological road he has taken us on or would he change course and embrace effective proposals that would make a real difference in the lives of middle-class Americans? Would he reach across the aisle to jump-start job creation and make the economy work for the middle class again?

Well, over the last few months we appear to have gotten our answer. Once more, the real concerns of ordinary Americans have been pushed aside in favor of the preoccupation of the political left. Yet again we have seen the truth of the old saying that a liberal never lets the facts get in the way of a good theory. Once again we have seen how liberal policies end up hurting the very people they claim to help.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the debate over the minimum wage. As a recent CBO report made clear, the President's bill basically amounts to a terrible real-world tradeoff, helping one group of low-income Americans by undercutting another group of low-income Americans. How is that fair? Americans are crying out for jobs. Job creation is the top issue in our country. Our unemployment and underemployment rates have remained abysmally high more than half a decade after this President took office. What is the White House's solution? A bill that might sound good in theory but could cost as many as 1 million jobs, according to CBO.

The Congressional Budget Office released another report, this one on ObamaCare. There is a similar story: 2.5 million fewer Americans in jobs thanks to ObamaCare; huge disincentives to work thanks to ObamaCare. That is what CBO says.

Of course, Washington Democrats—the same folks who promised you could keep your health plan if you liked it—told Americans not to believe their own eyes, that ObamaCare would simply liberate them from jobs. ObamaCare would simply liberate them from jobs. It is just unbelievable, especially when we consider that the law's medical device tax alone is projected to kill as many as 33,000 jobs and that 60 percent of business owners and HR professionals recently surveyed said ObamaCare will negatively impact jobs. As a member of that group recently put it, ''Small businesses have an incentive to stay small'' under ObamaCare. That is because ObamaCare can punish businesses that choose to hire more workers.

In my home State of Kentucky, the tension between the priorities of the left and the needs of real people is on full display. That is because the Obama administration has trained its sights on some of our most vulnerable citizens. One administration adviser actually used the words ''war on coal'' to essentially describe what the administration is doing or, in his view, probably should be doing to hard-working miners who just want to put food on the table.

Those were his words, not mine. Here is why: Because according to liberal elites in Washington, these folks are standing in the way of their theories. A practical approach that actually takes the concerns and anxieties of those people into account would promote clean energy even as it acknowledged the real-world benefits of traditional sources of energy.

My point is this: The administration has broken faith with the middle class, and it has stirred up strong emotions, especially among those who actually want to see a better life for those struggling to make it in our States. Almost everyone feels let down. A lot of folks are very angry.

It is a real tragedy, not only because of the missed opportunities and the human cost of these policies but also because when the President ran for office, he promised a very different approach.

It is tragic because the very folks he has talked about helping are the ones who seem to suffer the most under his Presidency.

It is tragic because it appears as if he has answered the question I posed in January: that he is prepared to double down on the left and throw in the towel on the middle class. How else can you explain the obsession with all of these peripheral ideological issues at a time when Americans are demanding good, stable, high-paying jobs and a new direction, at a time when folks' wages are stagnant but their costs always seem to be rising, at a time when younger Americans seem to be resigned to a harder life than their parents had? How else can you explain why the President has refused to sign off on projects such as Keystone Pipeline that would create thousands of jobs or why he refuses to push his own party to join Republicans and support trade legislation that could create even more jobs?

This cannot be the legacy the President really wants to leave, but it is the legacy he will be ensuring for himself if he does not change. There is still time to alter the course. There is still time for the President to acknowledge that there is no reconciling the demands of his base and the concerns of the middle class. It is one or the other.

The real solution here is liberating the private sector. The real solution is to implement policies that will increase wages for everyone instead of pursuing policies that essentially seek to distribute slices of a smaller pie to some. Of course, making a turn toward authentic job creation might make the left mad, but it is the only way to get the gears of our economy working again and college graduates off their parents' couches and onto a path of earned success.

Maybe the President will show some change of heart in Minnesota today. Maybe he will recognize, for instance, that killing thousands of high-tech jobs in the medical device industry is not worth the pain it is causing. Who knows? Who knows? I sure hope so because if you have entered the sixth year of trying to fix an economy and you are still talking about emergency unemployment benefits, it is time to recognize that your policies have not worked for the middle class. It is time for a fresh start.

Before I go, I would like to highlight one more dividing line between the dreams of the left and the well-being of our constituents. It is a topic I spoke about yesterday; that is, Medicare Advantage.

As I asked then: Why would the administration want to raid a program that is working, such as Medicare Advantage, to fund a program that does not work, such as ObamaCare? Why would Senate Democrats vote time and time again to do that? They must have known that taking $300 billion from Medicare Advantage to fund ObamaCare would have real-world impacts on seniors, such as losing choices and coverage and doctors they now enjoy. It is not fair. It is not right. Several of my colleagues will be coming to the floor to speak more about this issue this morning.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 2 hours, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nebraska.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. JOHANNS. Yesterday I had the opportunity to come to the floor of the Senate and talk about ObamaCare's broken promises for our Nation's seniors.

The administration's most recent proposal to significantly cut Medicare Advantage is certainly not news to my colleagues on the floor today. During the health care debate, we warned over and over again that cutting $½ trillion from Medicare to fund ObamaCare would have disastrous consequences and that it certainly would not strengthen Medicare. The law drains $308 billion from a very well-received Medicare Advantage Program.

The stories from Nebraskans illustrate how these cuts are hurting senior citizens. I heard from a couple in Carney, NE. They wrote to me saying that the Medicare Advantage plan they had for several years was something they liked. It was a plan that worked for them, but that plan, because of ObamaCare, was cancelled. She went on to say to me that another plan was going to cost more money and higher rates were coming for them.

She said: ''I have not been shy about telling people that we lost our insurance plan thanks to ObamaCare!''

I could add to that that she has lost her insurance plan—and thousands of others, tens of thousands of others across the United States—because of the votes of the majority and the President.

A Nebraskan from Hastings shared that her Medicare Advantage plan was discontinued and her new Medicare Advantage plan option was, get this, 357 percent more expensive. Is that fair treatment to that senior citizen?

When ObamaCare was passed, we tried to get amendments done that if there were any savings in Medicare, it would go back to Medicare to protect the system. That was voted down by the majority.

What we ended with is a situation where those funds were pulled out of Medicare and used to finance ObamaCare. For millions of Americans and about 35,000 Nebraskans who rely upon Medicare Advantage, this law has not delivered on its promises.

As I have said over and over since this debate began, I have been committed to ensuring that Medicare is sustainable for decades to come, not only for the current generation but for our children and our grandchildren. The health care law does not accomplish this goal, and I believe strongly it needs to be repealed.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. I come to the floor also to talk about a letter I got from Wyoming from a constituent, Traci, who lives in Rock Springs, WY. She is very concerned about the health care law. It is interesting because she writes after hearing on the news last week a clip of Secretary Sebelius. It is a clip where Secretary Sebelius claims there is no indication that the ACA is responsible for any job loss.

Traci in Rock Springs, WY, sees Secretary Sebelius on television and wants to let the country know—and I am doing that for Traci today—that the Secretary is wrong.

Traci says: ''My life is a prime example. Let me explain just how the ACA has destroyed my life.''

The quote she is referencing is Secretary Sebelius last week said: ''There is absolutely no evidence, and every economist will tell you this, that there is any job loss related to the Affordable Care Act.''

It almost seems like a deliberate deception, an effort by the Secretary to mislead the American people, saying: Who are you going to believe, Secretary Sebelius or your own two eyes when you see what is happening in your own communities?

That is why Traci wrote to me from Rock Springs, WY.

Traci said she works full time. She also maintains a number of part-time jobs. She has a master's degree.

She says: ''Once the ACA was passed, I saw the writing on the wall, and so did the companies I work for.''

Isn't it interesting that Traci in Rock Springs, WY, could see the writing on the wall, the companies she worked for could see the writing on the wall, and yet the Democrats in this body who voted for this law couldn't see the writing on the wall.

She said she had health insurance and that these companies wouldn't have had to provide her with anything because she had insurance—wouldn't have had to provide her with anything. But they didn't know who might and might not have insurance, and they weren't taking the chance that they would have to offer health care to a large number of people. So what these companies basically did, she said, was hire a specific number of individuals full time and thus those of us who remained part-time employees have been cut way back. This is obviously impacting her wages, her take-home pay, the things that matter to her, and it seems that Democrats, including Secretary Sebelius, couldn't care less.

It was interesting. I came to the floor yesterday with an article from the New York Times last week about all of these public jobs, people working for public schools, people working for community colleges, sanitation workers for communities, counties—all of these people having their hours cut, their take-home pay cut, their wages cut, and it is because of the health care law, specifically because of the health care law.

Traci continues:

> I can't believe in a country my grandfather came to and lived the American dream is actually actively trying to prevent me from being able to do the work I want to do. The kind of work I am good at. The kind of work that others benefit from. What was the comment last week about how I am being liberated from my job to do what I truly want.

It is astonishing. What she says is: I was doing what I truly wanted.

But yet, according to the Democrats, according to NANCY PELOSI, the former Speaker of the House, she is now being

liberated from the job to do what she truly wants to do—when we have somebody with a master's degree, someone who loves to teach, and not being able to do what she truly wants to do.

Continuing:

And now this government is actually preventing me from what I want to do, doing what I like to do, doing what I am meant to do.

This is a woman in Wyoming doing what she wants to do, what she likes to do, what she wants to do, and was meant to do as a teacher—because of this health care law.

It is not only in Wyoming. I read a story on the floor yesterday of a school district in Connecticut, Meriden, CT, where the superintendent, who is on a national board of school districts, said: What am I supposed to do? If I am going to provide by law all of these part-time workers—who are working over 31 hours—health insurance, what I am going to have to do is fire five reading teachers. How can I make that decision and that tradeoff?

Instead, they cut their hours to less than 30 hours a week, but yet Kathleen Sebelius says there is absolutely no evidence relating to job loss in the Affordable Care Act.

My friend Traci writes: ''So Obama care—has cost me a lot of jobs, has cost me about half of my income.''

When the President of the United States is saying we need to raise the minimum wage, why is the President of the United States ignoring Traci, her income, her wages, and her take-home pay? Why is his health care law making her life worse?

She said: ''So Obama care—has cost me a lot of jobs, has cost me about half of my income.''

She continues:

And by the way I was one of those taxpayers that don't have any deductions generally to take other than my mortgage, so when you used to get a lot of taxes from me, by decreasing my income in half, your tax revenue is decreasing in half as well. So next time Sec. Sebelius claims that there are no indications of any job loss, you can tell her that I have lost multiple jobs and I am not being ''liberated.''

That is what the American people are facing. That is what the President of the United States denies every day when he refuses to give voice to the suffering that his health care law is causing all across this country in all 50 States. It is time that we work together, get solutions for the health care needs of this country, and not continue under what is happening with the President's health care law—which, case after case after case, is not yet giving the American people what he promised them and is giving them a lot worse. It is hurting their lives, it is hurting their health, and it is hurting their take-home pay.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. I thank the Senator from Wyoming, who is one of the most knowledgeable, eloquent Members of our side of the aisle or in this Chamber on the subject of health care law. As a former practicing orthopedic surgeon, he knows the subject better than almost anyone I know.

But we are on the floor today to talk about the cuts to the only real choice that seniors have when it comes to their health care coverage under Medicare. There are basically two choices. One is called Medicare Advantage, which I will talk more about in a minute, and the other is Medicare, traditional Medicare, which is a fee-for-service program that many people find is less advantageous to them than Medicare Advantage.

Close to 16 million people currently receive health care benefits through Medicare Advantage—about 1 million of them in Texas, the State I am honored to represent. Of course, they represent roughly 30 percent of all Medicare beneficiaries.

Why would somebody choose Medicare Advantage rather than traditional Medicare? Because it gives a lot more flexibility and greater patient choice. It actually delivers better results than traditional Medicare. It has been one of the main sources of innovation when it comes to health care, producing better outcomes for seniors under Medicare. Medicare Advantage is the primary driver.

Unfortunately, the President's health care law, known as the Affordable Care Act, or ObamaCare, slashed about $300 billion from Medicare Advantage. My constituents are already going to start to see premium increases to their Medicare Advantage policies. Many of them will have to then question whether they can afford that, whether they will drop Medicare Advantage, lose the choices, the flexibility, the innovation that goes along with it, and end up basically turning to traditional Medicare fee-for-service.

In Texas, about two out of every three doctors will see a new Medicare patient because it actually reimburses physicians at a lower rate than regular health insurance does, so many doctors have found that they have to limit their practice, much as they have under Medicaid as well.

But we know that the $300 billion that has been taken from Medicare Advantage, and these seniors—who rely on it to shore up the Affordable Care Act or ObamaCare—know that the news on ObamaCare continues to unwind and bring us bad news almost every day. Not only have millions of people lost their existing health care coverage, even though they were promised by the President of the United States that if you like it, you can keep it—I lost count of how many times the President made that statement, but I think it is somewhere in the high twenties. Of course, now we are finding out that more and more people are having to pay higher premiums as a result of ObamaCare.

Another promise the President made is he said that a family of four would see a reduction of $2,500 in their average premiums, but they are seeing their premiums go up. Indeed, on Friday, in a late-afternoon news dump—that has become a new art form for the administration, they dump news on Friday afternoon and hope nobody notices, or it won't be covered—we learned that roughly two-thirds of the people who work for small businesses will see an increase in their premiums as a result of ObamaCare, some 11 million small business employees.

The people who are concerned about Medicare Advantage aren't only on this side of the aisle. In fact, we have had bipartisan accolades for Medicare Advantage, called a great success by both Senators from New York, for example, and the chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee from Colorado. They recently joined me, along with a couple of dozen colleagues, to urge CMS Administrator Marilyn Tavenner to ''maintain payment levels that will allow [Medicare Advantage] beneficiaries to be protected from disruptive changes in 2015.''

This bipartisan support for this important choice for seniors, known as Medicare Advantage, is in real jeopardy as they are going to see as a result a $300 billion cut from Medicare Advantage in order to shore up this failing experiment in big government known as ObamaCare.

People's existing health care arrangements are in serious jeopardy and they are concerned and they are calling and writing us and wondering what we are going to do. Unfortunately, those calls and letters seem to fall on deaf ears, as far as the President and the people who voted for this bill are concerned. The American people have seen they are whistling past the graveyard and hoping that what will likely happen in November—which will finally be the day of electoral accountability—is that their voices will actually be heard.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise to speak on behalf of the 35,000 Nebraska senior citizens who are enrolled in Medicare Advantage. These Nebraskans are going to face fewer choices, increased premiums, and decreased benefits because of ObamaCare's latest cuts. I am especially concerned with how these cuts will impact rural Nebraskans who may be forced out of the program altogether due to the lack of available plans.

The administration has already taken over $700 billion from Medicare to prop up ObamaCare, and $308 billion of that is from the popular Medicare Advantage Program to fund this failed health care experiment. These cuts to health services for seniors only hasten the demise of this successful program, a program that has improved the lives of millions of seniors across this great country. Medicare Advantage works for them.

Too many promises have already been made and broken, so let's not break another promise to America's seniors.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I think nearly every Member of this body shares the goal of increasing access to affordable health insurance and helping American families receive the best coverage to meet their specific needs. So the question before us today—and the question before us this entire Congress—is how are these goals being achieved. This has been an issue we have been debating since 2010, when ObamaCare was signed into law.

Based on the extraordinary feedback from Hoosiers, regardless of party affiliation or ideology, the overwhelming number of messages that have been sent to my office, and that I have heard while traveling across the State of Indiana, suggest that the Affordable Care Act has turned out to be a dismal failure. It is hurting more families than it is helping.

To top it all off, the administration, late last Friday afternoon once again cut one of the most popular programs available to seniors—Medicare Advantage. We have 230,000 Hoosiers enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans who could be told major cuts will be made to their plans in order to pay for ObamaCare.

What an irony. We pass a program to provide health care coverage for senior citizens. They sign up for the program. They make the choice on their own to pay higher costs for Medicare Advantage so they get better coverage, and the administration simply says: We need to rebalance things so we are going to do everything we possibly can to make it more difficult and more expensive. This was their choice, but the administration is saying: We are going to make it our choice that this program is going to be reduced and much harder to engage in.

Consider what is happening. This administration is cutting billions of dollars from Medicare Advantage—an extremely popular program not just in my State but across this country—to pay for ObamaCare, which is extremely unpopular. So the administration takes a plan that works, a plan that people support, because it is their choice and they are willing to pay for it, and the administration says: No, we are going to take that away from you so we can cover the cost for a plan that is not popular. This is the irony of ironies, particularly in terms of meeting the goal that I think all of us want to meet.

So we have yet another broken promise. The President so famously said over and over again: If you like your plan, you can keep it. If you make a choice as to how you want to be covered, what benefits you want to have, what premium you want to pay, you can keep that—but now he is saying, well, no, effectively, you can't keep it because we are going to take that away from you.

It is no wonder I receive tens of thousands of pieces of mail and phone calls from Hoosiers all across my State saying: I got duped here. I got lured into something that supposedly was going to make medical care less costly; that I would be able to keep my doctor, I would be able to stay with my hospital, I would be able to keep the benefits in the plan I chose, and now I am being told, no, none of that is going to work.

As was just stated by Senator CORNYN of Texas, there is a bipartisan effort underway to send a message to the President. It urges the President to preserve Medicare Advantage and the incentives to join it. I know the President doesn't want to listen to Republicans and have them tell him what is happening in their States, what their suggestions are as to what to do to fix this disaster of a health care plan, but maybe he should listen to Members of his own party. There is a significant number of Democrats who have said: We don't want these cuts to be imposed on Medicare Advantage. We don't want to go home and tell our constituents they can no longer have their Medicare Advantage plan.

So if the President doesn't want to listen to us, I fully understand that. He has made that very clear. But perhaps he should listen to Members of his own party and listen to what they are saying. Let's give people the ability to make choices and keep the plan they have chosen and not have it taken away by a bureaucracy that simply makes decisions for them.

With that, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I compliment my colleagues who have been talking about Medicare Advantage today. It is amazing to me that this administration will take money from Medicare Advantage—a program people love and that works well, where they can have their own doctors and their own health care providers—and put it into ObamaCare—a program that is not working and people are not happy with—and we wind up with a lot of dissatisfied people in this country and with good reason for their dissatisfaction.

So I rise to join my colleagues in speaking out against the harm ObamaCare is already causing to seniors throughout the country who rely on Medicare Advantage. I have heard from many seniors in my home State of Utah who are worried about the impact further cuts to the Medicare Advantage Program could have on their personal health care.

For example, James and Maureen of Spanish Fork, UT, sent a letter describing how they have been personally affected by the hundreds of billions of dollars taken from Medicare Advantage to pay for ObamaCare—to take money from a program that works, that people are happy with, that they pay for, and put it into ObamaCare where it doesn't work, they are not happy with it, and it even costs the government more money.

James and Maureen were informed some time ago that their current doctors and most providers in their area will no longer be covered as a part of their plan's network. In Maureen's words:

> If further funding is taken from the Advantage programs, more and more providers will stop accepting these plans. Where will we go to seek medical treatment?

Maureen also said that similar to many other seniors, she and her husband ''worry about what will be next.''

These are common stories. Seniors throughout Utah and the Nation are seeing their health care options dwindle because President Obama and the Democrats in Congress raided Medicare Advantage to pay for their misguided ObamaCare and what they call their health care law.

We all remember when the President promised under ObamaCare if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. Yet because of the law's cuts to Medicare Advantage, people such as James and Maureen are being forced to find new doctors and health care providers. As each day passes, fewer and fewer options are available to them. This is just another example of broken promises that came part and parcel with ObamaCare.

On top of the problems with Medicare Advantage, a new report issued late last week from the Chief Actuary from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services had even more troubling news. Buried in the report—which was 2 years late, by the way—is the confirmation that ObamaCare will raise insurance premiums for 11 million employees of small businesses.

You heard that right. The Obama administration's own actuary found that under the President's health care law 11 million workers will see their premiums rise. As I said, this report was 2 years late, and it is no wonder why the administration sat on it for as long as they did.

This is just the latest in a long line of bad data we have seen about this misguided law. Yet the administration refuses to step away from its talking points and acknowledge the truth—that the health care law is fundamentally flawed and is not working as promised.

All of the problems we are seeing are confirming over and over that the best path forward would be to repeal ObamaCare and replace it with patient-focused, commonsense reforms that will actually lower costs and expand options for the American people. I hope eventually that is the path we take.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, in July of 2009, President Obama said: ''If you like your doctor, you keep your doctor.

If you like your current insurance, you keep that insurance. Period, end of story.'' Then later, in September of 2009, the President said: ''Now these steps [ObamaCare] will ensure that you—America's seniors—get the benefits you've been promised.''

Well, Mr. President, last Friday we saw yet another group of Americans fall victim to the Democrats' broken ObamaCare promises, and this time it was America's seniors. ObamaCare cuts of over $300 billion to Medicare Advantage are already hurting seniors who rely on that popular program for their health care needs. More than 15 million seniors, close to about 30 percent of all Medicare recipients, are enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans.

The Wall Street Journal reports that approximately one out of every two new Medicare enrollees chooses Medicare Advantage. Seniors often choose Medicare Advantage because it is a more comprehensive and cohesive way to get health care services and it offers seniors the chance to pick a plan that is right for them instead of a one-size-fits-all approach picked for them by Washington, DC.

The administration's additional cuts to Medicare Advantage announced last week will make it even harder for America's seniors to keep their benefits, plan, and preferred doctor. The Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that more than one-half million seniors will lose their current plans in 2014, which is a direct violation of the President's promise.

This administration's cut to Medicare Advantage in order to try to pay for ObamaCare is having real-world impacts on people throughout the country.

A constituent of mine, Cheryl from Box Elder, SD, wrote to me this past week and said:

> My husband and I both pay for a Medicare Advantage Plan. . . . We have already had our original policy cancelled because of ObamaCare. And our prescription costs have increased for the same reason. So I am practically begging you to do all you can to keep our Advantage Plan from being cut.

Every Senator who voted for this train wreck owes America's seniors such as Cheryl an explanation for these Medicare cuts, which are already resulting in canceled plans, higher costs, and reduced access to the doctors they had and liked.

When the ObamaCare legislation was being debated and these proposed cuts to Medicare were being advanced, many of us said this would be a big mistake because what they were essentially doing was cutting Medicare—particularly Medicare Advantage, which is especially helpful to a lot of seniors across this country and which is working out there—taking the savings and then using them to pay for a whole new entitlement program.

At the time we talked about this—and, of course, because of the weird conventions used in trust fund accounting here in Washington, the hundreds of billions of dollars that were cut from Medicare were not only then used to pay for this new entitlement program, ObamaCare, but were also credited to the Medicare trust fund. Their argument was that they were preserving and extending the lifespan of Medicare, and at the same time they were using these savings from the cuts coming in Medicare Advantage to pay for a whole new entitlement program. I think for most Americans this would be spending the same money twice. It would be double-counting revenue.

Essentially what they are saying is this: We are going to put an IOU into the Medicare trust fund which at some point in the future we are going to have to redeem to pay benefits, and this is going to require us to borrow more money.

It is intergovernmental debt. We talk about publicly held debt, which is debt held by the public, but there is also intergovernmental debt, which adds to the total debt burden we place on American citizens and which is debt that we are going to have to pay back in the future.

Essentially, all they have done is put a promissory note—an IOU—into the trust fund. At some point in the future when we need to be able to pay benefits to beneficiaries, we are going to have to borrow the money to redeem that IOU.

Essentially, they were able to argue that we were somehow extending the lifespan of Medicare at the very time these cuts were being made and also at the same time paying for a whole new entitlement program under ObamaCare. It was spending the same money twice. It was double-counting revenue—something which anywhere else in the country would probably land most Americans in jail.

That being said, these Medicare Advantage cuts are now having real-world impact—something we predicted all along.

The reason Medicare Advantage is a popular program and the reason one in two new beneficiaries is signing up is that it gives you options. It gives you choices. It provides competition, which is something we need to have more of, not less of, in health care today.

If you want to put downward pressure on prices, if you want to constrain utilization in health care, then create competition out there. Give people more ownership, more skin in the game. Give them some personal investment in their own health care decisions.

As it is, with the traditional Medicare Program we have a fee-for-service Medicare Program. Many seniors are enrolled in that. But Medicare Advantage gave them another option—an option that presented choices and opportunity to cover things they want to see covered in their health care plans. And it has worked. It has been an effective program, one that I think most people point to as a success.

So we are going to cut the very program that is working perhaps the best out there in terms of meeting the health care needs of America's seniors in order to fund a whole new entitlement program, ObamaCare, and in the meantime end up with these higher premiums, canceled coverages, and all the dislocations that are coming as a result of these Medicare Advantage cuts to seniors across this country. That is the wrong way to approach this issue.

There is a much better way, one that relies more on the very things on which Medicare Advantage is based—more competition, more choice, more options—and wouldn't lead to canceled coverages, higher premiums, higher deductibles, and fewer doctors and hospitals to choose from for America's seniors. But that is exactly where we are, and American seniors are now experiencing the very thing a lot of other Americans have already experienced. People who get their insurance on the individual marketplace have seen a lot of these canceled coverages already. They have seen these huge increases in premiums.

Many of us have been here on the floor reading constituent mail and emails from families and individuals who have been adversely impacted and harmed by ObamaCare because of canceled coverage, higher premiums, higher deductibles, and loss of doctors and hospitals. We have seen this in the individual marketplace. We are starting to see this—and we will see more—in the small business, employer-provided marketplace.

But now, as of last week, the real impacts are being felt as well by seniors across this country who in big numbers have been signing up for Medicare Advantage. Close to 30 percent of all Medicare recipients—15 million seniors—as a result are going to see higher premiums and reduced access to health care because of the cuts that will occur to Medicare Advantage in order to pay for a new entitlement program, ObamaCare, which, based on the number of delays the administration has made, has already demonstrated it is not working. And I, as have many of my colleagues here, have argued for a long time that it can't work because it is built upon a faulty foundation.

There is a much better way to do this. We should do away with this approach, go back to the drawing board, and use a step-by-step approach to reforming health care in this country, realizing the status quo doesn't work but realizing as well that the best way to get lower costs, more affordable health care, and more accessible health care for more American citizens is to create downward pressure on prices. That requires giving people choices and creating competition in the marketplace. Those are the things we ought to be advocating and advancing rather than this top-down, government-knows-best, one-size-fits-all solution coming out of Washington, DC, which is hurting more and more Americans and most recently American citizens who are now experiencing the adverse impacts of

ObamaCare because of the cuts to their Medicare Advantage plans.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IRAN

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about a grave threat to the United States of America, a grave threat to the world, and a grave threat to our friend and ally, the State of Israel; that is, the threat of Iran's nuclear weapons program.

As we stand here today, pending has been legislation filed by Senator RICHARD BURR which contains important sanctions which are essentially an insurance policy to make sure that Tehran does not play the United States of America and that they are, in fact, serious about stopping their nuclear weapons program. Unfortunately, there is a long history with Iran where we talk and they enrich. This is why it is so important right now that we have this insurance policy.

These sanctions pending would only go in place if Iran violates the interim agreement that has been entered into between the administration and other countries in the world and Iran and if they fail to reach a final agreement that is acceptable to the security interests of the United States of America and to our allies in the region to make the world a safer place.

We cannot accept a nuclear-capable Iran. Why is that? Iran is a country that has threatened to wipe the State of Israel off the face of the Earth. Iran has called our country ''the Great Satan.'' Iran is the world's worst state sponsor of terrorism. They have supported terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas. They have, unfortunately, obviously worked against our strong ally Israel. They have supported the murderous Assad regime, providing Assad arms so he can murder his own people.

Unfortunately, there are so many examples of the danger of Iran having nuclear weapons capability. If Iran gets this capability, unfortunately we will also find ourselves in a position where we are in a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, a Sunni-Shia arms race, which would then also threaten the world and make that region even more of a tinderbox.

So we now find ourselves at a critical moment. I am deeply worried that the sanctions regime this Congress has worked so hard to put in place on a strong bipartisan basis is unraveling and we need an insurance policy to make sure Iran knows they are not going to play us and unravel these sanctions. The way we can do that is by having sanctions legislation passed which is prospective.

If Iran is serious about a nuclear weapons agreement that takes away their capability of having a nuclear weapon, then they should not have a problem with prospective sanctions by this Congress. Again, those sanctions would only go in place if they violate the interim agreement. If their words mean anything, then they shouldn't have a problem with the fact that we are just saying: If you violate it, we will impose additional sanctions. We will not allow this sanctions regime to unravel.

What is the significance of this sanctions regime? The work done by this Congress on a bipartisan basis and with our partners around the world is what has brought Iran to the table. All of us want a diplomatic resolution that stops Iran from having a nuclear weapon, but we need to go into this with clear eyes, which is why having this insurance policy is so important. A final agreement with Iran will only be meaningful if it ensures they will not have the ability to enrich because their ability to enrich makes it easier for them to immediately ramp up to nuclear weapons capability.

I recently attended a security conference in Munich and met with some representatives of the Arab nations. They were asked in an open forum: If an agreement is reached and Iran is allowed to enrich, what will the rest of you want to do? Their answer was that they will want the right to enrich too.

This final agreement must stop Iran's ability to enrich. If we do not stop them, we will not only face the risk of Iran being able to quickly ramp up to a nuclear weapon and its capability to harm the world but also the risk that the Arab nations themselves will also enrich. Even if they don't have a nuclear weapon capability, they are all right at the point where they could break out to that capability, and that is just as dangerous for the world.

The amendment we have makes it clear that we are going to protect the United States of America and protect our allies and the world. It has to be clear. It should prevent Iran from that enrichment capability. This agreement should stop their capability at the Arak facility to produce plutonium. Our agreement should absolutely make sure we are given access to their military facilities so we can stop them from their programs where they are working on weaponization of nuclear materials.

I serve on the Senate Armed Services Committee. The Director of National Intelligence and others have told us that by 2015 Iran could have ICBM capability. Can you imagine if they were to continue with this nuclear program and have ICBM capability? This is a true risk to the world.

An agreement is only meaningful if it is an agreement we can rely on, that is open, transparent, verifiable, and absolutely stops them from having a nuclear program that could be a threat to the world. We need to make sure they stop enrichment and put a stop on the Arak plutonium reactor and weaponization program. We need full and open access.

We should be addressing Iran's acts of terrorism throughout the world. One of the grave dangers I worry about is that if Iran has a nuclear weapon, they may not use it, but they may pass it on to the terrorist groups that Iran is associated with, and that is a grave danger not only to our ally Israel but also to the United States of America.

One of the reasons I believe the sanctions legislation that is pending is so important is because some of the statements that have been made recently by the regime in Tehran are very troubling and harken back to their prior behavior of we talk, they enrich. We have to question how serious they are about a verifiable, transparent, and real agreement to stop their nuclear weapons program.

For example, on February 18—in talks between Iran and the P5+1 that were held in Vienna—Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the talks ''will not lead anywhere.'' In advance of the talks, President Ruhani, whom Prime Minister Netanyahu has described as a wolf in sheep's clothing—and I would agree with him on that—has stated that peaceful atomic research would be pursued forever.

Iran's Foreign Minister recently clashed with a lead U.S. negotiator, Wendy Sherman, over the Arak and Fordow facilities. Sherman stated that Iran had no need for either facility. Make no mistake, if Iran is serious about giving up its nuclear weapons capability—or the pursuit of that capability—then she is absolutely right; there is no need for the Arak facility that allows them to produce plutonium. There is no need for these underground facilities such as Fordow, where they are trying to hide their program from the rest of the world.

The Foreign Minister of Iran, in reaction to her comments, described her statement as ''worthless'' and reinforced Iran's position that their ability to produce atomic energy at the plutonium reactor at Arak is not negotiable.

This is deeply troubling, and it is one of the reasons we need to send a clear message here and now. They came to the table because of sanctions. The sanctions were having a deteriorating effect on their economy. Yet recently we have seen—and this has been my fear—the sanctions regime unraveling. They are actually using this negotiation with the administration to further unravel those sanctions in order to get what they want without an insurance policy to ensure that we will get what we want, and that is what this sanction legislation does.

One of the issues that came up in February, a French trade delegation—representing 116 French companies—

traveled to Tehran. I recently met with one of the Arab nation's Foreign Ministers, and he told me that the hotel rooms in Tehran are filled with business men and women looking to line up to do business with Tehran.

This is a real issue that the sanctions regime is starting to unravel, and the legislation we have pending with 59 cosponsors is an insurance policy to say: If you are not serious about this agreement, we will impose further sanctions to make sure we do everything we can to stop you from having nuclear weapons capability.

This is a critical moment in the history of this country. This is a critical moment for the safety of the world. We want to stop Iran from using diplomatic means as a way to have nuclear weapons capability because of the risk it presents to the world.

We cannot be naive. We have to understand the prior behavior of Iran because the prior behavior of Iran will allow us to go in with our eyes wide open rather than just taking their assurances that they are serious about a nuclear weapons agreement that will stop them from having this capability.

As we stand on the floor, I ask the majority leader to allow a vote on this legislation so we can send a clear message to Iran and the rest of the world that they should not think they should do further business with Iran unless Iran is serious about giving up its nuclear weapons program through a transparent, verifiable agreement that will ensure they cannot threaten the State of Israel and the rest of the world with a nuclear weapon. I ask the majority leader to allow a vote on this important legislation.

There are so few pieces of legislation that come through the Senate which actually have 59 cosponsors. This is one of them. It certainly has strong bipartisan support.

I don't buy the argument that if we were to pass this legislation, somehow Iran would walk away from the negotiations. If Iran walks away from the negotiations because we pass prospective legislation as an insurance policy to make sure they are serious about a real, verifiable agreement that stops their nuclear weapons program, then, frankly, we know they have been playing us. Because the reality is, if they are serious, they should not care if we put an insurance policy out there. If they are serious, they will follow through and will do what the interim agreement requires and will agree to a final agreement that stops their nuclear weapons program in a transparent, verifiable way once and for all.

On the other hand, if they are just going to walk away with a threat of prospective sanctions, how serious can they be? We will still have the sanctions in place that will continue to put pressure on them to say the United States of America and our allies will not accept a nuclear-armed Iran because of the threat it presents to us.

We cannot allow the largest state sponsor—and most serious state sponsor—of terrorism around the world to have this capability. We cannot allow a race in the Middle East—a Sunni-Shia race—to see who can have a nuclear weapon first because of the danger it presents to the world.

Finally, we cannot allow Iran to continue to threaten our friend and ally, the State of Israel. I understand and appreciate that when Iran and its leaders have made statements they want to annihilate Israel from the face of the Earth, our friends in Israel take that very seriously. They have vowed never again. We stand with them not only for their friendship but also for the safety of the world.

We have legislation pending on the floor that gives us an opportunity to make it clear what the United States of America stands for and that we will not accept a nuclear-armed Iran. They must be serious or there will be consequences in terms of economic sanctions.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, yesterday we received news that 4 million people have now signed up in private health care exchanges all across the country. In addition, it was released that about 12 million people have called the call centers in January alone, and 1.1 million people signed up to receive health care through the Affordable Care Act during that time. Young enrollment—the group of individuals for which there has always been a question as to whether they are going to sign up for these exchanges—grew by 65 percent.

It is time for this body to recognize the Affordable Care Act is working. It is working for people who have been desperate to get insurance. It is working for people who have been getting the short end of the stick from insurance companies, and it is working for millions of seniors all across this country who have been paying far too much for prescription drug costs and for preventive health care.

We have known this from the very beginning in Connecticut. Despite the hiccups over enrollment in the fall period, States such as Connecticut that had made a commitment to making this law work, rather than undermining it, have seen the success from day one. Connecticut, at the outset, said that we were going to try to enroll between October 1 and March 31 about 80,000 people. That was our goal. We just announced in Connecticut—a State that is working to implement the law, not undermine the law—that we didn't just hit 80,000, we didn't just hit 100,000, but we have enrolled 126,000 Connecticut residents in our health care exchanges and in Medicaid. Our projection is that we are going to enroll 150,000 people by March 31. That is nearly double our initial estimate. Last week, traffic on Connecticut's Web site rose 31 percent, and the daily enrollments rose by 67 percent.

The stories just keep on coming into our office about the lives that are being changed as people, for the first time in their lives, get access to affordable health care. People such as Susie Clayton, who has been dealing with a cancer diagnosis for over a decade—a crippling, preexisting condition that for most of her adult life has kept her out of the ranks of the insured. I have known Susie for probably two decades. Almost every single conversation I have had with Susie over those 20 years has been about her daily struggle to try to deal with her illness and her preexisting condition. Every single day, every single week, she has thought about whether she is going to be able to pay for her health care if she has a reoccurrence of her cancer and whether during that time she is going to have a job that provides her with insurance.

Susie had been paying about $1,700 a month at last count for an insurance plan she could afford. Her life changed on January 1. She now is paying a couple hundred dollars a month in premiums. She finally gets to wake up every day not having to worry about whether she is going to be able to afford coverage, whether she is going to be able to see a doctor to deal with her very difficult diagnosis. With 4 million people now enrolled in these exchanges across the country, that story can be replicated over and over.

A bunch of our Republican colleagues have come to the floor over the last couple of days—I was in the presiding chair yesterday listening to some speeches—regarding some new information about Medicare Advantage. Everybody knows by now that included in the health care bill was an end to the subsidies given to Medicare Advantage plans. The private sector in health care and in other industries always tells us they can do things more cheaply than the Federal Government—and a lot of times they are right about that—but it was exactly the opposite when it came to Medicare Advantage. We were paying private insurance companies 13 percent more than it costs the Federal Government to run Medicare. This was a source of enormous profit for the insurance companies. It didn't make sense to oversubsidize insurance companies to run a program the Federal Government itself was running for 13 percent less money. So we ended those subsidies, and part of the elimination of those subsidies has gone into effect.

But the story that is being told on the floor today isn't true. The fact is that since the Affordable Care Act was

passed, even as we have been implementing these cuts to these overly generous, unjustifiable subsidies to insurance companies, Medicare Advantage enrollment has gone up by 30 percent. Thirty percent more seniors are now enrolled in Medicare Advantage, even as these cuts have been imposed. Premiums are down. Medicare Advantage premiums have been reduced by 10 percent.

Over the course of the debate on the Medicare Advantage cuts, I heard Republican after Republican, when I was in the House of Representatives, come to the floor and tell us that the sky was going to fall when we ended these subsidies to insurance companies. I will be honest. A lot of them are in my State of Connecticut. Not only has the sky not fallen, it has risen, with 30 percent more seniors in Medicare Advantage with 10 percent less in premiums. To the argument I have heard on this floor that there will be less choices available to seniors because of these cuts going into effect, let's just be honest: The average Medicare beneficiary has 18 different Medicare Advantage plans to choose from—18 different plans. That is a pretty robust market.

Let me just add that Republicans have voted for these cuts themselves. The Ryan budget, which has essentially been the budget standard for Republicans in both the House and in the Senate—endorsed by hundreds of Republican legislators—the Paul Ryan budget included the cuts to Medicare Advantage subsidies because Republicans have agreed with Democrats that there is no reason to subsidize insurance companies instead of subsidizing beneficiaries.

So what happened when we decided to stop subsidizing Medicare Advantage? Enrollment went up 30 percent. Premiums went down 10 percent. The average beneficiary still had the choice of 18 different plans. But we took that money we saved in padding the pockets of health care insurance companies, and we told seniors that when they show up to get a preventive health care visit, they are not going to have to pay anything out-of-pocket. So since the ACA has been passed, here is how much a senior has to pay for their annual checkup: Nothing. So 25 million people have gotten free preventive care since the Affordable Care Act has been passed.

What else did we do? We decided that this doughnut hole in the prescription drug bill, whereby people got coverage up front and then they had to pay for a certain amount of drugs themselves and then they got catastrophic coverage, didn't make sense. So we eliminated the prescription drug doughnut hole. It will be gone by 2020. It has been cut by more than half already. Since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, the average senior has saved $1,200 in prescription drug costs thanks to the Affordable Care Act.

So as I listen to my Republican colleagues come to the floor and complain about the cuts to Medicare Advantage—cuts, in fact, that many of them have supported—I think we have to ask ourselves: If we had a choice to provide a 13-percent subsidy to for-profit insurance companies or pass along $1,200 in savings to American seniors and eliminate the costs that many of these fixed-income seniors pay when they go in to get preventive care, what would we choose? This is really all about choices in this body. It is about choices in terms of where we put the money we spend on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries. To me, it is a no-brainer. To the American public, it is a no-brainer. Instead of subsidizing insurance companies, let's subsidize hard-working seniors, who have built this country, with $1,200 in drug savings and 25 million people who have gotten free preventive health care.

For Republicans who have come down to the floor and said they want to repeal the Affordable Care Act or that they want to repeal the cuts to Medicare Advantage plans, essentially they are saying they want to return billions of dollars to the insurance companies and take away that money from seniors in this country. I do not think that is a choice the American people are going to accept.

This week a group of us in the Senate are launching the ACAworks campaign. Later today I will be joined by a number of my colleagues around the corner as we launch a new effort to make clear to the American people that now, with 4 million people enrolled, and millions of people saving money—notwithstanding the legitimate difficulties that were encountered in the first days of the Web site—the Affordable Care Act is working. It is working for millions and millions of people across this country who are finally getting care.

We will be joined today, as well, by a couple of Medicare recipients who are glad they now have the protection when they get into the doughnut hole. They are glad they now get free preventive care. And they will take the choice any day of this Congress and this government investing in them instead of investing in big for-profit insurance companies.

None of us deny there are bumps in the road as you rework one-sixth of the American economy, which represents our health care economy. None of us will deny there is no excuse for the fact that for the first few months there were a lot of people who were not able to enroll who wanted to. But now that the enrollment site is working, now that outreach efforts are up and running, record numbers of people are signing up for health care because there is an almost insatiable demand for quality, affordable health care that is now being met as the Affordable Care Act is working.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. 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. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I want to begin by thanking my colleague and friend from Connecticut, Senator MURPHY, for the very eloquent and powerful remarks he has just made, showing America the Connecticut experience with health care, which shows that the Affordable Care Act is working and is expanding opportunities for health care across the country. Once the myths are exploded, once the truth is told, Americans will appreciate how fortunate we are to have this reform in the way that health care is insured and delivered for the American people.

There are bumps in the road, as Senator MURPHY has just said. There will continue to be issues to be overcome in achieving success. But the enormous potential to make America healthier, to eliminate the anxiety and anguish Americans experience in seeking a quality of life that health care affords, is an opportunity and obligation we cannot shirk. I am proud to join with him in speaking this truth and clarifying for people across the country the great promise of this program.

A lot of the promise still has to be fulfilled. A lot of the realization about that promise has to be educated. But we will succeed in that effort. I thank him and my other colleagues who are joining us in seeking to make America realize the great potential and promise that we have, and already the great accomplishments that have been made.

Connecticut stands as a model for both the promise and the accomplishment in the 130,000 people who have already enrolled in the benefits for young people now permitted to stay on their parents' policies, and, indeed, the elimination of preexisting conditions as an obstacle to insurance.

I know about many of these issues and obstacles from my time as attorney general when I fought insurance companies that denied basic opportunities and failed to fulfill their obligation and impose these kinds of obstacles. Now, hopefully, insurers will be a partner in this effort, and so will the medical community and business community across the country.

So I look forward to continuing this effort and thank him for the exposition he has given, and my other colleagues who will join us later today.

I want to focus on a group that particularly needs health care in this country, and that is our veterans. We are here to talk about the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014—a measure that seeks to address comprehensively the challenges our veterans face today.

There are more and more veterans. We are losing some of the ''greatest generation.'' In fact, we are losing them tragically and unfortunately

every day. But the next greatest generation needs the same benefits and services we have given to the ''greatest generation.'' The next greatest generation is serving right now and has served recently in the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan.

We must be unwavering in our commitment to our veterans. We must determine that this big and broad bill is necessary to keep faith with them and to make sure we meet the diverse and urgent needs they present.

We all talk in this body about our commitment to veterans. But all too often, our Nation has failed to keep faith. I have learned that we all have expressed here our admiration and commitment to our Nation's veterans. I have introduced, as have many of my colleagues, veterans bills based on input from my constituents. In fact, my very first piece of legislation as a Senator was the Honoring All Veterans Act.

But the reality is this comprehensive approach is necessary. I thank Senator SANDERS as chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for recognizing that the needs of our veterans are interlocking, multifaceted, and manifold in the kinds of problems that are raised as they leave the military and enter the civilian world.

Sometimes it is their medical records that cannot be transferred seamlessly from the Department of Defense to Veterans Affairs and Veterans' Administration facilities. Sometimes it is the failure to make their military skills transferable in credentials and licensing. And sometimes it is medical conditions, health care needs for post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury, that make their wounds invisible, make them difficult to discern to the ordinary eye but are there deeply and enduringly unless they are treated properly. That is why health care for them is so important and why this bill expands opportunity for health care so dramatically.

The health care needs of our veterans must be met through the provisions of this bill that expand health care opportunities and services. When I first came to the Senate, I thought—and I think reasonably—that a veteran needing health care could simply go to a VA hospital to receive it. But that is really not the case. On January 17, 2003, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it would ''temporarily'' suspend enrolling Priority Group 8 veterans. That temporary restriction stands today. So under existing restrictions, a veteran making as little as $33,577 or a family of five making a household income of $50,025 can be denied health benefits in Connecticut. There are an estimated 720,000 Priority Group 8 veterans who are not enrolled in health care. Tens of thousands of veterans apply each year for enrollment and are denied due to that means test.

Simply put, the VA should have the capacity and resources to serve every veteran. That is why section 301 of this bill would allow veterans who lack that access, who do not have a service-connected disability, and who do not have affordable health insurance, to enroll in the VA's health care system.

There are other health care provisions: section 305, which expands the provision of chiropractic care; sections 331, 332, and 333, which expand complementary and alternative medicine. Anybody who has not yet seen ''Escape Fire'' should view it to understand the stark ways that veterans have challenges in access to alternative treatments and why drug addiction and abuse can become such a problem. And there is section 334, expanding wellness programs. All of these programs are vital, as well as the expanded access to treatment for post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury, which, in my view, are at the core of the need for this legislation.

Section 342 would require the VA to contract with outside providers to establish a program of supportive services to family members and caregivers of veterans suffering from mental illness. All of these invisible conditions have such dramatic consequences in the employability of veterans and their ability to give back and continue to contribute to this Nation, as so many of them wish to do.

The needs of our veterans are also pressing in disability claims. The need to end the backlog is, again, one of the areas addressed directly in this bill. The backlog of disability claims at the Department of Veterans Affairs has become a chronic problem. The VA is making progress. There is no question that the numbers are better today than they were. But there are still veterans such as Army veteran Jordan Massa in Connecticut, who served in Afghanistan, and Marine veteran David Alexander, who was deployed in Iraq, who had to wait too long and suffered as a result. We need to keep faith with those veterans.

I understand and I applaud Secretary Shinseki, who has committed to tackling this problem. But some 389,000 claims are still backlogged. In Connecticut, about 48 percent of the claims are backlogged, meaning that 48 percent of claims made by our veterans take more than 125 days to be resolved. Each of these veterans has an individual story, a record of service, a record of suffering. Be it in today's wars or conflicts past, a record of service and sacrifice is exemplified by every one of them. These individuals may now be looking for employment, perhaps, to support a family. We need to keep faith with them.

This legislation aims to decrease the backlog further through an accelerated appeals process and getting the VA the information it needs to decide these claims. It brings in local governments to help with the claims. And it helps veterans who have misfiled documents in the claims process to seek a better route to what they need and deserve.

The bill also would require regular reports to Congress on efforts to eliminate the backlog. Accountability is so critical—accountability on backlogs, on all of the issues that underlie the failure to process these claims as quickly as they should be. And the backlog must be eliminated.

Employment programs are also addressed in this bill. So are the traumatic effects of sexual assault. The bill is multifaceted and comprehensive, as it should be. To address the diverse and urgent needs, it must be big and broad because the needs and challenges of our veterans are big and broad.

The reality is that 1 million men and women will leave the military over the next 5 years. One million patriotic and brave men and women will be separating from our Armed Forces. Becoming veterans, they will need services and benefits that they have earned, and they will need them at the time they leave, not at some distant point in the future. We owe it to them now to keep faith.

I have submitted amendments that would address some of the other issues.

For example, the need to recognize that post-traumatic stress is not only a condition that afflicts our current military men and women and veterans but also past veterans, even though it was undiagnosed and untreated at the time. Changing their status so as to recognize post-traumatic stress for the veterans of past wars is a need that we need to address.

I will make sure those veterans of past wars, whether it is Vietnam or Korea or any of those conflicts in our history, receive a second look at their discharge. That is the purpose of the amendment. That is the purpose of legal action that has been brought by the Yale veterans clinic. I will continue to support it.

We can go further as well to enhance our veterans' health by including the Toxic Exposure Research and Military Family Support Act in this measure. I have an amendment that will do so. Many veterans were exposed to toxic chemicals such as Agent Orange and their needs are only beginning to be addressed.

In addition to the harmful effects to those individuals, there are also impacts on their children. For many years those who were exposed to Agent Orange were told there was no evidence that their symptoms resulted from that. Now that we have evidence Agent Orange is toxic, we need to include the longer term effects on their children and their families. The amendment I have offered would address those issues.

Even if none of those amendments I have proposed are adopted during this process, this measure stands on its own as a historic step forward. It is, indeed, a historic recognition of the obligation and opportunity we have at this point in our history to make sure we leave no veterans behind and keep faith with our veterans, address their needs in a

big and broad bill that reflects the urgent and diverse issues and challenges they face. I am proud to support it.

I thank my colleagues on the Veterans' Affairs Committee who have approved many of the parts of this bill by unanimous vote or overwhelming bipartisan majorities. This cause should be truly bipartisan. Let's move forward and move America forward addressing the needs and challenges of its veterans as we have an obligation to do. We must keep faith with our veterans and leave no veterans behind.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

COMPREHENSIVE VETERANS HEALTH AND BENEFITS AND MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY RESTORATION ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1982 which the clerk will now report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to Proceed to Calendar No. 301 (S. 1982) a bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me thank Senators MURRAY, DURBIN, and BLUMENTHAL for their very thoughtful and important remarks regarding the needs of veterans and why it is absolutely imperative we pass this comprehensive veterans legislation. Let me also begin by thanking all of the members of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs for their very hard work in helping to craft what is not only an enormously important piece of legislation impacting the lives of millions of our veterans but is also, to a large degree, a bipartisan piece of legislation.

It is no secret that Congress today is extraordinarily partisan and, in fact, is largely dysfunctional. On major issue after major issue the American people are crying out to us and asking that we address the serious problems facing this country. Yet we are unable to do virtually anything. I hope—and I say this from the bottom of my heart, and as chairman of the Senate veterans committee—that at least on the issue of addressing their needs—the need to protect and defend those veterans who have protected and defended us, those men and women who have put their lives on the line to protect this country—we can rise above the partisan rancor that we see down here on the floor every single day.

That is what the American people want us to do. Not only has the veterans community been clear on the need to pass this bill, but that is what the American people want us to do. They understand the sacrifices made by veterans and their families, and they want us to rise above the partisan acrimony the American people see every single day.

Let me be very clear, and let there be no misunderstanding about this. I have tried, as chairman of the committee, to do everything I can to bring forth legislation which includes provisions from Republicans and provisions from Democrats. My view is, and has been, that if there is a good idea that improves the lives of veterans—I don't care if there is an ''R'' attached to a Senator's name, a ''D'' or an ''I,'' as in my case—let's bring forth that legislation.

The reality is, to the best of my knowledge, there are 26 separate provisions that Republican Members have authored or cosponsored—that is a lot—and some of them are very significant provisions. Further, perhaps most importantly, two of the most important parts of this comprehensive legislation are omnibus bills that were passed unanimously by the committee. So what we have done is brought ideas together in two of the most important provisions in this bill, with two separate omnibus bills passed unanimously by the committee. There are other provisions in the bill that were not passed unanimously but also passed with bipartisan support.

I also want to point out the two provisions that were not discussed at the committee level but have been passed almost unanimously by the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, and I believe have strong bipartisan support in the Senate. With almost unanimous votes, the House passed a provision that would solve a long-standing problem and enable the VA to enter into 27 major medical facility leases in 18 States and Puerto Rico. We have virtually that same language in our bill, and that was passed almost unanimously in the House. So I think that is a nonpartisan, bipartisan provision.

A second provision passed by the House with very broad support deals with ensuring that veterans can take full advantage of the post 9/11 GI bill and get in-State tuition in the State in which they currently live. That language I believe is identical in our bill.

So we have major provisions passed in the Republican House with almost unanimous support that are in this bill, and there are two omnibus provisions passed with unanimous support out of our committee, and we have other provisions passed with bipartisan support.

So while I am not here to say this is 100-percent bipartisan, because it is not, we have gone a very long way to do what has not been done very often here in the Senate, and that is to bring everybody's ideas together to pass something that is terribly important for our veterans.

The point I am trying to make here is that I happen to believe that virtually every Member of the Senate, regardless of their political point of view, does care about veterans. I say this especially about the members of the committee—the Veterans' Affairs Committee—who would not be on the committee if they didn't care about veterans. I believe that virtually every Member of the Senate wants to do the best they can for veterans. That is why I have worked so hard to do my best to make sure this bill is as bipartisan as it can be.

In my view, this is, in fact, a very good bill. But like any other piece of legislation, it can be made better. We have 50 States, we have Native American tribes, and we have all kinds of issues out there. There are 100 Senators here in this body who know their States, who know their issues. So let me be very clear in echoing what the majority leader said this morning, and that is he and I want to encourage every Member of the Senate—Democrat, Republican, and Independent—who has germane amendments dealing with veterans issues to please offer those amendments. Bring them to the floor.

My understanding is a number of amendments have already been offered by Democratic Senators and we have some amendments now that have been offered by Republican Senators. I understand Senator RUBIO and Senator COLLINS have offered amendments, as well as a number of Democrats. We look forward to more amendments coming to the floor so that we can have a serious discussion about those amendments.

I hope the one thing that will not happen is that, as we discuss this legislation, instead of having an honest debate about the needs of veterans, that this legislation becomes another forum for the same old partisan politics we have seen for years—the sort of partisan politics the American people are increasingly disgusted with. The American people understand that honest people have differences of opinion on the issues, but they do not want to see serious legislation being sabotaged because of political partisanship.

In my view, with regard to this veterans bill and the fact we have language in this bill which can improve the lives of millions of veterans and their families, I believe it would be extremely disrespectful to the men and women who have put their lives on the line to defend this country to use this piece of legislation dealing with veterans issues as nothing more than a political pawn for other issues that are totally extraneous to their needs.

I fully understand—no great secret here—that my Republican colleagues do not like the Affordable Care Act. They are entitled to their opinion. We have discussed this issue and this law over and over. I ask my Republican colleagues: Please, do not inject ObamaCare into the veterans debate. It has nothing to do with the needs of veterans.

I understand some of my Republican colleagues have strong feelings about sanctions in Iran. Clearly, this is an important issue. But it has nothing to do with the needs of veterans in this country. Please, do not inject the Iran sanctions issue into a debate on how we can improve the lives of veterans and their families.

I know there are strong feelings and disagreements about the wisdom or lack of wisdom of the Keystone Pipeline. I have my views on the issue. Other people have their views on the issue. But, frankly, the Keystone Pipeline has nothing to do with the needs of our veterans. And there are many other issues out there.

Let me at this point quote from a tweet that came out last night from the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America association, and this is what they say. This is the organization that represents the men and women who have fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is what they said last night:

> The Senate should not get distracted while debating and voting on the vets bill. Iran sanctions, ObamaCare, et cetera, aren't relevant to S. 1982.

That is the issue we are debating today, and I absolutely agree with the IAVA on this issue. They also say in another tweet:

> In 2013, veterans were not immune from gridlock in Washington. This year has to be different. We urge the Senate to pass this legislation.

As I mentioned yesterday, this legislation, in fact, has the support of virtually every veterans organization in the country, representing millions and millions of veterans, from the American Legion to the VFW, the DAV to the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the Vietnam Veterans of America to the Disabled American Veterans and the Paralyzed Veterans of America. We have dozens of organizations that know how important this legislation is to their members.

So my plea to my colleagues is let's debate veterans' issues. If you have an idea to improve this bill, I welcome it. Let's have that debate. I do not believe this legislation is immune to improvement. We can improve it, but please do not inject extraneous issues in here for totally political reasons. I think that is unfair to the veterans of this country.

As the Presiding Officer well knows, on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, I—and I suspect every Member of the Senate—go out and speak to veterans. We express our deep respect for them and their families and the appreciation for all they have done for our country. Today I hope we can keep faith with those promises. Let us focus on veterans' issues. Let us get the best bill we can. Let's not kill this bill because of the same old same old partisan situation we face.

I will take a few minutes to discuss why we have brought forth this legislation, which has been described as the most comprehensive piece of veterans legislation to have come before Congress in decades.

While in recent years the President and Congress have made good progress—I think the President's budgets have been good; I think Congress, in a bipartisan way, has done a good job in addressing many of the problems facing the veterans community—the truth is, and I hope everybody knows, we still have a very long way to go. Now I will discuss some of the outstanding issues this bill addresses.

I think anybody who has nursed a child or a parent who is ill or injured knows how difficult and stressful this is; how sometimes you have to stay up all night, how sometimes you have to stay with your patient 24 hours a day. I would like people to be thinking about what it means day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, to be taking care of those veterans who are severely disabled in war.

Think about, for a moment, what the stress is and how much of your own life you have given up to your loved ones, and there are tens of thousands of spouses who are now doing nursing and caring for veterans from World War II, from Korea, from Vietnam, from Iraq, from Afghanistan. That is what they are doing right now, and they are doing it because they love their husbands or their wives or their sons or daughters.

The very good news is in 2010 Congress passed legislation to develop a caregivers program for post-9/11 disabled vets. This was a huge step forward. What it said is for those men and women who came back from Iraq and Afghanistan, perhaps without legs, perhaps blind, perhaps without arms, perhaps ill in one way or another through PTSD or TBI, we were going to make sure their wives, their mothers, their sisters, their brothers, their children had the support they need to provide the kind of inhome nursing care those veterans need. This legislation has been very successful for post-9/11 veterans. I will give one example and there are obviously many.

One family who benefited from the VA's caregiver program is Ed and Karen Matayka. They live in my home State of Vermont. In 2010, Ed and Karen were deployed together as medics to Afghanistan with the Vermont Army National Guard, a National Guard of which many of us in Vermont are very proud. Just 2 days before Independence Day, the vehicle Ed was riding in was hit by an IED. The driver, Vermont's Ryan Grady, was killed. We remember that loss very well. Ed and three others were severely injured. Ed lost one leg immediately, suffered a stroke and a severe spinal cord injury. Soon thereafter his other leg was amputated above the knee and he suffered yet another stroke.

After 3 years of rehabilitation, Ed was medically retired from the Army. Because of VA's caregiver program—a program we established in 2010 for post-9/11 veterans and their families—his wife Karen was able to separate from the Army as well as become her husband's full-time caregiver. Karen spends a significant amount of time every day caring for Ed. She helps Ed with personal care, fixing his meals, and all of his transportation, including to and from medical appointments. Karen has gone through the training program and receives a monthly stipend to help compensate for her loss of income.

I think that is the right thing to do. I am not sure there are too many Members in the Senate who don't think that is the right thing to do. Here is a guy who suffered terrible wounds. His wife is now giving up her career to care for him. Should we not help that family? I think we should. Thanks to this program Ed and Karen are able to continue their lives together in their home.

Another important point: What might the alternative be? Send Ed to a nursing home where he would be uncomfortable, not get the care of a loved one, and at great expense to the VA? So this saves us money and provides better care for our veterans. This is what we did in the post-9/11 caregiver bill. The problem is the bill only applies to post-9/11 veterans.

What I think should happen, what the veterans community thinks should happen, and what I believe the American people think should happen is we should expand that program to all veterans of all wars and their families. There are tens of thousands of family members today who are caring 24/7 for veterans wounded in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and other wars. They deserve the same benefits the post-9/11 veterans families are now receiving. That important provision is in this legislation, and I hope my colleagues support it.

There is another important provision in this legislation. This is a very important and sensitive issue. There are some 2,300 veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan who, because of a variety of injuries, are unable to start the families they have wanted to start. Some injuries are spinal cord, some may be genital injuries, some just affect the reproductive organs, and they are no longer able to have babies. Many of these young men and women want to have babies, to raise their children, and, as much as they can, to have a normal family.

Right now the VA does not offer reproductive treatments to veterans, meaning the most seriously injured among them cannot access the treatment or care needed to start a family.

Senator MURRAY, former chair of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, was on the floor yesterday speaking at great length about this important issue. I believe that if we send young people off to war and they become injured and if they want to start a family, we have to assist them in being able to do so. That provision is included in this legislation.

I will talk about another issue we deal with in this bill. Unfortunately, yesterday in discussion this provision was mischaracterized by some who spoke against it. This provision deals with expanding VA health care and making sure some, including some very vulnerable veterans who are today not eligible for VA health care, in fact become eligible.

Currently, VA uses an extremely complicated system to determine eligibility based on income for veterans without service-connected injuries, often what we call priority 8 veterans. The VA now determines income eligibility by looking at the income of an individual and his or her family county by county in each State. I don't know how many thousands of counties we have in the United States of America, but I will discuss what this means in the real world in terms of how the VA currently determines income eligibility.

My own State of Vermont is a small State—620,000 people. We are a rural State. There are just 14 counties. In Vermont, as throughout the country, each county has its own threshold for determining eligibility for priority group 8 veterans.

For a veteran living in Chittenden County, where I live, the threshold to enroll in the VA health care is less than $48,000, but for a veteran living in Windham County, in the southern part of the State, the threshold is less than $39,000. That is a difference of nearly $9,000.

In the State of Georgia, there are 159 counties and nearly as many income thresholds. Imagine that. For a veteran living in Walton County, GA, the threshold is less than $41,000. But if a veteran lives in Coffee County, the threshold is just over $28,000. It may make sense to some people. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me.

In the State of Texas, there are 254 counties. For a veteran living in Brazoria County near Houston, the threshold is less than $48,000. For a veteran living in Bee County, the threshold is less than $31,000. That is a difference of over $17,000. Frankly, this whole process does not make a lot of sense, and I know from personal experience it is totally confusing to veterans: Am I eligible for VA health care? It depends on which county you live in. It depends on which side of the road you live. This makes no sense at all.

This legislation simplifies the system. We establish a single income threshold for an entire State. So instead of having thousands of income thresholds, we have 50. It is true that the threshold we use would be the highest in each State, therefore, making more veterans eligible for VA health care. In my view, this is exactly what we should be doing.

There may be some in the Senate who believe a veteran in a given State who earns all of $28,000 a year should not be eligible for VA health care because he or she is ''too rich.'' I respectfully disagree. VA provides high-quality, cost-effective health care. There are many veterans in this country struggling economically who want and need VA health care.

I should also add that these newly eligible veterans will pay a copayment just like all other currently eligible priority 8 veterans. Frankly, I would prefer those veterans receive high-quality care at the VA, rather than going into an emergency room at 10 times the cost when they become ill.

Let me reiterate. Unlike what some of my colleagues said yesterday, this important provision does not open VA health care to every veteran in America—and there are 22 million of them—nor does it open the floodgates, bringing in millions and millions of veterans.

I cannot give an estimate, nor can anybody else, how many will take advantage of this provision, but it will be a manageable number, largely because we make very clear—and this is an important point some of my colleagues apparently did not understand. We make it very clear in this legislation that the VA has 5 full years to fully implement this provision in a way that will not negatively impact current patient needs. So anyone who says it is going to open the floodgates for every veteran is not accurate, and that because all of these veterans are coming in we are going to diminish the quality of care for current veterans is not accurate. Let me reiterate this point, which is also in the bill. We understand that the highest priority—and we have talked to disabled American veterans about this issue—for VA health care is to take care of those veterans with service-connected problems. That is the case today and that will remain the case after this bill is passed tomorrow. Those with disabilities and those with service-connected problems will remain the highest priority.

This is a long discussion, and we could go on and on for hours about this. I am also on the health committee and I have studied this issue a little bit. There were some very harsh criticisms made yesterday about VA health care. The truth is that the Veterans' Administration runs 151 medical centers. They run some 900 community-based outreach clinics. They have hundreds of vet centers.

The VA is the largest integrated health care system in the United States of America. It employs hundreds of thousands of workers, doctors, nurses, technicians, you name it. Obviously no one has ever suggested that VA health care is perfect or that there aren't problems within the system. I have talked to veterans in Vermont, and I have talked to veterans all over the country, and by and large there is very strong support for VA health care. These veterans understand that when they walk into a VA facility, the people who are there to treat them understand their problems, and many of the workers are veterans.

I think if you talk to the veterans community, they will tell you not that the VA does not have its share of problems, it certainly does, and not that we should not focus vigorously on improving the care at VA, but they will tell you by and large the care they are getting is good care.

The point I want to make is that before we eviscerate, as was the case yesterday, the Veterans Health Administration's health care system, let us remember today about what is going on in terms of health care in America. Let us understand that the VA is not the only health care system in this country which has problems.

Today, as a nation, we are the only major country on Earth that doesn't guarantee health care to all of its people as a right. Today there are tens of millions of people—even after the Affordable Care Act—who lack any health insurance.

Let's remember that 45,000 people—according to a Harvard study—die each year because they don't get to a doctor on time because they lack health insurance. Let us not forget that in the midst of high premiums, high copayments, and lack of insurance, the United States of America spends almost twice as much per person on health care as do the people of any other nation. Many of those other nations that spend a fraction of what we spend have better health care outcomes than we did in terms of life expectancy, infant mortality, and many other important outcomes.

I will also add that before we go about attacking, in a rather vicious way, the Veterans Health Administration's health care system, we should understand that according to a recent study that appeared in the Journal of Patient Study that between 210,000 and 400,040 people each year who go to the hospital for care suffer some type of preventable harm that contributes to their death. According to that study, that number would make medical errors the third leading cause of death in America behind heart disease and cancer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used the hour of postcloture debate time.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 5 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. My point in saying that is not to say that the VA health care system doesn't have its problems.

It is to say that we have problems in every health institution in America. That is what we have.

When you look at the VA—and I can go on and on—they are doing some cutting-edge work. If you look at health care technology and health care records, the VA has led the country in that direction.

There was a discussion yesterday—an absolutely correct discussion—about our concerns within the VA and outside of the VA and about overmedication of people who are dealing with pain problems. To the best of my knowledge, the VA is leading the country and doing cutting-edge work in complementary and alternative medicine with good results. They are saying that maybe we don't have to use all of this medication. Maybe we can use acupuncture, maybe we can use yoga, and maybe we can use meditation. They are doing that aggressively. By the way, this legislation expands those programs.

One of the crises in American health care today is our failure in terms of developing a strong primary health care system. Guess what. The VA has 900 primary health care facilities all over this country. The VA has women's health centers which deal with the specific needs of children.

I could go on and on about it. It is not fair to pick on the VA. They are vulnerable. Every problem they have is on the front pages of the newspapers.

I will never forget that a good friend of mine went into a hospital and died of an infection. It didn't make the front pages of the paper. That is happening all over America.

Yes, of course, we want to improve the VA health care system, but let us thank the hundreds of thousands of highly qualified and dedicated workers who are providing quality care to their patients.

Lastly, I want to say a word on something I feel very strongly about. I have always believed that dental care should be an integral part of health care as a nation and within the VA, and what this bill does for a first time, through a pilot project, is begin the process of opening dental care for nonservice-connected veterans.

There are a number of other provisions I will talk about later. Here is the bottom line: We owe more than we can ever pay back to people who sacrifice so much for this country. I think it is important that we pass this comprehensive legislation. I think it is terribly important that we have a serious debate about the serious issues facing the veterans community.

I look forward to my colleagues—Republican, Democrat, and Independent—bringing forth their ideas and amendments, but please do not disrespect those people who have sacrificed so much by killing this bill because of the same old politics we have struggled with for years. This is a veterans bill. Let's discuss veterans issues.

I yield the floor and thank my colleague for allowing me the extra 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, as Paul Harvey used to say on the radio: Now the rest of the story. We just heard a very glamorous description of bipartisanship and benefits that have been not provided equitably to veterans. What I would like to do is try and focus on reality and discuss what is actually in the bill, what is not in the bill, and what was the intent of Congress. What is the shape of the Veterans Administration?

I will start with one very important thing. My colleague pointed out that most of the veterans organizations support this bill. He is, in fact, correct. I will read from an editorial written by the CEO of Concerned Veterans of America. I won't read the whole thing and bore the President or those who listen, but he says:

> But given the vast scope of this bill, we should be skeptical. In recent years, the VA, which will take on a wide range of expanded responsibilities should this bill become law, has come under fire for dysfunctional management and poor service to veterans. If the VA is already failing to meet its obligations to veterans, is it wise to extend its mission even further? Of course not. And while we need to restore the shortsighted cuts to the military pensions, there are more narrow ways to address these cuts, such as Sen. Kelly Ayotte's (R–N.H.) military pensions bill, S. 1977.
>
> It's troubling that under this bill, VA services would be expanded far beyond veterans with combat injuries and service-connected disabilities, fundamentally changing the founding mission of VA. This will only flood the VA system with new claimants, many of whom would be better served by health coverage in the private insurance market.
>
> Veterans seeking VA care already face wait times of months and even years; further expanding eligibility to veterans who would be better served by other healthcare options will only stretch the VA to its breaking point. There is also currently no cost estimate of this massive expansion.
>
> Meanwhile, there is another compelling question of costs. Sanders has proposed shifting funding from the Pentagon's Overseas Contingency Operations to pay for these expanded veterans priorities. But taking funding from the men and women serving in Afghanistan and elsewhere is shortsighted and could otherwise endanger their lives. That approach will likely meet a chilly reception in the House of Representatives, and justifiably so.
>
> This means that Sanders' $30 billion bill would be paid for through the accumulation of additional debt. The CVA has been clear that Washington needs to ''cut debt, not vets.'' With $17 trillion in debt and massive annual deficits, our country faces a fiscal crisis of unparalleled scope. Now is not the time, in any federal department, to spend money we don't have.
>
> To be sure, there's much to like in the Sanders bill. And if those components were presented as separate, smaller bills, as part of a carefully considered long-term strategy to reform the VA, hold leadership accountable and improve services to veterans, we would have no problem extending enthusiastic support.
>
> As with so many bloated legislative projects in today's Washington, the overreaching and overpromising in this bill will only lead to disappointment and recriminations as the high costs and unanticipated consequences are revealed. That will be followed by demands for an entirely new round of ''comprehensive'' reform, and the cycle will begin anew.
>
> Congress should go back to the drawing board, assume a more modest approach and take up these proposals on an individual basis. That's the better path to achieving enduring and effective reform of, and accountability for, the services we provide to our veterans.

I point that out because he is a CEO of a veterans organization. Not all veterans organizations agree that more is necessarily better and that to blindly add to the system is not necessarily good.

My colleague mentioned that there was a 5-year implementation. I have the legislation right here. It is title 3, subtitle A. Expansion and improvements of benefits generally, requirements for enrollment in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs of certain veterans eligible for enrollment by law but not currently permitted to enroll.

It goes through all the subsections and basically says the Secretary shall provide for the enrollment in the patient enrollment system of veterans specified in paragraph 2 by no later than December 31, 2014.

Well, in section 2, veterans with noncompensible service-connected disabilities rated as zero percent disabled who are not otherwise permitted to enroll in a system as of the date of enactment of the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefit Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014—under this section they do not have access to health insurance except through a health exchange.

My colleague sat on the floor and begged me not to talk about the Affordable Care Act. The Affordable Care Act is in his bill. It is referenced in his bill.

Now, get this: The Affordable Care Act has been portrayed as the solution to the health care problem in America. Forget for a minute the fact that premiums have increased for practically everybody in America—90 percent have seen increases. The $2,500 savings per family is a wish, a hope, and a dream.

My colleagues think so much of the Affordable Care Act that if the only choice for a veteran is the Affordable Care Act, then they can opt to go into the VA. If the Affordable Care Act and the exchange are so good, why would we want to shift them from something good into something that is questionable, based upon what the editorial said.

My colleague said the VA has the best health care system in the world. It does. The hospital system has been rated high practically every year it has been rated. I made the statement yesterday: Why would we take a system that is broken and stuff more people into it? Why wouldn't we focus the debate on how to reform the system?

This is one year's worth of inspector general reports on health care facilities, over 40 healthcare inspections reports that have been released by the inspector general. I can tell my colleagues what is in front of the VA. They can't even get their hands around their own inspector general's report. These are deaths of veterans. These are individuals who used somebody else's insulin pen. This is legionnaires disease. This is a system that drastically needs reform. This is not a Member of the Senate making an accusation, it is the inspector general of the Veterans' Administration and all of these reports from 12 months. Yet we are talking about a massive expansion of the Veterans' Administration, where the chairman says: Oh, they have 5 years to do it.

I am reading the legislation. There is no 5 years. There is a specified expansion of who is included in it, and it says the Secretary will do it by December 31, 2014. If the phase-in is there, then the chairman can come down and read me the language where it says 5 years. I am certainly not trying to mislead anybody, although I am trying to make sure we get the facts on the floor of what this legislation actually does.

The chairman talked about bipartisanship. He is correct. Quite a few of the bills in his package are my bills, and they passed out of committee with unanimous support. Incorporated in his bill are 143 provisions, 26 of which are Republican. I have never judged whether I liked the bill based upon how many of my proposals were in it or how many proposals from my side of the aisle were in it; I base it on what is in the bill. What are the policies? What is our intent? Do we accomplish that in the language of the legislation?

Let's look at it for just a minute. There are no reforms—zero. Zero reforms are in the bill. It is a massive expansion of individuals in the system. As a matter of fact, under this piece of legislation, the VA doesn't even support it. Let me read what the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Dr. Robert Jesse, said. He indicated that expanding enrollment of Priority 8 veterans ''presents many potential complications and uncertain effects on VA's enrollment system.'' This is the individual in charge of health at the VA who says: I don't think this is a good idea.

So I guess the only mistake the chairman made was—he suggested that I was opposed to it, and he was accurate, but he didn't ever say the VA is opposed to this massive expansion.

He talked about the caregiver bill. I know something about it because I wrote it. We implemented it as a demonstration project. Why? Because Senator Akaka and I believed the VA was not in a position to absorb this massive program and to administer and implement it in an effective way. As a matter of fact, Senator Akaka said at the time—he was then the chair of the veterans' committee—he said there were three reasons he was reluctant to—well, let me just say that when the caregivers program came up in debate on the Senate floor, Senator Akaka, then chair, noted that these benefits and services were not made available for all veterans for three reasons:

> [O]ne, the needs and circumstances of the newest veterans in terms of injuries are different—different—from those of veterans from other eras; two, the family situation of the younger veterans is different from that of older veterans; and three, by targeting this initiative on a specific group of veterans, the likelihood of successful undertaking is enhanced.

I say to my colleagues, would the author of the caregivers program not be the first one to come to the floor and lobby for an expansion? I think the answer is yes. But would the author of the caregivers legislation want to wait until the system can handle it?

Do my colleagues realize that in two States in America, a veteran can file for caregiver status in one State and be denied and file the same application in another and be granted caregiver status? It happened in Colorado and Florida. How, in a system that is created to equally treat veterans, is that possible? Now we want to extend it to veterans of all eras. I would suggest to my colleagues that this is almost ludicrous to even think about.

I see quite a few Members here, and I am not going to take up but a couple more minutes. I want to make sure my colleagues understand that my opposition is not to veterans. My opposition is to proceeding with legislation that could hurt veterans, not help them. In this particular case, more is not necessarily better. As the CEO of Concerned Veterans of America stated, the right congressional action would be to stop, take a breath, and focus what is broken. Fix the system. Then have a debate about which veterans, if any, should be included in the VA delivery of care.

The chairman highlighted yesterday that incorporated in both his bill and my bill is a House provision that provides leases for 27 new VA outpatient facilities. He said: That is proof we have in the system enough facilities to handle the population. No, Mr. Chairman, that is not proof. Those 27 leases are for trying to make sure we have facilities to handle our current population within the VA. Those veterans who are driving over 2 hours for a primary care visit, those individuals whose transportation is their No. 1 issue—27 doesn't even get us up to taking care of today's population.

As I said yesterday, we have I know $14 billion worth of construction that is currently underway in the VA; yet we appropriate $1 billion a year. It will take us 14 years to build out the inventory we have today. But the legislation calls for an incredible increase in the size of the veterans population by December of 2014. We won't have any of those 27 facilities that would be legislated in this bill done by December 2014.

So I am going to urge my colleagues, as we move forward, let's not do anything to damage veterans. Let's not do anything to overwhelm the Veterans' Administration. Let's commit to work with them to reform the system. Let's listen to what they want and not put them in a situation where they are telling us: We don't want what you are proposing. Let's listen and let's apply common sense to legislation versus to just be focused on the cheers we receive from a few who are paid to represent folks in Washington.

The chairman said a number of times that this is about veterans. I can tell my colleagues it is a little bit more. It is about the American people. It is about my kids, our kids, our grandchildren. It is about what they inherit from us. They are going to inherit from us probably the most important thing: the obligation to keep our promise to veterans of all eras.

I think the decision we have to make as we debate this legislation is whether we are going to commit to a promise that is bigger than what our kids can fulfill, that costs more than our kids can afford, and that doesn't necessarily enhance the health care delivered to our veterans. If anything, today it would probably be detrimental to those who need it the most.

I thank the Presiding Officer for his patience. I thank my colleagues for their indulgence as they have patiently waited. This is way too big an issue to rush forward with. I look forward over the next several days to a real debate about the specifics in this bill and, more importantly, about what we should do as a Congress to help veterans and to help the Veterans' Administration.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I did not come to speak on this bill, although I certainly appreciate the remarks of my colleague from North Carolina I also see the chairman is here. I say to the chairman of the committee, I am only prepared to speak on a separate subject probably for 5 to 7 minutes.

As I said, I appreciate the comments of my colleague, particularly when we are dealing with veterans, their benefits, and health care in particular. We need to be very careful in terms of what we are doing so we do it the right way because we owe them all our Nation's gratitude for the sacrifices they have made. As veteran myself, I have some appreciation of that. My daughter married into a military family. Nevertheless, we need to be very careful how we go forward in making sure the care they get through the VA system is the very best care possible. My colleague has outlined a number of issues that need to be debated, and I dearly hope the majority leader will allow us the opportunity to not only debate but vote on the alternative which, in my opinion, addresses the issue in the very best way.

MEDICAL DEVICE TAXES

Today I come to speak about the President's visit to Minnesota. I wish it were Indiana. He is going there for the purpose, as stated, of discussing a new initiative—I think it is a transportation initiative—that he hopes will create jobs and stimulate economic growth. Clearly, that has been an ongoing challenge for this administration.

How ironic. How ironic to go to Minnesota, a State like my home State of Indiana, which has been one of the most negatively impacted by the excise taxes imposed upon one of its most dynamic job creators—the medical device industry. How ironic it is to go to Minnesota and talk about creating jobs and economic growth while at the same time promoting a provision that was incorporated in the Affordable Care Act that imposes an egregious excise tax on not the profits but on the sales receipts of medical device companies. It is simply an ObamaCare pay-for.

As I said, Indiana and Minnesota are homes to many of the country's largest medical device manufacturers. In fact, my State of Indiana exported more than $9.7 billion in life science products in 2012, which includes medical devices. It is second in the country only to California in terms of exports of life science products. So it is very important to our State.

We have over 300 FDA-registered medical device manufacturers—some of them large, some of them small. They employ 20,000 Hoosiers directly, with an indirect support of nearly 30,000 more. So it is not a small thing for our State. It is one of the—and pardon the pun—cutting-edge industries, producing devices that improve the health of Americans and extend the life of Americans through some remarkable innovations. These companies have revolutionized the medical field with life-enhancing, as well as lifesaving, technology.

So what is the effect of this excise tax that has been imposed on these companies and this thriving industry?

Well, let me respond in a way that reflects what some Hoosiers have told me, as I travel across the State talking to these device employees and CEOs and manufacturers, learning what the impact of this tax is on their industry, which is so important to our country's economic growth.

One device manufacturer located in Warsaw, IN, develops and sells orthopedic implants for children but recently had to shelve two important projects simply because they had to get the money to pay the tax, so they could not put it into the research and development and innovation of their next products. I quote an employee of this company, who told my office: ''The medical device excise tax inhibits us from developing more products that can reduce a wheelchair-bound child's discomfort or that can allow a kid to walk for the first time.''

So there are real consequences here. Companies, many of which are innovative, struggling to design that new product that can be life enhancing and life saving, have simply had to defer their product to pay the tax. They may not have made a penny in net profits. Many of these are startup companies, hoping to develop and get FDA approval for, the next new life-enhancing innovation. Yet they are not taxed on their net profits—and many are losing money initially in order to go through the tortuous and time-consuming process of getting FDA approval, which denies them getting their products out to the market for a long period of time; so most of them early on are not making any profit. But on the devices they are selling, every dollar that comes in is taxed, even though they have no net profits and, therefore, they have to take money out of research and development, out of capital equipment, out of employee compensation, in order to send the check to the government.

Cook Medical, which is located in Bloomington, IN, another Hoosier device manufacturer, was forced to table plans for a major expansion because of the device tax. In testimony before the Senate Budget Committee last year, Cook's medical chairman, Steve Ferguson, said this:

> Cook has made the difficult decision that without repeal [of the medical device tax], we will move important new product lines outside of the U.S. Our previous plans to open up five new manufacturing facilities in American towns are now on hold as we use capital intended for these projects to pay the excise tax.

There are very real consequences here in terms of job creation and economic growth that are being inhibited. We are getting just the opposite. We are getting job-killing and deflated economic results as a result of this tax. And it is an egregious tax.

The Advanced Medical Technology Association recently conducted a survey of its members—they shared that with me earlier today—and found that the device tax forced manufacturers to let go of or avoid hiring 33,000 workers last year. Mr. President, that is 33,000 people who could have joined the workforce at wages which in my State are 56 percent higher than the average State wage. So these are good-paying jobs. They require good skills, but they are good-paying jobs. And it is an emerging series of products that can be exported around the world.

The survey also found that one-third of the respondents had to reduce their research and development as a result of the medical device tax.

In terms of investment dollars, three-quarters of the respondents said they had taken one or more of the following actions in response to the tax: They have either deferred or canceled capital investments; deferred or cancelled plans to open new facilities; reduced investment in startup companies; found it more difficult to raise capital, particularly among startup companies; and reduced or deferred increases in employee compensation.

There are negative results that come from taxing anything. But when you tax sales, when you tax on an excise basis, it has a compounding effect for startup companies, and even for established companies, in terms of what they are able to do in terms of hiring, in terms of plant expansion, in terms of research and development, in terms of innovation.

This is happening across the country. Minnesota and Indiana just happen to be two States that have been particularly hard hit. We ought to be encouraging these companies to continue their research and development. We should not be punishing them with an egregious tax which is simply a byproduct and the administration says: We have to find a pay-for for ObamaCare. Here is a prospering industry, so let's take some money from them—not on their profits—but let's just take money from them from their sales—an excise tax—so that we can apply it to ObamaCare.

Essentially, what they are doing is taking money from a program that works and puts people back to work and generates taxes the right way and transferring that money to a program that is in distress, has turned out to be a job killer, according to studies and a number of agencies that have looked at this, and is very much in a state of confusion and disarray right now among the American people.

So you take some money from something that works and you give it to something that does not work. What kind of rationale is that? And how can the President go to Minnesota and say: I am here to stimulate growth and create jobs, while his very own policy has done just the opposite?

The senior Senator from Minnesota, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and I chair the Senate Medical Technology Caucus. We have been able to pull together a bipartisan effort to increase awareness of these unique issues but also to achieve a vote, which is hard to do around here. During the budget we had the so-called vote-arama. Republicans and Democrats got to offer any amendment we wanted. It is not binding law, but it sets the stage and illustrates the Senate's stance on particular topics.

On this one 79 out of 100 U.S. Senators—Republicans and Democrats; that is 45 Republicans and 34 Democrats—voted for repeal of the medical device tax. So this is not a Republican standing here challenging the President of another party or Members across the aisle saying: We are asking you to support this Republican issue. This is a bipartisan issue. Almost as many Democrats as Republicans support this. But yet the majority leader has refused to allow this to come to an actual vote, which would put it into passage—because the House has already supported and passed this—and be sent to the President for his signature.

So I guess what I am asking here today is that the majority leader at

least allow us the opportunity to go forward with a vote, where it would then, I suspect it would pass, be sent to the President. If he really wants to create jobs and stimulate the economy, we have living proof of something that will do it.

I do not know how the President today can go to a State and say: I am here to stimulate the economy and provide for new jobs and at the same time have in place a majority leader who will not allow us a vote on it. We all want to enact measures here that will get our country growing again and will get people back to work. In an area where we are providing life-enhancing and lifesaving medical technology, it is particularly important.

So my plea, as I finish here, is I urge the majority leader and I urge the President—if they are serious about encouraging economic growth, spurring job creation, and improving health care—to support the repeal of this unfair and destructive tax of medical devices.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I yield 45 minutes of my hour under cloture to Senator SANDERS, chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time is so yielded.

Mr. COONS. 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. SANDERS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, earlier this afternoon I spoke about the many important provisions in this veterans bill that came out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee: the fact that we worked as hard as we could to make it bipartisan, the fact that there are many provisions in this bill that came from Republican Members, and the fact that some other provisions in this bill were passed unanimously by the House of Representatives, indicating very strong bipartisan support.

But what I also said is that while I believe the American people understand the full cost of war and understand the sacrifices made by veterans and their families, what they also believe is that when we have a piece of legislation—an important piece of legislation—on the floor dealing with the needs of millions and millions of veterans and their families—whether it is health care; whether it is dental care; whether it is sexual assault and how we address that issue; whether it is the fact that over 2,000 veterans have lost their ability to have kids and what we can do to make it possible for them to have children; whether it is the fact that we have tens of thousands of families in this country where loved ones are taking care of disabled vets, need some support, and we have a need to expand the caregivers act; whether it is the fact that we have some young people who are eligible to use the post-9/11 GI bill but are unable to do it because they cannot get in-State tuition; whether it is the issue of advanced appropriations and making sure we never again find ourselves in the position that we did a few months ago, where the government was shut down and where disabled veterans were 1 week or 10 days away from losing the checks they are dependent upon, I think there is widespread support in America for that bill, for the understanding that we do owe the men and women who put their lives on the line to defend us a debt of gratitude that can never be fully paid.

But we have to do our best. We have to make life as good as we can for those who were injured in war. We have to protect the hundreds of thousands who came back from Iraq and Afghanistan with PTSD or traumatic brain injury. But whatever one may think of the bill—whether you like the bill, don't like the bill, think it is too expensive or think we should have done more—the one thing most Americans understand is that it is totally absurd to be bringing forth extraneous issues into a debate on veterans needs in order to kill the bill.

I say to my colleagues exactly what the majority leader said this morning. If you have amendments dealing with veterans issues, we welcome them. We have a number of Democrats who have come forward with amendments. We have some Republicans who have come forward with amendments. We welcome amendments that are relevant and germane to the needs of veterans. What we do not welcome are extraneous amendments that are designed only—only—for partisan, political reasons, exactly the process that the American people are disgusted with today.

Interestingly enough, that is my view. I mentioned earlier today that the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America sent out a tweet yesterday, and the folks who served us in Iraq and Afghanistan said: The Senate should not get distracted while debating and voting on the veterans bill. Iran sanctions, ObamaCare, et cetera, aren't relevant to S. 1982—which is the veterans bill we are dealing with today.

The Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America said: Focus on veterans' issues, which is a very simple request and the one that should be heeded.

But today, a little while ago, we heard from the largest veterans' association in America; that is, the American Legion, which represents 2.4 million members. The American Legion is the largest veterans' organization in this country. I suspect they have chapters. I know they are strong in Vermont. I suspect they are strong in Hawaii and strong all over this country.

American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger said today:

> Iran is a serious issue that Congress needs to address, but it cannot be tied to S. 1982, which is extremely important as our Nation prepares to welcome millions of U.S. military service men and women home from war. This comprehensive bill aims to help veterans find good jobs, get the health care they need, and make in-State tuition rates applicable to all who use their GI bill benefits. This legislation is about supporting veterans, pure and simple. The Senate can debate various aspects of it, and that is understandable, but it cannot lose focus on the matter at hand: helping military personnel make their transition to veteran life and ensuring that those who served their Nation in uniform receive the benefits they earned and deserve. We can deal with Iran—or any other issue unrelated specifically to veterans—with separate legislation.

I think Commander Dellinger hit the nail right on the head. What he is saying is, fine, we can debate Iran at some point; we can debate ObamaCare, which has been going on day after day after day. We can do anything we want to do, but this is a bill that deals with veterans' issues.

I thank the American Legion not only for their support—they along with virtually every other veterans organization in this country supports this legislation: the VFW, DAV, Vietnam Vets, Iraq-Afghanistan Veterans of America, and dozens of organizations—but I thank the American Legion in particular for their statement in making it clear that our job is to debate a veterans bill, not kill this bill because of an extraneous issue such as Iran sanctions.

I wish to say one other word before I proceed to my main remarks. My colleague from North Carolina quoted from a group called the Concerned Veterans of America. In support of our legislation, we have the largest veterans organization in America, the second largest, third largest, fourth largest, the fifth largest, the sixth largest, and all the way down the line—many millions of Americans. Apparently supporting his position is a group called the Concerned Veterans for America. I don't mean to be personal, but this is just a simple fact that people should understand. This organization, according to the Washington Post, is significantly supported by Charles and David Koch—the Koch brothers. We are going to be running into the Koch brothers on every piece of legislation where there is some group out there that they fund, and in this case it is the Concerned Veterans of America.

I talked earlier about the many important provisions in the bill dealing with reproductive issues, the belief the Federal Government and the VA should assist those men and women who have lost their ability to have kids. We have talked about caregivers and all that, and I want to just touch on a couple more issues at this moment.

I have believed for a very long time that dental care should be regarded as a part of health care. I think we make a mistake as a nation saying this is

health care and this is dental care. Our legislation, for the first time, begins the process of providing dental care to nonservice-connected members through a significant pilot project. I have the feeling once we do this we will see veterans from all over the country who are dealing with long-term dental problems availing themselves of this service. It is the right thing to do and something I think we should be doing.

Another provision in this bill deals with the COLA issue for military retirees. I think everybody here is familiar with the fact that in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 it reduced by 1 percent annually the cost-of-living adjustments for military retirees until age 62.

The good news is the House and Senate recently passed legislation completely rescinding those cuts and the President has signed that bill. That is the good news. The bad news is those cuts continue to exist for those who join the military after January 2014, and I know the veterans organizations are concerned about that. I am concerned about that. I think that is wrong, and our legislation corrects that. So if one is talking about cuts to military retiree COLAs, we end it, pure and simple. Those COLA cuts will no longer exist if this bill is passed.

As I mentioned earlier, this legislation addresses the issue of the benefits backlog. There is great concern among all Members of the Senate that veterans are forced to wait much too long to get their claims processed. What this legislation does is support VA's ongoing efforts to end the backlog and would make needed improvements to the claims system. Again, this is the result of some bipartisan efforts.

Secretary Eric Shinseki of the VA, as he moves the claims system from paper into an electronic system, has advanced the very ambitious goal of making sure that every claim filed by a veteran will be processed in 125 days at 98 percent accuracy. That is a very ambitious goal, and the language we have is going to hold the VA accountable and make sure we reach this very ambitious goal.

I gather there may be differences of opinion on this view, but another provision in our bill deals with the educational needs of servicemembers and making sure they get a fair shot at attaining their educational goals without incurring an additional financial burden, which is what the post-9/11 GI bill was all about. That bill has been enormously successful. There are certain problems remaining in it and we address these problems.

Given the nature of our Armed Forces, servicemembers have little to no say as to where they serve and where they reside during military service. Thus, when transitioning servicemembers consider what educational institution they want to attend, many of them choose a school in a State other than their home State or the State where they previously served. I have heard from too many veterans that many of these public educational institutions consider them out-of-State students. Given that the post-9/11 GI bill only covers in-State tuition and fees for public educational institutions, these veterans are left to cover the differences in cost between the in-State tuition rate and the out-of-State tuition rate. In some States that difference can be more than $20,000 a year.

That is certainly not what the purpose of the 9/11 GI bill was about. As a result, many of our Nation's veterans must use loans to cover this difference and, in the process, become indebted with large school loans that will take them years to pay off.

My office has heard from a number of veterans and veterans organizations about this problem. We heard from Skye Barclay, who lived in Florida prior to joining the U.S. Marine Corps in 2006. After serving her country, Skye decided to remain with her family in North Carolina so her husband could finish serving his military obligations. Less than 1 year later, they moved to Skye's hometown in Florida to transition back to civilian life and finish their college education.

Skye and her husband changed their residency, immediately started renting a home, and ensured her car registration was up-to-date. However, the school she chose to attend could not consider either of these veterans as in-State students. As a result, they were forced to pay an additional $2,000 out-of-pocket each semester. Due to the additional financial burden, Skye and her husband were unable to afford daycare for their daughter and instead have to juggle two demanding schedules, with one of them attending school in the morning and the other late afternoon.

The bottom line is that we passed a post-9/11 GI bill which is working incredibly well. Over 1 million veterans and their family members have used this program. It is very important for higher education in America, and I think we should support our veterans who move to another State and make sure they get in-State tuition.

Let me conclude my remarks at this point, though I will be back later to reiterate the major point I wish to make. We can play the same old politics. My Republican colleagues can defeat this bill because of some extraneous matters in it. I think that is incredibly disrespectful to the veterans community that has sacrificed so much. That is not just my view; that is what the American Legion believes and what the American Legion says: Discuss veterans issues in a veterans bill. The Iraq-Afghanistan Veterans of America say the same.

So we may have disagreements on this bill. People may choose to vote against it for whatever reason. People may offer amendments that we would love to see—some of them may be good, some not so good—but let us respect those folks who have given so much to this country. Let us not demean the veterans community by killing this bill because of something to do with Iran sanctions. That has nothing to do with veterans' needs.

I hope we continue to have a vigorous debate on this piece of legislation. I see my friend from Florida is on the floor. People may want to vote for it. That is good. They may want to vote against it. Fine. But let us not play the same old politics which so disgusts the American people.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I would like to inquire as to the pending business before the Senate. Is it the veterans bill, the motion to proceed?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is indeed the motion to proceed to S. 1982.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I appreciate this opportunity to address a number of matters of great concern. There might be, but I don't know of any State that has a greater presence of veterans within it than Florida, certainly per capita. We have a huge military presence in our State and a large number of veterans.

I have commented to people, by the way, that in my time in the Senate, which is now about 3 years and 2 months, a substantial percentage of the calls we get to our office are from veterans regarding veterans' issues. I have a veteran in my family—my brother—who has recently encountered some bureaucratic hurdles he is trying to overcome in terms of getting service from the VA. So these are relevant matters that are of great importance.

I am glad the Senate is on the debate. I am glad we have proceeded to have this debate. It is an important one, and I do hope I will have an opportunity to offer an amendment I have relevant to the bill that involves and gives the opportunity for the Secretary who oversees this Department to be able to hire and fire, particularly to hold accountable mid- and higher level officials within the Veterans' Administration who are not doing their jobs and are contributing to this backlog.

I can tell you that in Central Florida we have a veterans hospital that has been well over budget and has timeliness issues and it needs to be addressed. I think that is a veterans' issue that has extraordinary bipartisan consensus. So my hope is we will be able to address it and we will have an amendment process that allows these ideas to be brought forth. From what I heard from the Senator commenting just a few moments ago, he welcomes amendments. So I hope I will have an opportunity to offer that.

I know as part of this debate the issue of Iran sanctions has been raised. I don't think it is rare to have issues that perhaps are not directly on point to a bill offered in debate, particularly when getting into a debate on an issue that has been so difficult. That is part of the problem with the Iran sanctions issue.

I understand when someone files a bill, the managers have worked hard on it, and the last thing they want is for it to be slowed down because of debate on another topic that is not directly on topic. I understand that concern. I do. But on the other hand, I hope Members will understand that part of the frustration has been the inability to even get a debate on what truly is an extraordinarily important issue.

For those here watching and those at home watching and those who may see this later, let me take a moment to briefly discuss what is at stake. I briefly discussed this a few weeks ago, but I wanted to take this opportunity to do so again.

Here is the issue: Iran, a few years ago, began developing a nuclear processing capability. What that basically means is they take uranium, for example, and they reprocess it to a certain level. You need to have a certain level of reprocessing in order to, for example, provide domestic energy for nuclear energy plants. Many countries in the world have nuclear energy, but only a handful actually process it themselves. Most decide to buy it already processed from abroad.

We have agreements and arrangements with countries all over the planet that do that. Only a handful actually retain the capacity to reprocess it or to enrich uranium or reprocess plutonium. So when we see a country announce they are going to invest money, time, and energy in developing a reprocessing or an enrichment capability, that raises red flags, and here is why. Because while you only need a certain level of enrichment to be able to provide nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and a little bit higher level in order to use it for medical isotopes, the exact same scientists, the exact same machines, the exact same facilities are the exact same ones that can also reprocess or enrich to an even higher level to use in a weapon.

The story of Iran has been, over the last few years, to increase their enrichment and reprocessing capabilities. That in and of itself raises red flags. Adding to that uncertainty and concern about it has been the fact they have tried to hide most of this. Consistently, Iran has been found to have secret development projects ongoing that they only admit to once they are discovered. They take a tremendous amount of effort to hide it from the world. That begins to raise red flags, because if it is truly just a peaceful program, there would be no reason to hide it or to hide their capabilities. But Iran has consistently hidden them.

There is even more reason to be concerned. In addition to increasing their capacity to enrich and reprocess, Iran is also developing long-range missile capabilities. A long-range missile—basically a missile that can fly from Iran 1,000 miles, 1,500 miles, 2,000 miles, 3,000 miles—costs a lot of money to develop. It takes a lot of time to develop.

You don't spend time or money developing those capabilities for purely conventional purposes or for defensive purposes. Usually when you undergo those efforts to develop that kind of capability, it is because you want to have the opportunity to one day put a nuclear warhead on one of those rockets.

So that is the story of Iran: massive expansion in their enrichment and reprocessing capabilities; secret enrichment programs which they try to hide from the world; and the development of long-range missile capabilities. Add to it that we are not dealing with the government of Belgium, Japan, South Korea, or any other responsible government on the planet; we are dealing with a government that actively uses terrorism all over the world as an active element of its foreign policy. They are involved in supporting various terrorist elements around the country, not just in the Middle East. Open-source reporting revealed that just a couple years ago they were involved in a plot to assassinate a foreign ambassador in Washington, DC—not in the Middle East somewhere but here. They have an active cyber capability designed to attack, disrupt, and create acts of terror online. They have been implicated, for example, in the bombing of a Jewish center in Argentina. There are few, if any, countries in the world that more actively support terrorism than the Government of Iran.

So this is with whom we are dealing. As a result, the international community, through the United Nations, imposed sanctions. Not only did they impose sanctions, they imposed the requirement that they immediately suspend and stop all enrichment and reprocessing capabilities. We can imagine why the neighbors of Iran are concerned. It is not just Israel that is concerned. Ask the Saudis, ask the Turks, ask any number of the other countries in the region.

Recently, the President and this administration have begun to undertake conversations with Iran about this program. Their hope is that we can get Iran to a place where we can lock them in; where they, in exchange for the loosening of these sanctions, agree not to do certain things.

I don't know of anyone here who would not love to wake up to the news tomorrow that the Supreme Leader in Iran has decided to abandon the reprocessing and enrichment capability and to truly show that all he is interested in is domestic energy for peaceful purposes. The problem is that is not what is happening. I believe what is happening is the United States, through the State Department and this administration, de facto, is already—but if not, is on the verge of—agreeing to allow Iran to keep in place its enrichment and reprocessing capabilities, and I will explain why this is a problem.

If that capability is still there, if they retain all the facilities necessary for enrichment and reprocessing, even if they agree to limit it to a certain level for now, at any point in time in the future they can ratchet it back up and can go on to develop a weapon. In fact, unfortunately, the design for a weapon is the easiest part of all this. The hardest part is reaching the technological capability to enrich uranium to a certain point to weaponize it.

If we allow them to keep all the equipment, all the technology, all their scientists, all the infrastructure in place, then at any point in the future when they decide it is time for a weapon, they can break out and do that. And I would submit that the evidence is strong that this is exactly what their strategy is.

I don't think, I know for a fact that the mandate given to those negotiators on behalf of Iran and the Supreme Leader was the following: Do whatever you can to get these sanctions lifted off our shoulders, but do not agree to anything that is irreversible.

Put yourself in their position. If you want to retain the option to one day be able to enrich and then build a weapon, you are probably willing to take one step back by agreeing to suspend enrichment only to a certain level in exchange for the lifting of these sanctions, knowing that at some point—in 2 years, 3 years, or 4 years—when the world is distracted by something else, when something else is going on around the planet, you can then decide to come up with any excuse to build a weapon.

One of the reasons I know that is their strategy is because it is exactly what the North Koreans did. The playbook has already been written. They would engage in these ongoing negotiations, on again, off again, all designed to buy time.

Why does a government like Iran need or want a nuclear weapon? And they do. It is pretty straightforward.

No. 1, because of deep historical reasons, they desire to become the dominant power in the Middle East, to drive not just the United States but other nations out of the region and diminish everyone's influence at their expense.

The other is because they view a weapon as the ultimate insurance policy. They don't want to be the next Muammar Qadhafi; they want to be North Korea so they can now act with impunity, so they can do anything they want against us or anyone in the world because no one could possibly attack them because they have nuclear weapons.

I have heard stories about, well, we will know; we will be able to see this happening before it happens and do something about it. But look at Pakistan and India, which was a surprise to everybody, particularly India's capabilities. It is not outside the realm of the reasonable to believe that at some point one day we will wake up to the news that Iran has detonated a device and proven their capability. In fact, I have zero doubt in my mind that this is where they want to go.

What I find offensive in this whole conversation is the notion by some in the administration that anyone who

feels this way or anyone who has doubts or skepticism about these negotiations is warmongering.

I actually think the failure to impose sanctions now will inevitably place a future President—perhaps even this one—with a very difficult decision to make, and that will be whether to go in and take military action to stunt or stall their weapons program because, make no mistake, a lot of damage has already been done. A lot of damage has already been done to the sanctions that were already in place. There is already growing evidence that the amount of revenue coming into Iran, the amount of business dealings coming into Iran just simply on this talk about the interim deal has truly spiked.

We also see it in their comments. The leaders of Iran—from the President, to the Supreme Leader, to the chief negotiator—are not just bragging in Iran; they are bragging all over the world that they have agreed to nothing and the West has capitulated.

What we were told by the State Department is, well, that is only for domestic consumption; they are just saying that to be popular at home and to appease the radicals within Iran.

By the way, the term ''radical'' is an interesting term when applied to Iran. All the leaders in Iran are radical; it is just degrees of radicalism.

But to get back to the point I was making, we hear the comments they make in Iran—bragging how they have won, how they snookered the West, how they agreed to nothing, how everything they were doing before is going to move forward—and we are told: Just ignore that. They are just saying that for domestic political considerations.

That is not true. In fact, the Supreme Leader himself, the Ayatollah, has announced that these talks are going to lead to nowhere. He is not going to interfere, but they are going nowhere.

This is a transparent effort. All you have to do is open your eyes and see what they are doing. All they are doing is buying time. All they are doing is looking to relieve as many sanctions as possible without giving up anything they can do in the future or are doing now. For a deal such as this to work, you have to rely on all sorts of verification systems with a government that has made a specialty out of hiding their intentions and programs in the past.

The reason we see the push for the additional sanctions to be put in place is because at least 59 of us in the Senate—and I suspect many more who haven't lent their names to this effort yet—recognize that we cannot afford to be wrong about this because a nuclear Iran would be one of the worst developments in the world in a very long time.

In addition to being able to hold the region hostage, in addition to now being able to act with impunity—they don't have a weapon now, and they try to assassinate Ambassadors in Washington, DC. Imagine what they think they can get away with if they do have a weapon.

Beyond that, think about the risk it poses to our allies in that region, and think about this: Think about the reaction of other countries in the region to the news. The Saudis are not going to stand by and watch Iran develop a nuclear capability and not have one of their own. So I submit a nuclear Iran isn't just one more country joining the nuclear weapons club; it can be as many as two or three more countries eventually joining the nuclear weapons club in the most unstable region in the world, a place that has only had conflict, I don't know, for 5,000 years. This is what we are on the verge of here.

I appreciate the work diplomats working in the State Department do. There is a role for diplomacy in the world, and the good news is that we can negotiate agreements with most of the countries on this planet. But I think diplomacy also requires us to understand its limitations. It is very difficult to negotiate settlements and agreements with governments and individuals who don't ever feel bound by them, who see them as one-way streets, who see them as tactics and vehicles to buy time. That is what we are dealing with.

The other part we forget is that in some parts of the world and with some governments on this planet, the language of diplomacy is viewed as a language of weakness. It becomes an invitation to become aggressive or miscalculated.

I don't know of anyone in this body who is looking to get into another war or armed conflict. That is not what Americans are all about. If we look at the story of the conflicts we have been engaged in, almost all of them involved a reluctant nation having to get involved for geopolitical purposes, because we were trying to stem the growth of communism, because we were attacked in Pearl Harbor. That is not who we are. That is not who we have ever been. Americans aren't into that. What we want to do is live happy lives and raise our families in peace. We want to be able to sell to and buy from other countries. We want a peaceful world we can partner with for business and culture.

But I also think it is important to understand that when mistakes are made in foreign policy, it is a lot harder to reverse than when they are made in domestic policies. If we pass a bad tax bill, we can always come back and pass a new one. If we make a mistake—as this body did by passing ObamaCare—we can always come back and repeal it. If we make a mistake in domestic policy, we can always come back and reverse it somehow. It is not the same in foreign policy. Once there is a nuclearized, weaponized Iran, it will be quite difficult to undo, and so are all the things it will lead to.

Let me also say that additional sanctions are no guarantee that they will never get a weapon, but it changes the cost-benefit analysis. It tests their pain threshold economically. It forces them to make a decision about whether they want to continue to be isolated from the world economically and whether weaponizing is worth it.

If you put in place an interim agreement or a final one that allows them to retain the capability to enrich in the future, they will build a weapon. That is not a matter of opinion; in my mind, that is a matter of fact. Maybe this President won't be here by the time that happens, but someone is going to have to deal with that, and it is not just the President; our country is going to have to deal with that. I at a minimum want to be on record today as making that point because if, God forbid, that day should ever come, I want it to be clearly understood that I, along with my colleagues, warned against it.

By the way, I think this opposition to additional sanctions is part of a pattern of flawed foreign policy decisions on behalf of this administration, one that has largely been built on the false assumption that our problems in the world were caused by an America that was too engaged, too involved, too opinionated, was providing too much leadership and direction, when, in fact, the opposite is now true.

Many of the conflicts happening around the world today are a result of the chaos left by this administration's unclear foreign policy. Many of our allies openly question—and I can tell you from my travels that privately they strongly question—whether America's assurances remain viable and whether we can continue to be relied upon in the agreements we have made in the past to provide collective security for ourselves and our allies.

When you leave a vacuum, it is going to be filled. What it is being filled by right now are some of the most tyrannical governments on the planet. Look at what happened with Moscow over the last 5 years. Moscow viewed the whole reset strategy of the United States under this President not as an opportunity to engage us but as an opportunity to try to get an upper hand on us.

Look at what has happened in the Asia-Pacific region where the Chinese regional ambitions to drive the U.S. out have grown exponentially, as have their capabilities. Meanwhile, our partners in the region, while they welcome the rhetoric of a pivot, question whether we will have the capability to carry it out.

Certainly in the Middle East an incoherent foreign policy with regard to Syria left open an ungoverned space where foreign jihadists have poured into that country and have now basically converted entire parts of Syria as the premier operational space for global jihadists to train and operate.

Now Iran. The situation in Iran, to use a colloquial term, is freaking out all the other countries in that region who have no illusions about who Iran

truly is. They know exactly who these people are, and they are baffled at how the most powerful and informed government on the planet doesn't realize what they realized a long time ago—that you are not dealing with a responsible government here with Iran. You are dealing with a nation that openly supports terrorism as a tool of statecraft, that openly has shown that they want to develop a nuclear weapons capability so they can become untouchable and the dominant power in that region.

If we don't put in place a mechanism for additional sanctions to take place, I submit that the negotiation that is going on with the Iranians will become irrelevant. By that point, even if you wanted to impose more sanctions, it would be impossible to do because so many other countries will have reengaged with commercial transactions with Iran. You are not going to be able to put this genie back in the bottle, and the genie is already halfway out.

I hope we will take this more seriously, but at a minimum I ask this: Why can't we vote on it? If we are wrong, debate us on it. But why can't we vote on it? Since when has the Senate become a place run by one person on a matter of this importance and magnitude? Since when has the Senate become controlled by one person's opinion?

Are you telling me that the people of Florida who I represent do not deserve the right to be represented and heard as much as the people of Nevada or any other State? Are you saying that on an issue of this importance, one individual should have the power to basically say we will have no debate when 59 Members of this body—in a place where it is tough to get 51 votes on anything—have expressed the strong opinion that they favor this?

Why can't we have this debate? Isn't that what the Senate was designed to be, a place where the great issues of our time could be debated and flushed out before the eyes of the American public and the world?

What we are consistently told is we can't have this debate and we're not going to do it. Why? Why can't we debate this? This is important. Its implications will be felt by people long after we are no longer here. I hope more attention is paid to this.

Let me just say that I understand the frustration. A piece of legislation is filed on behalf of veterans, and the Iran issue comes up. But we are running out of time. This is the only mechanism that exists to have this debate.

I would argue that it actually is relevant because it is our men and women in uniform we are going to turn to—when this thing ends up the way I know it will—and ask them to take care of this problem.

If in the end these negotiations fail, and I tragically have to say they are destined to fail, and Iran retains their enrichment capability and eventually develops a nuclear weapon, it is the men and women in uniform of these United States—our sons, our daughters, our neighbors, our friends, our mothers, our brothers, our sisters, and our fathers—whom we will ask, as we always do, to go solve the problem for us. But if we put in place sanctions that clearly articulate and lay out the price they will have to pay to continue with these ambitions, we may be able to delay that, and even prevent it; otherwise, that day will come. This piper will be paid, and I hope the price will not be so high. I fear that is where we are headed. We are on the verge of making an extraordinary geopolitical blunder that will be very difficult to undo or reverse once it is already made.

All we are asking is to have a vote on this issue. This matters enough to the American people. This matters enough to the safety and future of our children and future generations. This matters enough to the world. It deserves a full debate, and it deserves a vote.

If you are against it, you can vote against it. If you are against it, you can debate against it. We want to hear their arguments and thoughts. Why can't we vote on it? It deserves a vote. It is that important.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Texas.

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

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

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I rise to commend the words of my esteemed colleague, the junior Senator from Florida, who has just spoken powerfully about the threats facing our Nation. On Monday evening he spoke powerfully on the Senate floor about the brutal human rights abuses that have been endemic in communist Cuba over the past 50 years, and the sad reality that Cuba is playing a leading role in the repression of the opposition protests that are currently taking place in Venezuela.

I commend the sentiments of the Senator from Florida, and I offer a few additional thoughts of my own on this important topic.

Brave Venezuelan protesters persist in crowding the streets in Caracas, San Cristobal, Merida, and Valencia despite the detention, torture, and murder of their compatriots in recent days. They are not alone. They have been joined by darker figures, representatives of Hezbollah, Iran, and Cuba, all of whom have a vested interest in propping up the increasingly authoritarian socialist regime of Nicolas Maduro. The appearance of the Iranians, and their Hezbollah agents in Venezuela, is concerning, but it should not be surprising.

Iran has long maintained one of its largest embassies in Caracas, where it has been able to exploit the Venezuelan financial system to evade the international sanctions that—up until a few weeks ago—were placing a real burden on Iran's economy.

Now that the administration has eased the sanctions on Iran, Iran is in a significantly stronger position. Not only have they received the first $500 million in unfrozen assets, but they have also reaped considerable collateral benefit.

Iranian President Rouhani recently tweeted: ''You are witness to how foreign firms are visiting our country; 117 political delegations have come here.''

The Dutch ambassador to Iran tweeted in mid-January that he participated in ''speeddate sessions to meet business[es] interested in Iran.''

China has emerged as Iran's top trading partner with nonoil trade hitting $13 billion over the past 10 months, according to Iranian media.

According to documents seen by Reuters, Iran has signed a deal to sell Iraq arms and ammunition worth $195 million—a move that would break the U.N. embargo on weapons sales by Tehran.

What could a reenriched Iran offer Venezuela, given that the joint plan of action that has enabled this economic detente has done nothing to reverse their nuclear program. The answer is chilling. The longstanding commercial ties between Iran and Venezuela, not to mention their mutual hatred for the United States, raise the specter that should Iran acquire nuclear weapons technology, it might be inclined to share it with Venezuela, which would then act as a surrogate threat to the United States in our own hemisphere.

We need to act immediately to reimpose sanctions on Iran and stand unequivocally against Iran acquiring nuclear weapons capability. I am sorry to say there is one reason—and one reason only—that we have not done so, and that is because the senior Senator from Nevada has been single-handedly blocking the Senate from voting on a bipartisan bill on Iranian sanctions. Given the broad bipartisan support in both Chambers, both the senior Senator from Nevada and the rest of the Democratic leadership need to be held accountable for this obstruction and standing in the way of defending U.S. national security interests and standing in the way of defending our friend and ally, the Nation of Israel.

As alarming as the increasing collaboration is between Iran and Venezuela, there is no country that has a greater stake in preserving the status quo in Venezuela than communist Cuba. Over the 15 years of Hugo Chavez's rule, Venezuela and Cuba have engaged in a mutually parasitic relationship in which Venezuela has exported free oil to Cuba and imported the repressive apparatus of a police state that Raul and Fidel Castro have carefully nurtured other the last 50 years.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992, many former Soviet satellites have moved towards freedom and prosperity promised by closer ties

to the West—some even joining the historic NATO alliance. But Cuba, tragically, has remained mired in the communist past in no small part because Chavez provided the economic lifeline that sustained the Castro brothers' brutal oppression.

While some hoped that after Raul Castro replaced his brother in 2008, a new era of moderation might dawn, the opposite has occurred. Despite minor cosmetic reforms largely targeted toward beguiling the Western media rather than helping the Cuban people, the Castros have consolidated their control of the island with a significant uptick in human rights abuses.

Last year I had the opportunity to visit and interview two Cuban dissidents to help provide a forum for them to tell their stories. They described the oppression as ''Putinismo.'' That said it was following the strategy of Russia's President Putin, appearing on the outside to make cosmetic reforms while brutally repressing the people at home. That is what is happening in Cuba.

The Castro playbook includes targeting family members of the opposition, brutal attacks and even murder, as well as keeping inexorable control over communications in and out of Cuba.

An American citizen, Alan Gross, was thrown into prison in 2009 for the crime of handing out cell phones to Havana's Jewish population. Alan Gross should be released, and the United States should be calling for Alan Gross's release.

In a tip to the information age, heavy Internet censorship, among the most repressive on the planet, blankets the island to preempt the spontaneous organization facilitated by social media.

First Chavez, and now Maduro, have learned these lessons well under the tutelage of agents from the Cuban intelligence services, and their work has been on grim display during the protests that have taken place this month. The death toll is now at 13, and climbing, as police bullets have taken the lives of not only activists, but of students, innocent bystanders, and even a beauty queen.

Maduro's agents have also borrowed the tried-and-true Castro tradition of summarily detaining opposition leaders, including Leopoldo Lopez who helped organize the protests. But Mr. Lopez's real crime has been to propose an alternative to the socialist catastrophe into which Chavez and Maduro have plunged this once prosperous nation, and to suggest that real economic freedom is the only path out of the rampant inflation and chronic shortages that are making life in Venezuela intolerable.

Recent polling by Gallup reveals a dramatic shift in Venezuelans' attitude toward the economy, as the socialist policies continue to depress growth and to worsen the lives of hard-working Venezuelans. In 2012, just a couple of years ago, 22 percent of the population thought the economy was getting worse and 41 percent thought it was getting better. In 2013, those numbers reversed, with 62 percent believing it was getting worse while only 12 percent believed it was getting better. These numbers suggest there has been a sea change in how the majority of Venezuelans see their situation. These protests are different, and it is little wonder that so many have taken to the streets to demand something better.

America should stand with the protesters. America should stand on the side of freedom. America has a tradition for centuries of presenting a clarion voice for freedom because every heart yearns to be free across the globe, and the United States should unapologetically defend freedom.

Maduro appears to understand the threat of his people demanding freedom, but the unprecedented scale of his crackdown on the protesters has largely been masked from the rest of the world by a heavy veil of Internet and media censorship designed to simultaneously disable the opposition and to mask the scale of their oppression from the outside world. Some ingenious remedies have emerged, including Austin, TX's, own Zello—a direct messaging service that allows members to communicate freely either privately with individuals or over open channels that can support hundreds of thousands of users. Despite the best efforts of the Venezuelan censors to block access to Zello, the company has nimbly developed patches and work-arounds to maintain service to the some 600,000 Venezuelans who have downloaded the app since the protests began.

Zello is a shining example of how we can use our technological advantage to support those fighting for economic and political freedom across the globe, recalling our proud tradition of Radio Free Europe during the Cold War. Can my colleagues imagine apps such as Zello spreading to millions of Cubans, to millions of Iranians, to millions of Chinese, providing them the tools to directly speak out for freedom? We have other ways of supporting those advocating for a more free and prosperous Venezuela, such as supporting the sort of liberal economic reforms Mr. Lopez has proposed.

Given the remarkable natural resources Venezuela has enjoyed, it is ridiculous—it is tragic—that the economy has been so mismanaged that citizens face a chronic shortage of basic necessities. But this situation is not inevitable, and the United States is uniquely poised to help. For the United States, Canada, and now Mexico, democratic, market-oriented energy production has been the foundation of what we are beginning to call the American energy renaissance—and there is no reason that Venezuela could not reap these benefits if they reverse the socialist policies that have destroyed their economy.

In this event the United States could help Venezuela reach its full energy potential by offering a bilateral investment treaty that would cover the energy sector. Such an arrangement would protect American companies eager to invest in Venezuela and, at the same time, modernize facilities and increase production of crude—which, I might add, can be refined at the CITGO facilities in Corpus Christi, TX—resulting in gasoline and other refined petroleum products that can be sold on the open market for the benefit of the Venezuelan people, not given to Cuba to prop up the Castros. Which is the better deal for the Venezuelan people: having them receive the benefits of the bounty God has given that country in the open market, receive freedom, receive material blessings, or have instead their oil given to Castro to fuel the repressive policies that are inflicting misery on so many millions?

This is a dangerous and unsettling moment for Venezuela, but it is also a moment of great opportunity. Almost exactly 1 year ago, the Obama administration had a chance to push strongly for reform in Venezuela, when Chavez was on his deathbed. Instead, the Obama administration opted not to rock the boat, in the hopes that Chavez's hand-picked successor would prove more susceptible to diplomatic outreach, that he might not follow Chavez. These hopes are apparently evergreen, as just yesterday a State Department spokeswoman announced that they were open to closer engagement with the Maduro regime, saying: ''We have indicated, and have indicated for months, our openness to develop a more constructive relationship with Venezuela . . . .''

Negotiating with tyrants and bullies doesn't work. The notion that our State Department could at this moment extend yet another olive branch to Caracas is exactly backward. This is the moment to point out that Maduro's abuse of his fellow citizens is intolerable to the United States; that if he wants better relations with us, he should start by listening to the demands of his own people. He should immediately and unconditionally release Leopoldo Lopez, who is being held as a hostage at the mercy of an authoritarian state. He should lift the cloud of censorship that he is using to isolate Venezuelans from each other and from the rest of the world, and the United States should do all it can to help the people of Venezuela as they choose a different path—a path of freedom and prosperity that will return this one-time enemy to their traditional role of our partner and friend. That is where the Venezuelan people want to be, and it is only their brutal leadership that is preventing it.

This is a time for American leadership to speak in defense of freedom. This is a time for the President of the United States to unequivocally stand against oppression, against totalitarianism, and for the desire of the Venezuelan people to be free and prosperous. That would benefit them, it

would benefit us, and it would benefit the world.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. 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, I wish to say something about the Iran sanctions legislation that is contained in the alternative bill of which Senator BURR has been the chief architect. First I wish to speak briefly on what is happening in the Ukraine. Late last year, the country's increasingly autocratic President, Viktor Yanukovych, refused to sign a trade agreement with the European Union after coming under strong pressure from Russian leader Vladimir Putin. His refusal to sign the trade deal, coupled with the government's persistent attacks on democracy and civil liberties, as well as growing fears of Moscow's effort to turn Ukraine into a puppet state, sparked massive street protests in the capital city of Kiev. When the government responded with violence, the situation rapidly spiraled out of control until eventually President Yanukovych was expelled from office and forced to flee.

It has been almost a decade since Ukraine's Orange Revolution captured the attention and spirits of freedom lovers across the globe. Now the country is once again at a crossroads. The decisions that are made in the days and weeks that lie ahead will determine whether Ukraine is allowed to flourish as a pro-Western democracy or it is forced to languish in corruption and authoritarianism as a Russian satellite.

It is time for the President of the United States—the Commander in Chief, President Obama—to remind the world where America stands in the ongoing battle between democracy and dictatorship. It is time for him to rethink the so-called reset policy that has done nothing but embolden Vladimir Putin and discourage Russian human rights activists. It is time for the President to make absolutely clear that Russian meddling in the sovereign affairs of Ukraine is absolutely unacceptable.

As for Putin himself, it is time people everywhere see him for what he really is: a brutal thug who epitomizes corruption, repression, and dictatorship.

Turning to another important issue, which is what is happening in Iran, just a few months ago, after years of mounting sanctions and economic pressures, it appeared the West had finally gotten the Iranian dictatorship's attention and it was literally on the ropes. But then, for some reason, we chose to let them off the hook and to throw them a lifeline and to give up some of the very best leverage we had obtained over the course of years for minor concessions and hollow promises.

While the Obama administration is still trumpeting the November 2013 Iranian nuclear agreement as a diplomatic watershed, I remain deeply skeptical and concerned that we threw an economic lifeline to the world's leading state sponsor of international terrorism, even though the ayatollahs have shown no real willingness to abandon their decades-long quest for a nuclear weapon. Of course, were Iran to achieve a nuclear weapon, there would be a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, dramatically destabilizing that already very volatile region of the world.

So given that reality, along with Iran's well-documented record of duplicity, I have joined with 58 other of my Senate colleagues—Republicans and Democrats alike—in sponsoring new sanctions legislation. We have been ably led by the Senator from Illinois Mr. KIRK and other leaders. It is something called the Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act that would take effect if and only if Tehran violated the Geneva agreement.

In other words, this is a backstop to the negotiations that Secretary Kerry has had and that the President has pointed to, but amazingly the Obama administration has taken the very bizarre position that the Democrats who are supporting this legislation—this backstop legislation that would do nothing to undermine the negotiations between the Secretary of State and other nations in the region—the President is now urging Democrats to stop supporting this important piece of backstop legislation, even though a commanding majority of the Senate has indicated their support for it.

In fact, the President has gone so far as to promise a veto of this legislation if it reaches his desk. Of course, it is not true, as the President argues, that this legislation would effectively sabotage the Geneva deal. In truth and in fact, what it would do is provide, as I said, a backstop but reinforce what the President and Secretary Kerry are so proud of in terms of what they have already negotiated. If Iran follows through, then this sanctions legislation would be of little force and effect.

I am not sure I understand the administration's concern. After all, if the administration thinks Iran will follow through on its Geneva commitments—something I am personally skeptical of—but if the President thinks they will follow through, then there is nothing to worry about. But if the administration believes that Iran will fail to honor those commitments, then it never should have made the deal in the first place and it should have welcomed this amendment, this piece of legislation, this backstop sanctions legislation that would buttress what they have negotiated.

I believe today what I have believed for many years—that our only hope for a peaceful resolution of the Iranian nuclear crisis is to combine tough sanctions with the credible threat of military action. That is the only thing that will bring the ayatollahs to the table, and that is why we need to vote on new sanctions as soon as possible, preferably this week, to demonstrate that there will be serious consequences if Iran fails to uphold the Geneva deal or if it tries to delay indefinitely a final agreement.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAHAM. 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. GRAHAM. Madam President, I would like to be recognized for 10 minutes, if I could.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, thank you. If the Presiding Officer would let me know when the 10 minutes expire, I would appreciate it.

I wish to rise in support of Senator BURR's alternative to Senator SANDERS' veterans bill. We are having a contest here about how best to help veterans. There is a lot of bipartisan agreement over the substance of the bill. The real difference is how to pay for it, but there is one key difference. In Senator BURR's alternative, we have the Iranian sanctions bill. I believe it is imperative for this body, the Senate, to speak on sanctions against Iran before it is too late. I hate the fact that we have lost our bipartisan approach to this topic.

We have been together for a very long time as Republicans and Democrats. We have had 16 rounds of sanctions since 1987, 9 U.N. Security Council resolutions since 2006 demanding the full and sustained suspension of all uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and full cooperation with the IAEA.

The United Nations, the Congress, in an overwhelming bipartisan fashion, have been imposing sanctions in speaking to the threat we all face from the Iranian nuclear program. Unfortunately, the bipartisanship has come apart in terms of whether we should have another vote. The bipartisan bill that would reauthorize sanctions at the end of the 6-month negotiating period has 59 cosponsors, 17 Democrats.

We believe desperately—at least I do—that the sanctions that have been so effective in bringing the Iranians to the table are literally falling apart, and I will have some evidence to show that.

But here is what Senator REID, the majority leader, said on November 21, 2013:

I am a strong supporter of our Iran sanctions regime and believe that the current

sanctions have brought Iran to the negotiating table.

I believe we must do everything possible to stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons capability, which would threaten Israel and the national security of our great country.

The Obama administration is in the midst of negotiations with the Iranians that are designed to end their nuclear weapons program. We all strongly support these negotiations and hope they will succeed, and we want them to produce the strongest possible agreement.

However, we are also aware of the possibility the Iranians could keep negotiations from succeeding. I hope that won't happen, but the Senate must be prepared to move forward with a new bipartisan Iran sanctions bill when the Senate returns after the Thanksgiving recess. I am committed to do just that.

I will support a bill that would broaden the scope of our current petroleum sanctions, place limitations on trade with strategic sectors of the Iranian economy that support its nuclear ambitions, as well as pursue those that divert goods to Iran.

While I support the administration's diplomatic efforts, I believe we need to leave our legislative options open to act on a new bipartisan sanctions bill in December, shortly after we return.

The challenge of the majority leader was to find a bipartisan bill that could speak anew to sanctions. We are able to do that. Senator MENENDEZ has been absolutely terrific, along with Senator KIRK, in making sure that sanctions have worked. The Obama administration deserves a lot of credit for keeping the sanctions regime together and getting Iranians to the table.

But the interim agreement that has been entered into between the P5+1 and the Iranians quite frankly is well short of what we need. My goal, and I think the body's goal—at least I hope—would be to dismantle the plutonium-producing reactor that the Iranians are building; not just stop its construction, but dismantle it; take the highly enriched uranium that exists in Iran today and move it out of the country so it cannot be used for a dirty bomb or any other purposes.

This is what the U.N. resolutions have called for, removing the highly enriched uranium that exists in great number from Iran to the international community so it can be controlled; and, last but most importantly is to dismantle their enrichment capability. If the Iranians truly want a peaceful nuclear power program, I am all for that. I do not care if the Russians are jointly with us, that we build a nuclear powerplant in Iran to help them with commercial nuclear power. We just need to control the fuel cycle. There are 15 countries that have nuclear power programs that do not enrich uranium, Mexico and Canada being two, South Korea being another.

The point I am trying to make here is if you leave enrichment capability intact in Iran, the only thing preventing their abuse of that capability would be a bunch of U.N. inspectors. We tried this with North Korea. We provided foreign aid and economic aid and food assistance to control their nuclear ambitions. Well, they took the money and now they have nuclear weapons. The U.N. failed to stop the desire of the North Koreans to develop a nuclear weapon.

That type of approach is not going to work in Iran. Israel is not going to allow their fate to be determined by a bunch of U.N. inspectors. If that is the only thing between the Iranian ayatollahs and nuclear weapons is a bunch of U.N. inspectors, Israel will not stand for that, nor should we.

So when the Iranians demand the right to enrich, that tells you all you need to know about their ambitions. If they want a peaceful nuclear power program, they certainly can have it. We need to control the fuel cycle.

The interim deal has not dismantled any centrifuges. They have unplugged a few, but all of them exist, the 16,000 to 18,000 of them. Here is what the Iranian Government has been openly saying about the interim deal:

The iceberg of sanctions is melting while our centrifuges are also still working. This is our greatest achievement.

This is the head of the Iranian nuclear agency. The Foreign Minister said:

The White House tries to portray it is basically a dismantling of Iran's nuclear program. We are not dismantling any centrifuges, we're not dismantling any equipment, we're simply not producing, not enriching over 5 percent.

Pretty clear. This is the President of Iran, Mr. Rouhani, on CNN.

So there will be no destruction of centrifuges—of existing centrifuges?

No. No, not at all.

Another statement, another tweet:

Our relationship with the world is based on Iran's nation's interest. In Geneva agreement, world powers surrendered to Iran's national will.

You could say this is all bluster for domestic consumption. But just keep listening to what I have to tell you. The Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister said of the interconnections between networks of centrifuges that have been used to enrich uranium to 20 percent, so that they can enrich only to 5 percent: ''These interconnections can be removed in a day and connected again in a day.''

So you are not dismantling anything. You are unplugging it. They can plug it right back in. Here is what has happened, the President of Iran again:

We have struck the first blow to the illegal sanctions, in the fields of insurance, shipping, the banking system, foodstuffs and medicine and exports of petrochemical materials.

You are witness to how foreign firms are visiting our country; 117 political delegations have come here: France, Turkey, Georgia, Ireland, Tunisia, Kazakhstan, China, Italy, India, Austria, and Sweden.

The French Chamber of Commerce hosted a delegation to Iran after the interim deal. The International Monetary Fund says the Iranian economy could turn around due to the interim agreement. Prospects for 2014 and 2015 have improved with the agreement. They are getting a stronger economy. The interim deal has done nothing, in my view, to dismantle their nuclear program that is a threat to us and Israel.

India's oil imports from Iran more than doubled in January from a month earlier. China has emerged as Iran's top trading partner, with nonoil trade hitting $13 billion over the past 10 months. U.S. aerospace companies are talking about selling them parts. Thirteen major international companies have said in recent weeks they aim to reenter the Iranian marketplace over the next several months.

The value of their currency has appreciated about 25 percent. Inflation has been reduced substantially. In other words, the interim deal is beginning to revive the Iranian economy that was crippled by sanctions. The international community is lining up to do business in Iran. The sanctions against Iran are crumbling before our eyes, and the Iranians are openly bragging about this.

The only way to turn this around is to pass another piece of legislation that says, we will give the 6-month period of negotiations time to develop, but at the end of the 6 months, if we have not achieved a satisfactory result of dismantling their nuclear program, the sanctions will continue at a greater pace.

Without that threat, without that friction, we are going to get a very bad outcome here. The administration says that new sanctions will scuttle the deal and lead to war. I could not disagree more. The lack of threat of sanctions, the dismantling of sanctions, the crumbling of sanctions is going to lead to conflict. I do believe that if this body reinforced that we were serious about sanctions until the program gets to where the world thinks it should be, then we would be reinforcing our negotiating position.

So to my Democratic colleagues and Democratic leadership, I am urging you, please, to let this bipartisan bill go forward, if not in the Burr alternative, bring it up as a separate piece of legislation. Let's act now while we still can. I am hopeful we can avoid a conflict with the Iranians. But the only way to do that—I ask unanimous consent for 5 more minutes.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. The only way to do that is to make the Iranians understand that they are never going to have prosperity and peace until they comply with the will of the international community, which is give them a peaceful nuclear power program, not a weapons capability. Rather than us bending to their will, they need to bend to ours, simply because a disaster is in the making if Iran comes out of this negotiation with their nuclear capability intact.

If you allow the Iranians to enrich uranium, that is the final deal, where they still have an enrichment capability, theoretically controlled by the

U.N., every Sunni Arab state will want an enrichment program of their own, and you have destroyed nonproliferation in the Mideast.

I say again, if this final agreement allows enrichment at any level by the Iranians, Sunni Arab states are going to go down the same road. Then we are marching toward Armageddon, I fear. The last thing in the world we want to do is allow the Iranians to enrich, telling our allies they cannot. That will lead to proliferation of enrichment throughout the Mideast, and you are one step away from a weapon.

If you had to make a list of countries based on the behavior that you should not trust with enriching uranium, Iran would be at the top. For the last 30 years they have sown destruction throughout the world, a state sponsor of terrorism. They have killed our troops in Iraq; they are supplying weapons to the enemies of Israel; they have been up to just generally no good. Why in the world we would give them this capability I cannot envision.

So the sanctions are crumbling. We see it before our eyes. The threat of military force against the regime I think has been diminished after the debacle in Syria. Do you really think the Iranians believe after the Syrian debacle that we mean it when we say we would use military force as a last resort? I do not want a military engagement against the Iranians. I just want their nuclear ambitions to end and give them a nuclear powerplant that is controlled to produce power and not make a bomb.

The Israelis will not live under the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran. They will not allow this program to stay intact, unlike North Korea, where the South Koreans and the Japanese did not feel they needed a nuclear program to counter the North Koreans.

The Mideast is different. The Sunni Arabs will not be comfortable with an enrichment capability given to the Iranians. Israel will never accept this, because it is a threat to the Jewish state unlike any other. So I will urge the body, before it is too late, to take the earliest opportunity to pass the bipartisan legislation that would reimpose sanctions if the agreement does not reach a satisfactory conclusion in the next 6 months.

We have 59 cosponsors. If we had a vote, I am confident we could get an overwhelming vote. It would be the right thing to send to the Iranians. It would tell the Western World: Slow down. The idea of giving this 6 months to continue at the pace it is going, it would be impossible to reconstruct sanctions if we do not do it now. Six months from now, if the deal falls apart, President Obama says he would impose sanctions in 24 hours. By then, the regime will have been broken. Western Europe will have been basically out of the game; they have a different view of this than we do. So the idea you can wait for 6 months and the damage not be done, I think is unrealistic. You can see where the world is headed. Sanctions as a viable control device seems to be in everybody's rearview mirror unless the Congress acts, and acts decisively.

What I hope we can do, in a bipartisan fashion, is let our allies and the Iranians know that sanctions are going to be in place as long as the nuclear threat continues to exist. I hope the President will reinforce to the Iranians: Whatever problem I had in Syria, I do not have with you.

I hope the Congress could send a message to the Iranians that we do not want a conflict, but we see your nuclear ambitions as a threat to our way of life. While we may be confused about what to do in Syria, we are not confused about the Iranian nuclear program. We want a peaceful resolution. Sanctions have to be in place until we get the right answer. But if everything else fails, then we are ready to do what is necessary as a nation as a last resort to use military force. I say that understanding the consequences of military force. It would not be a pleasant task. But in a war between us and Iran, we win, they lose. They have a small navy, a small air force. I do not want war with anyone. But if my options are to use military force to stop the Iranians from getting a nuclear weapon, I am picking use of military force. Because if they get a nuclear weapon, then the whole Mideast goes down the wrong road. You would open Pandora's box to attack the Iranians. They could do some damage to us, but it would not last long. They lose, we win. If they get a nuclear capability, you have created a nuclear arms race in the Mideast and you will empty Pandora's box and put Israel in an impossible spot.

So, my colleagues, we have a chance here to turn history around before it is too late. But the way we are moving regarding this negotiation with Iran and the outcome, I have never been more worried about. I do not want to allow the last best chance to stop the Iranian nuclear program to be lost through inaction.

If we misread where Iran is actually going, it will be a mistake for the ages.

I am urging the majority leader, if not on this bill, as soon as possible, to allow the bipartisan Iranian sanction legislation to come to the floor for debate and a vote. I think it can change history before it is too late.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOZMAN. 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. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I stand here as someone who is very interested in our Nation's veterans. We owe the men and women who stood in defense of our Nation the care and services they deserve for the sacrifices they have made for our country.

My dad served in the Air Force for over 20 years, and his service and sacrifice is in no small part why I am a Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, and previously the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. I requested to be a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committees in both Chambers because we made a commitment to take care of those who put their lives on the line for our safety and ideals, and I believe in carrying out the promise.

During my days as a Member of the House of Representatives, my mom would routinely ask me when I would see her: What have you done for our veterans lately? I was happy to talk about the programs and services we promoted, supported, and passed—and certainly in a very bipartisan way. There is a long list of accomplishments of which we can be very proud, from modernizing the GI bill so our veterans can get the education they need to succeed in life after the military, to helping our veterans pursue their dreams of owning a business, to improving the medical services our veterans need for the wounds they have suffered while serving our country.

Unfortunately, problems exist. In my Arkansas office—and I think this is true of most congressional offices—we have a number of dedicated staffers. In fact, we have three dedicated staffers who handle veterans-related issues. They help cut through the redtape of the Department of Veterans Affairs to get the care and attention our veterans have earned. Last year, more than 40 percent of the assistance we provided to Arkansans that involved Federal agencies focused on veterans' issues.

Increasing funding doesn't necessarily mean we will have better outcomes. Take for instance the claims backlog. This is a huge problem impacting hundreds of thousands of veterans nationwide. Even some of the simplest claims are stuck in the process. Since 2009, the number of claims pending for over 1 year has grown, despite a 40 percent increase in the VA's budget. The most recent statistics for the Little Rock VA Regional Office showed 7,663 total claims are pending. Nearly 54 percent have been in the process for more than 125 days. The regional office averages nearly 217 days to complete a claim.

Thanks to the hard work and commitment of Arkansans who work at the VA, we are making progress on the backlog at the Little Rock office, but there is still work to be done for our veterans. Take, for instance, the retired lieutenant colonel in Arkansas who is eligible for benefits he earned for his service in the military. He is not receiving the correct pay. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service approved his paperwork in August and sent it to the VA. It has been 6 months and still no decision has been made. This is an easy case, and it simply shouldn't take that long.

Retired CSM Richard Green lives in Sherwood and has already received his

retirement benefits, but he filed for benefits for his wife the month after they married in October 2012. It took 16 months to process that paperwork—much longer than he was used to during active military service when this sort of paperwork was fixed within one or two paychecks. Every part of the claims process is overwhelmed and bogged down.

Paul Cupp from Fort Smith, AR, has been working on his VA appeal since 2009. He was happy to get part of it approved in 2013, after 4 years of waiting. However, months later, he is still waiting for his rating to get updated and to see the actual benefits from that decision.

And the widows of our veterans are not exempt from this backlog. One Arkansan in her seventies has been working on her claim since 2005, and is still awaiting a decision on appeal. Nine years is certainly unacceptable.

Instead of fixing the existing challenges our veterans are facing through fully implementing what we have committed ourselves to, increasing accountability and improving efficiency, some of my colleagues think the best way to tackle this is by expanding programs and increasing the responsibility of the VA. The problem is we are putting more people in a system which is clearly overwhelmed and needs improvement.

This isn't the fault of the VA, which I believe is fully committed to meeting all the demands our veterans and Congress expect from them. However, the VA can only do so much. As the number of veterans and the complicated nature of their needs increases, we must not pile on additional responsibilities which overwhelm the agency. With the announcement by Senator Hagel of a potentially significant drawdown in the military, many more individuals will come into the VA system.

While the bill before us has worthwhile programs which I support and have championed, we should not expect a massive mandate imposed on VA to change the outcomes we experience. We need a measured approach to changes. They must be done over time and include oversight to make sure our veterans are receiving the attention they deserve in a timely manner.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, it is great to see my colleague from Arkansas. We know Senator BOOZMAN tries hard to help our veterans. I thank him for his public service and for focusing on our men and women, whether they are in uniform now or who have served this country.

In the last few weeks I have talked quite a bit about veterans. We have had the veterans retirement cost-of-living fix and a few others which have brought me to the floor to talk about this very important group of people.

In my State of Arkansas we have nearly 255,000 veterans. They have put on the uniform and served their country. They have put their lives on hold for our country. They deserve to return home to a country which is going to honor the commitments we have made to them and a country which will keep the promises we have made, which is why I have been very supportive of these individuals, especially in the context of the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014, S. 1982.

Many Senators are working to make this bill better and get it into a posture where it can pass the Senate. This is a commonsense bill which covers a broad range of topics which are important to our veterans, and a lot of work is going on here behind the scenes. Sometimes when the American people visit the Senate or tune in to C–SPAN 2, they sometimes see an empty Chamber. They aren't always aware of what is going on in the back rooms, here and in the hallways, with folks trying to work through a number of important issues, which is happening with this bill.

I have an important provision in this bill which I have been working on for a while. I think it is going to have broad support on both sides of the aisle, as well as a number of military organizations around the country, called the Honor America's Guard and Reserve Retirees Act. It is kind of a long name, but it is a very simple premise.

Under current law, the military definition of a veteran applies only to servicemembers who have served on Federal active duty under title X orders. This means that many of our servicemembers—most specifically our National Guard members—who have not been deployed under proper orders are falling short of this established criteria.

To put this in perspective: I recently received a letter from an Arkansas veteran named Vincent. He served for more than 20 years in the National Guard. He has protected our families from natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina. He served our country by protecting our borders in Operation Jump Start. He served our Nation in Operation Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, and in Iraqi Freedom. Yet he still doesn't meet the military definition of a veteran of the armed services.

Vincent isn't the only one. There are 300,000 National Guard and Reserve servicemembers across the country who fall into this same category. My bill, the Honor America's Guard and Reserve Retirees Act, would fix this. It would amend the military definition of veteran to give Guard and Reserve retirees with 20 years of service the honor of being called a veteran. And it is an honor. It would allow these servicemembers to salute when the Star-Spangled Banner is played, to march in veterans' parades, and be recognized as veterans by other veterans.

I know Members of this Chamber will ask, as they should: This is a cost-neutral bill. There is no cost with this. It is simple, it is cost neutral, and it is an overdue recognition of these individual servicemembers who served bravely for our country.

It is time we pass this bill so Vincent and hundreds and thousands of others can receive the honor they deserve.

Madam President, I yield the floor and 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. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning when I came to the Senate floor, I talked about how it is groundhog year, not ''Groundhog Day.'' What is going on here today is an example of what has been going on with the Republican-driven direction of this Congress for several years.

What are we doing here today? Nothing. Under the rules of the Senate, cloture was invoked 99 to 0. The purpose of that vote was to get on a bill. It is a shame we had to even file cloture on it, but we did, and that takes a couple of days. Everyone should understand that after cloture is invoked, there is 30 hours. It is a waste of time.

Why are they doing that? Why are they causing this? Because they don't want to legislate. They want to do anything they can to stop President Obama from accomplishing anything.

BERNIE SANDERS, chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, has dedicated his heart and soul to something he, his committee, and the veterans community believes in—improving the lives of veterans. We have millions of people who have come home, and are coming home, from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They deserve a lot.

The legislation that is on this floor is terrific. It is supported by 26 different veterans organizations, including the largest, the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Here is what the commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars said earlier today:

> American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger said Wednesday—

That is today—

> that sanctions against Iran have no place in a U.S. Senate debate over legislation that aims to expand health care, education opportunities, employment and other benefits for veterans.

I ask unanimous consent that his complete statement be printed in the RECORD.

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

COMMANDER: KEEP SENATE BILL FOCUSED ON VETS

American Legion leader says no other issues need to be attached to legislation to improve health care, education, employment and benefits for those who served our nation.

WASHINGTON (Feb. 26, 2014).—American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger said Wednesday that sanctions against Iran have no place in a U.S. Senate debate over legislation that aims to expand health care, education opportunities, employment and other benefits for veterans.

''Iran is a serious issue that Congress needs to address, but it cannot be tied to S. 1982, which is extremely important as our nation prepares to welcome millions of U.S. military servicemen and women home from war. This comprehensive bill aims to help veterans find good jobs, get the health care they need and make in-state tuition rates applicable to all who are using their GI Bill benefits. This legislation is about supporting veterans, pure and simple. The Senate can debate various aspects of it, and that's understandable, but it cannot lose focus on the matter at hand: helping military personnel make the transition to veteran life and ensuring that those who served their nation in uniform receive the benefits they earned and deserve. We can deal with Iran—or any other issue unrelated specifically to veterans—with separate legislation.''

A 99–0 vote in the Senate Tuesday cleared the way for a full debate on S. 1982, introduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I–Vt., chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The bill seeks to improve medical and dental care offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, open 27 new VA clinics where access to care is now difficult, renew the Vow to Hire Heroes Act that has helped some 70,000 veterans find jobs and receive employment training, improve care for those who experienced military sexual trauma and protect cost-of-living adjustments for future military retirees.

Dellinger is the leader of the nation's largest veterans service organization, the 2.4-million-member American Legion.

Mr. REID. It goes into detail as to how wrongheaded this is, that the Republicans are trying to divert attention from an issue that is so very important to the American people, and why their continued obstruction has been so detrimental to our country.

KOCH ADVERTIZING

Mr. President, I can't say that every one of the Koch brothers' ads is a lie, but I will say this: The vast majority of them are. Now, enough editorial comment. I am going to read verbatim a column that appeared in today's The Hill magazine—newspaper, I should call it—here on the Hill. It is entitled ''Koch brothers' ads shameful.'' Let me read this:

Having a right is not the same thing as being in the right.

In some instances, we have the right to behave immorally. For example, the First Amendment gives some people, in some circumstances, the right to lie.

Let's set aside for a moment whether the billionaire Koch brothers have the right to run a flurry of dishonest ads about ObamaCare and ask instead whether spending millions of dollars to mislead and even lie to the American people is the right thing to do.

There is no legitimate debate about the integrity of the ads. In Louisiana, the Kochs' political front group placed an ad that, to all appearances, features a group of Louisianans opening letters from insurance companies informing them about the problems they face as a result of the Affordable Care Act.

Except that, as ABC News has documented, the individuals in their ad are not Louisianans. They are paid actors who are not reading actual letters sent by any real insurance company.

In other words, nothing about the ad is true.

The response from the brothers' organization: ''The viewing public is savvy enough to distinguish between someone giving a personal story and something that is emblematic.''

A little editorial comment before I continue with this op-ed piece: How about that for a response? That is code word for ''we have a lot of money, and we will run ads about anything we want to run ads about.''

I continue the column:

Were this an ad for Stainmaster carpet, a Koch product, Federal Trade Commission guidelines would require the ad to ''conspicuously disclose that the persons in such advertisements are not actual consumers.''

That is from the FTC.

Moreover, the FTC would require them to either demonstrate that these results of ObamaCare are typical or make clear in the ad that they are not.

Needless to say, the ad meets none of these requirements, thereby conforming to the legal definition of false advertising.

Not all Koch ads feature actors. Even those with real people, though, are not necessarily factual. Witness the attack on Rep. Gary Peters (D-Mich.)—

Who, by the way, is running for the Senate—

in a Koch-funded ad featuring a Michigan leukemia patient.

Everyone sympathizes with her struggle, as well they should. But neither her bravery nor her suffering makes the words she utters true. They aren't.

In the ad, the patient claims, with ObamaCare ''the out-of-pocket costs are so high, it is unaffordable.'' The Detroit News reports the ''ad makes no mention that [the patient] successfully enrolled in a new Blue Cross plan where she's been able to retain her University of Michigan oncologist and continues to receive the life-saving oral chemotherapy. . . . The ad also does not mention that [her] health care premiums were cut in half.''

The Washington Post's Glenn Kessler did the math. She saved $6,348 a year on premiums. And because ObamaCare caps out-of-pocket costs for plans at $6,350, she will be paying, at most, $2 more this year for her care.

It's hard to call that an unaffordable increase.

If it were just these two egregious examples, someone might suggest I'm picking on the Koch brothers. Now, I do not always agree with the fact checkers, who are sometimes wrong. But it is striking that PolitiFact reviewed 11 ads placed by the brothers' organization, and not a single one was rated ''true'' or even ''mostly true.'' Nine were rated ''false'' or worse.

So, I return to my original question. Whatever their constitutional rights, are the Koch brothers right to degrade the Democratic process with lies? Are they right to use tactics that are, by legal definitions, deceptive and dishonest? Are voters choosing a candidate due any less respect and honesty than consumers buying carpet?

We in the consulting profession—

This column is written by a nationally known pollster by the name of Mark Mellman—

We in the consulting profession need to ask ourselves hard questions about where the line is that we won't cross. When does the pursuit of victory at any cost exact too high a price? When does dishonesty distort democracy?

Politicians, political parties or media that fail to condemn these tactics, as well as broadcasters that air these ads, and the consultants who make them, are all complicit in the Kochs' immorality.

Mr. President, this is the truth. This is the truth. What is going on with these two brothers who made billions of dollars last year and attempted to buy our democracy is dishonest, deceptive, false, and unfair. Just because you have huge amounts of money, you should not be able to run these false, misleading ads by the hundreds of millions of dollars.

They hide behind all kinds of entities. It is not just their front organization, Americans For Prosperity. They give money to all kinds of organizations—lots of money. When you make billions of dollars a year, you can be, I guess, as immoral and dishonest as your money will allow. It is too bad they are trying to buy America, and it is time the American people spoke out against this terrible dishonesty and about these two brothers who are about as un-American as anyone I can imagine.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, does the Senator yield the floor?

Mr. REID. I sure do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise briefly this afternoon to join my colleagues in expressing deep disappointment with yet another decision by the Obama administration to undermine the health care options of millions of Americans.

As we all know, the President promised, ''If you like your health care plan, you can keep it.'' But his law's drastic cuts to Medicare and Medicare Advantage are creating an impossible environment for Americans to keep their insurance plans or to keep their doctors. Even more troubling is that funds raided from Medicare will be spent on the President's flawed health care law.

In particular, Medicare Advantage serves more than 15 million American senior citizens, including some 56,000 Mississippians. It is a program that incentivizes market-based competition and patient choice. These are two elements that have made it both popular and successful. Nearly one-third of all Medicare patients voluntarily enroll in this type of health care plan, and 95 percent of Medicare Advantage members rate their quality of care as ''very high.''

Independent reports show that seniors will see their plans canceled. They will see higher premiums and fewer choices because of these severe cuts to Medicare and Medicare Advantage. I have heard from health care professionals in Mississippi who are concerned about the law's negative impact on patient care.

I came to the floor earlier this week to speak about the profound human

cost of the President's health care law. It is past time for the President and his allies in Congress to recognize the devastating consequences of ObamaCare. Delaying and changing the law, which the administration has done some two dozen times—with questionable legal authority, I might add—will not fix the damage. This is a law that just doesn't work.

The solution is to repeal and replace ObamaCare with market-driven reforms that empower Americans to decide which health care options are best for them. We can do better than this law, and we owe it to the American people to do so.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COBURN. 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. COBURN. Mr. President, I come to the floor again to talk about—it is my understanding we are not going to be allowed to offer any amendments again on a significant bill that spends billions, tens of billions of dollars—to talk about a couple of amendments I have.

My staff recently talked with some veterans from Oklahoma, and I want to give you an anecdote that just happened. This is about VA care. This is a lady, a 100-percent disabled veteran, who has had knee replacements at a VA hospital. She did not have one knee replacement, she had two knee replacements. And then she had two knee replacements on the other knee.

If you look at the statistics of a knee replacement having to be replaced, it is a very rare occurrence. But the fact that you would have two knee replacements, and both of them would have to be replaced is unheard of.

The story does not end there. The story ends with the fact that during her second knee replacement, they broke her femur. So they had to put a rod into her femur. When they put the implant in, she ended up with one leg an inch longer than the other leg.

The fact is that this all occurred at a VA hospital. And it is unheard of that somebody who has a knee replacement on one side would have to have another one done because of complications, and then have the other knee done, and have to have that knee redone because of a complication. But then on top of it, as to the skill of the surgeon in terms of doing a second replacement and having a rod, and then putting the wrong rod in, it creates a leg length discrepancy that can only be corrected now by her spending a significant amount of money on an orthotic shoe on the shorter leg which, if you know anything about medicine, changes the alignment of the spine, which causes tremendous arthritis in the spine of that patient.

So here is a patient that if you look across the world in the private sector 99.9 percent of the time would not have had to have either of them replaced, would not have had to have a rod put in her femur, and would not have a leg-length discrepancy.

I agree that is an anecdote. But those are the kinds of things that we are not holding the VA to account for.

One of the amendments I was going to offer to this bill was a very straightforward amendment requiring every 6 months that the VA publish, in both their hospitals—outpatient—and nursing homes the quality of their care, the mortality rates, the complication rates, the infection rates, the wait times in their emergency rooms, the wait times for a screening examination, the wait times for an endoscopy, the complications associated with those, so veterans could actually see and compare it to the private sector—every other hospital knows all this stuff and publishes it—so they can see and compare the quality of care. Because we have an honor-bound commitment to offer care to those who have offered to sacrifice their life and their future for our freedom.

But we are not going to be able to offer the first step in terms of accountability to the VA health system because we get to offer no amendments.

What if you knew—and this does not apply and I do not mean to denigrate the whole VA system because there are some great VA hospitals, but in your area, where you have to go, if you knew the quality was 20 or 25 percent less than what you could get in your own hometown, would you still go to a VA hospital? Should veterans not know whether they are getting a standard of care that equates to what they could get in the private sector? They are not going to know because that is nowhere in terms of the accountability of the VA system I talked about yesterday.

One of the other amendments I was going to offer would be to strike section 301. The chairman of the committee yesterday referenced section 302. He was actually talking about section 308 of his bill, not section 302 of his bill. But when you expand VA health care to Priority Group 8—these are people who do not meet the income, have no service-connected disability, and have no limited resources—to put them into the VA health care system, when we are not adequately treating the veterans who are eligible for service today in the VA health care system, what you are really doing is taking away our commitment to care for those to whom we have already promised care. So it is somewhat cynical that we would expand from 6 million to a potential of 22 million people in a system that is behind the curve already.

The other thing that is important for that is the care for these veterans with nonservice-connected disabilities was excluded from the VA's priority group so the VA could focus—focus—its limited resources on our veterans with service-connected disabilities. In other words, they have a health complication because they served our country.

As former Secretary Anthony Principi said: Remember, when everyone is a priority, no one is. That is exactly what this bill will do. It will take the priority away from our veterans with service-connected disabilities to where they will fall further through the cracks.

The other thing in this section is—the only thing worse than them being in the Affordable Care Act, which is what this is really specifically designed to do, is to take them out of the exchanges and put them into the VA. So what we are saying under this bill is, if you are a high-income, nondisabled veteran, and the only health care coverage you have available to you is an ObamaCare exchange, then you now qualify for VA services.

What is that about? What that is about is moving to a single-payer, government-run, totally government-run health care system. And this is about moving 16 million veterans—or the potential of up to 16 million veterans—to that position. So the only thing worse than being covered by the VA, where veterans are waiting for weeks to see a doctor and literally dying because of medical deficiencies, is being in an Affordable Care Act exchange.

This amendment would strike the expansion from the legislation, which would ensure that the VA remains focused on the service-connected disabled and increasing the quality of care for more than 6 million veterans currently in the VA system.

I want to talk a minute about why we did that. We created the VA health care system for those who have a complication of their service—a complication of their service.

Do we have a commitment, one, to ensure that those who have a complication from their service get the care we have promised them?

I believe we do. Section 301 would markedly minimize that commitment to those who have a complication from their service. So how is it that we have come about, that we have this great big VA bill on the floor, without any oversight, aggressive oversight, on holding the VA accountable to do what it is supposed to be doing now—with a 59-percent increase in budget since October 1 of 2009, and expand it and blow it to an area where we are going to offer these same services, where we are not meeting quality outcomes, we are not meeting timeliness outcomes, we are not meeting care outcomes, and we are going to put that on the VA system?

I would say the better way to honor our veterans who have a complication associated with their service is to hold the VA accountable through transparency of their quality.

Here is the other thing that has not been studied, and we do not know the answer to this. I certainly do not know

it. I cannot find it anywhere. It is this. What does it cost to do an ''X'' procedure in a VA hospital, totally absorbed, versus doing it in a nonVA hospital? Let's assume quality is the same. Would the American taxpayer be better off if, in fact, we delivered that service at a cost that is much less?

But nobody has asked for those numbers. The VA cannot give those numbers. The VA does not know those numbers. So we are driving blind. We do not know what it costs to do a total knee in a VA hospital. We do know what it costs in Oklahoma City from every hospital. As a matter of fact, there is a wonderful hospital in Oklahoma City that advertises every price, all their complications, everything else out there. They have people from all across the country coming because they are so much cheaper and so much better than what people in the private market can get done where they live.

Let's see how VA cost and quality and outcomes compare to that. If you really want to drive quality for our veterans, we have to have accountability in terms of how we spend money, accountability in terms of the outcomes, accountability in terms of the quality, and accountability in terms of the service.

The other amendment that I have would allow service-connected veterans who are driving hundreds of miles—in my State—to get care with a pilot program which would allow them to go anywhere they wanted, to their home town, to the next town over if it is bigger and has higher quality, rather than drive 200 miles to get their care at a VA hospital. We would cover it under Medicare rates, since we do not know the cost ramifications of what we do at VA clinics and VA hospitals, in terms of the total absorbed cost, but we do know what the price would be if we had Medicare paying. My learned opinion is that, No. 1, veterans would have access to care closer to home, probably improved quality, and most probably a decreased cost for the Federal Government, i.e., the American taxpayers in terms of meeting this honor-bound commitment to our veterans.

If, in fact, you served this country, and one of the benefits of serving this country—and you have a service-connected disability associated with that—is a promise of quality health care, why do we say you can only get it in a VA clinic or a VA hospital? If you served our country, why can't you get it wherever you want? I mean, you served our country to preserve our freedom of choice, our freedom to do and select what is best for us and our interests. Why can't a veteran have that privilege that he or she fought for and put their rear ends on the line for? Why do we not avail them of the freedom that they sacrificed for?

Nobody will answer that question. Nobody will come down and answer that question. Those are knowable answers. They are moral questions. If you sacrifice, should you not have the benefits of the freedom for which you sacrificed?

The other problem with this bill is it has a false pay-for, money that we might have spent on a war in Afghanistan. Because we are not going to spend it, we are going to spend it here and call that a pay-for. That is not a pay-for. It does not pass muster. It does not pass the budget point of order on it. Everybody knows that.

So what we ought to be doing, instead of having this bill on the floor, we ought to have a bill on the floor that holds the VA accountable, that creates transparency in the VA so that everybody in the country, including the veterans can see outcomes, quality, and cost. Finally, we ought to give the veterans the freedom that they fought for; that if they are deserving of this benefit, they ought to be able to get the benefit anywhere they choose, because they are the ones who preserved the rights and the abilities and the capabilities for us to experience the freedoms to make choices for ourselves.

I yield the floor and 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.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I come to the floor as the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee as we consider S. 1982, the Sanders bill. I have been down to the floor several times, and I will not take up a lot of the Senate's valuable time right now. But I do want to cover some things that have transpired since the last time I was on the floor today, when I read from an editorial that was written by Concerned Veterans of America. The group was challenged by some of my colleagues here as to whether it was a front group, whether this was a political front group.

Let me assure my colleagues, it represents real veterans. But in an effort to try to debunk the belief that this is just about one political group, I want to read some from another editorial written by Stewart Hickey of AMVETS. Now, nobody can question whether AMVETS is a legitimate veterans service organization. They have been around for a while. I will be selective in my reading:

> While we agree the bill addresses many critical issues and recommends important solutions for our veterans, we do not support this bill for several reasons. First, it would be morally irresponsible and fiscally unsound, given the historically volatile situation in Afghanistan, to hang the funding for such robust legislation on any potential ''peace dividend.'' Throwing more money—upwards of $30 billion, and taken from war funds no less—at a failing department will only make matters worse.
>
> This kitchen sink-like bill also endeavors to be all things to all veterans, and is very enticing to all of us ''Veterans Service Organizations'' as the panacea for all of our legislative agendas. The problem is, in its current configuration, it has little to no chance of passage, it's just too ''pie in the sky'' and lacks the power base to hold VA accountable for providing excellent care and services to veterans currently accessing the system.

It goes on to say:

> We all want what is best for the veterans community, and many of the provisions in S. 1982 are positive. However, ''bigger'' does not mean ''better.'' And the Sanders bill further expands a VA system that is already overwhelmed and cannot meet the current needs of veterans. Before overcommitting the Department of Veterans Affairs and subjecting our veterans to more broken promises, Congress should rally on legislation that keeps the promises already made.

Yet another veterans service organization says: Reform the Veterans Administration.

Dr. COBURN from Oklahoma, the Senator from Oklahoma, was talking about horror stories within the veteran's facilities. So I say to my colleagues: You know, the mistake here is that we are not on the floor debating the reform of the VA and then debating any expansion.

But the fact is that we look at editorial after editorial of people who have some contact with the VA. They are saying: The last thing you should do is expand service. The last thing you should do is use gimmicks to pay for it. The last thing you should do is saddle our kids with not only the debt for it but the responsibility to uphold a promise that might be impossible.

Let me speak a little further on some of the things Dr. COBURN hit on. This is about hospital delays, veterans dying at VA facilities. I came down earlier—and I might add right now that this is the stack of the Inspector General of the VA for 1 year, 1 year's worth of investigations on VA facilities where they made specific recommendations of changes that had to be made.

This dealt with the death of veterans. It dealt with Legionnaire's Disease. It dealt with things as simple as more than one patient using a disposable insulin pen—something meant for one patient that was used for multiple patients, exposing them to potential illnesses.

If the question is, do we keep the promise of the quality of care to our veterans? And if that is not important enough, let me go to the veterans that are in the system trying for the first time to get a disability rating because of a service-connected disability.

The number of claims pending in America right now is 673,000 veterans. These are individuals who have filed a claim with the Veterans' Administration, who are waiting in line for the determination to be made about what percentage of those claims they will approve. The number of claims that are considered backlogged right now is 389,000 veteran's claims.

Once a veteran receives a disability rating, if in fact they feel that the VA has come to the wrong conclusion as to the percentage, they file an appeal. The

number of appeals pending is 272,000 appeals. So one can conclude from this that the number of claims pending is 673,000 plus 272,000. So there are over 1 million veterans right now waiting for a determination by the VA specifically or by the Court of Appeals to sort out their disability status.

The number of days to complete a claim is 265 days. Let me say that again: 265 days to complete a claim. Right now, claims pending are 673,000. The number of days for an appeal that is pending is 600 days—600. So let's just say of that 1 million claims that are either pending or that have been appealed, which is 1 million veterans, the number of days to complete the claim on average took 265 days, and the number of days for an appeal, on average, was over 600. We are now at 800 days. That is almost 3 years.

I hope my colleagues are understanding what I am saying. We have a severely dysfunctional Veterans' Administration today. We have a population of warriors who are coming out of the battlefield in Afghanistan. They are coming back from deployments. They leave the service; they file for disability; they wait, they wait, they wait, they wait. When they finally get their disability claim and they are going to the VA, now all of a sudden we are talking about dumping millions of additional veterans into the line with them.

My good friend and chairman Senator SANDERS said: We can handle this because we have 27 clinics, outpatient facilities in this bill that, under a lease agreement, we are going to build out—27 facilities. They are for the veterans we have today. We don't have enough facilities to handle the current population, and he said this could handle the millions who are going to come in.

Let me remind my colleagues once again that currently we have $14 billion worth of veterans construction underway. We appropriate about $1 billion a year. That is a 14-year backlog on the construction of these facilities, and none of the 27 leases that are in this bill will be ready in December 2014 when the enactment of this legislation takes place.

There is one other area of massive expansion other than to veterans with nonservice-connected disabilities, and that is to a program called our caregivers program. I am pretty passionate about this because I wrote the legislation. My good friend Senator Akaka, who is no longer here, who was chairman of the Senate veterans' committee, became a champion of it. Earlier, I read Senator Akaka's statements on the Senate floor the day it was passed. He stated as clearly as anybody ever has why we limited this to a demonstration project, why we rolled it out to a small group. Our intention was that when the VA was fixed, reformed, and was capable of implementing a plan that expanded the caregiver program, we would do that but not a day sooner.

Now, all of a sudden, we are not just talking about extending the caregiver program to every current-era veteran; Senator SANDERS' bill extends it to every era. Veterans from every era who served who are still alive would be eligible for caregivers.

On occasion, he has pointed to the wounded warrior program. I will read a letter the Wounded Warrior Project sent to the committee when this legislation was being considered.

They said:

> More than 2 years after initial implementation, VA still has not answered—let alone remedied—the problems and concerns that WWP and other advocates raised regarding the Department's implementing regulations. For example, those regulations leave ''appeals rights'' unaddressed (including appeals from adverse determinations of law); set unduly strict criteria for determining a need for caregiving for veterans with severe behavioral health conditions; and invite arbitrary, inconsistent decisionmaking. Simply extending the scope of current law at this point to caregivers of other veterans would inadvertently signal to VA acquiescence in its flawed implementation of that law. We recommend that the Committee insist on VA's resolving these long-outstanding concerns as a pre-condition to extending the promise of this law to caregivers of pre 9/11 veterans.

If there is one thing I have made perfectly clear yesterday and today, it is that there is nothing in this bill that reforms the VA. Look at any area of the legislation. There is no reform. Yet editorials from service organizations, letters from the Wounded Warrior Project—and they were, make no mistake, behind caregivers. Their letter to the chairman said: Don't do this until it is fixed.

Well, we are where we are. To suggest that all veterans, all veterans organizations, all organizations that deal with veterans are for this is just inconsistent with the paper trail that exists, letters and editorials.

There are two things that don't go away: one, the need to reform and, two, the promise we made to our country's warriors.

We have to ask ourselves: Are we better off fixing the VA before we enlarge the population or after we enlarge the population? I can answer that. It is tough to do now, and it is not going to happen without congressional leadership. But if we expand the population, dump it on a system that is physically not capable of handling it, administratively not capable of handling it, what do we say to those veterans who need the VA health care system and can't get in to see a primary care doctor? What do we say to a person who needs mental health treatment but can't see a psychiatrist, can't get in to be evaluated, and doesn't get the medication they need?

I plead with my colleagues, don't make this mistake. There is an alternative bill. It is taken from the Sanders bill. It is 80 percent, but it doesn't have the massive expansion. It doesn't reform, but it really moves forward on some important issues.

No matter what we do, at some point we are going to have to show the leadership how to reform the VA. Why? Because we are going to keep our promise to veterans. The promise to veterans was that we would provide them a quality of care that was unprecedented.

I am not sure there is a Member of this body who believes we can dump this population onto the Veterans' Administration and that we can look any veteran in the face and say: We kept our promise to you. Yes, you may have access, but it may be months from now. You may have the ability to go to the VA, but we don't have any room; there is no room in the inn.

These are all part of keeping your promises.

I will go back to what the AMVETS editorial said, and I will end with that because I see my colleagues here.

Bigger is not necessarily better. When I gave these statistics on backlogs of claims and appeals, these are veterans who aren't asking for bigger, they are asking for better. They are asking us to sort out this system and make it work in a way they deserve. All we will do is exacerbate the problem if, in fact, we pass S. 1982.

I urge my colleagues, support the alternative—if we are given the opportunity to offer one. If not, then don't do this to our country's veterans. Wait and let us reform the VA. That is our responsibility. That is our promise.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, are we in morning business? What is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator should be aware we are on the motion to proceed to S. 1982.

Mr. WICKER. With the Senate's permission, I propose to speak, along with Senator MANCHIN, as in morning business on another matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

PUERTO RICO STATUS RESOLUTION ACT

Mr. WICKER. I rise today to speak about a recently introduced bill regarding the future of Puerto Rico's political status. Known as the Puerto Rico Status Resolution Act, this legislation would call for an up-or-down referendum on Puerto Rican statehood, excluding the option of Puerto Rico's current status of Commonwealth. The President and Congress would have to proceed with legislation if statehood receives a majority of votes.

I support Puerto Rico's right of self-determination. This is an issue I have closely followed and been involved in for the better part of two decades. Concern about the way we do statehood determination votes in Puerto Rico is an issue that has crossed party lines in the Congress.

I would say to my colleagues, Congress needs to make sure, at a minimum, that any process used to measure the intent of Puerto Rican voters is

objective; otherwise, the outcome will be neither fair nor a meaningful test of public opinion. That is why it is so important not to exclude the option of the current Commonwealth status.

The status resolution act does not rise to the threshold of fairness or a meaningful test of public opinion. There are two reasons:

First, legislation has already been enacted that calls for a plebiscite on Puerto Rico's political status. The 2014 omnibus already includes funding for a plebiscite that would include all available options for political status. Allowing Puerto Ricans the opportunity to choose a status besides statehood is in keeping with a recommendation from the White House Task Force Report released in 2011.

Second, the referendum proposed by the status resolution act would have the same shortcomings as the plebiscite held on November 6, 2012. The results of that referendum were widely criticized, as well as the tortured ballot designed by the pro-statehood party. Of the 1.9 million Puerto Ricans who participated in the referendum, only 834,191—or about 44 percent—favored statehood. Only 44 percent favored statehood. Close to half a million voters declined to respond to the second question on the ballot, evidencing their dissatisfaction with the choices offered. We need to offer better choices. The percentage of statehood supporters has not changed significantly over the past 20 years and certainly does not serve as an impetus for Congress to entertain yet another admissions process now.

Elsewhere on the November 6 ballot that I referred to, public support was clear for the pro-Commonwealth Popular Democratic Party and the election of pro-Commonwealth and anti-statehood candidate Alejandro Garcia Padilla as Puerto Rico's new Governor. In fact, the Commonwealth's legislature, as a result of that election, is now controlled by the pro-Commonwealth party, as is the mayorship of San Juan, the capital of the Commonwealth.

Statehood advocates may attempt to manipulate ballots and election results to support their preferred outcome, but they do so at the expense of the democratic process and the right of every Puerto Rican to have a say in the island's political future.

The referendum process should be conducted in a fair and transparent manner that reflects the true will of the people. In the past, I have introduced legislation that would recognize Puerto Rico's right to convene a constitutional convention—a process that could help build consensus rather than advance the exclusive agenda of one political party over the other.

For Commonwealth supporters, Puerto Rico's current status is instrumental to preserving the island's rich heritage and maintaining the authority needed to address specific needs. The status resolution act not only has the potential to trample on people's rights, but it also distracts from the island's pressing economic and security concerns.

In conclusion, Congress and the Obama administration should continue to strengthen the partnership between Puerto Rico and the United States in constructive ways instead of encouraging a shortsighted and flawed referendum. Puerto Rico faces economic, energy, and public safety challenges that have a direct impact on the quality of life of its residents. Joint efforts to restore economic growth, modernize energy resources, and reinforce strategies for combating drug trafficking could have a big impact. I am encouraged by proposed reforms, and I wish the best to Gov. Garcia Padilla in the early days of his term in office.

I hope the Senate will not attempt to impose a solution from Washington, DC, on Puerto Rican voters—a solution that would be contrary to the public opinion of inhabitants of the island.

I am glad my colleague from West Virginia, who serves on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee which exercises jurisdiction over matters relating to Puerto Rico, has joined me on the floor, and I would now yield for him—Senator MANCHIN—to comment on a recent study by the GAO on Puerto Rico's economy and the potential effects of statehood.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I wish to thank my colleague Senator WICKER for his longstanding concern about Puerto Rico's current status and how they can govern themselves and work independently. As you can tell, this is a bipartisan concern we have and we are working very closely together.

As Senator WICKER mentioned, the Government Accountability Office is currently working on a report that examines Puerto Rico's economy and the cost of admitting Puerto Rico as a State. I look forward to seeing the results of that report. But in light of the fact we are still awaiting the GAO report, in addition to a number of other reasons, I share Senator WICKER's concerns about the Puerto Rico Status Resolution Act.

On August 1 of last year, the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which has jurisdiction over Puerto Rican issues, held a hearing on the political status of Puerto Rico, where we had the opportunity to hear from Governor Padilla, Commissioner PIERLUISI, and the President of the Puerto Rican Independence Party Ruben Berrios. I appreciated their willingness to openly discuss the ongoing status debate in Puerto Rico and their work with the committee members on how to move forward.

Similar to Senator WICKER, I support Puerto Rico's right to self-determination. However, I have voiced my concerns that the 2012 plebiscite did not meet our democratic standards of fairness and exclusivity, and more than 470,000 Puerto Ricans who left the ballot's second question blank would seem to share my concerns as well. We need a process with the support of all Puerto Ricans, regardless of their beliefs and political status.

Supporters of statehood argue about the constitutionality of different status options. Crafting a plebiscite, however, which excludes all options except statehood, as the Puerto Rico status resolution does, is not the solution. It is not the solution.

The 2014 omnibus includes funding for a plebiscite that would be proctored by the Department of Justice which can authoritatively decide on the constitutionality of all possible status options. Further, both those who are pro-Commonwealth and those who are prostatehood have expressed support for this process. This is not true of the 2012 plebiscite nor the Puerto Rico status resolution.

Political status is not the only issue facing Puerto Rico. The Commonwealth has faced more than half a decade of economic recession and high unemployment, as well as exceptionally high utility costs and continued obstacles to economic development.

As a former Governor I have great respect for Governor Padilla and the challenges he is up against, which are not unlike many of our own States in our country. In meeting with Governor Padilla, I have had the opportunity to hear directly about the enormous economic difficulties he has tackled in his short time as Governor.

In my understanding the 2014 budget—his 2014 budget for Puerto Rico—would significantly reduce the Commonwealth's projected deficit. General fund expenses were down by nearly $200 million during the second half of last year and expected revenue is up. The Governor has made these efforts with the goal of having a balanced budget by 2015, something we could all work toward and a goal I applaud. I understand and have seen that progress is being made.

The Senate should do everything we can to encourage economic development across our country, including in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. We need to work as partners in confronting its high energy costs, double-digit unemployment, and continuing recession. As we support self-determination, we should ensure our focus on political status does not prevent us from addressing the immediate economic needs of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

I thank my colleague for the time to join him in speaking on this important issue and I look forward to his support of a fair and open process and to working with him on this issue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, if I might, let me congratulate my colleague from West Virginia on his remarks and in closing make three observations.

Despite the economic hardships of the region, the economy of Puerto Rico is the strongest of any of the Caribbean islands, and this has occurred under Commonwealth status—the special relationship that Puerto Ricans have with the United States as U.S. citizens but with their separate identity on the island.

Secondly, I would point out that some of the most vocal pro-Commonwealth voices in this Congress are Puerto Rican Americans who happened to have been elected to the Congress from the States, and they speak also and have spoken also with authority in favor of the Commonwealth concept but also in favor of a fair and accurate election.

Finally, I wish to just drive home a point Senator MANCHIN and I have made. On election day in 2012, 1.9 million Puerto Ricans showed up to vote in that election. The pro-Commonwealth candidate for Governor was elected, the pro-Commonwealth candidate for mayor of San Juan was elected, and a majority of the legislature of the island that day turned out to be pro-Commonwealth.

As flawed as the plebiscite was, the fact remains, of the 1.9 million American citizens in Puerto Rico who voted—who showed up to vote—only 44 percent of them cast a ballot in favor of statehood. That is a figure that cannot be controverted: 1.9 million people showed up to vote—American citizens in Puerto Rico—and only 44 percent of them checked the box for statehood.

So as we go forward and as we implement the provisions of the omnibus act, let us make sure that whatever we do we have the facts, as Senator MANCHIN has pointed out, and also we have a process to accurately reflect the will of the Puerto Rican people.

I thank the Chair, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I have talked to a number of my Republican colleagues, some of whom have expressed support for many of the provisions in this comprehensive veterans bill. Many of my Republican colleagues say they would like to support the bill, but they have concerns about how it is paid for and the issue of deficit—increasing the deficit. So let me say a word about this.

Unlike many expenditures, including the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the truth is this bill will not add one penny to the deficit. Let me repeat: This bill will not add one penny to the deficit. The Congressional Budget Office—the nonpartisan scorekeeper—has estimated that mandatory spending in this legislation will total $2.88 billion over the next decade. All of this mandatory spending is completely offset not by the overseas contingency operations—or OCO—but through more than $4.2 billion in actual savings from programs within the jurisdiction of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. As a result, CBO has determined that overall mandatory spending—mandatory spending in this bill—will be reduced by more than $1.3 billion.

In addition to the mandatory spending, this bill authorizes $18.3 billion in discretionary spending over the next 5 years to improve the lives of our Nation's veterans and their families.

As we know, there is no rule in the Senate that an authorization of funding has to be offset. In essence, the discretionary spending provisions in the legislation we are debating today are just recommendations on how much additional funding we believe is needed for our Nation's veterans. It will be up to future legislation originating in the Appropriations Committee to approve or disapprove these recommendations. In other words, the Veterans' Affairs Committee is an authorizing committee; the final decisions in terms of expenditures are made by the Appropriations Committee.

Many of my Republican colleagues have insisted even recommendations of new spending—spending which may never actually happen because it has to go through the Appropriations Committee—be offset. I have done my best to listen to their concerns and have come up with an offset which will not add to the deficit over the next decade.

Specifically, the discretionary spending authorized under this bill is paid for by using savings from winding down the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—otherwise known as the OCO fund. CBO estimates spending for overseas contingency operations will total $1.025 trillion over the next decade, so a little more than $1 trillion. Spending as a result of this legislation will be a tiny fraction of that amount—less than 2 percent.

OCO funds are designed, very broadly, to be used to fund war-related activities. In my view, it is totally consistent with the goals of this funding source to provide support for the men and women who have defended us in those wars.

In recent years OCO funds have provided assistance to Syrian refugees, and have helped the people of Haiti recover from a massive earthquake. Further, since 2005, the Defense Department has used OCO funding for childcare centers, hospitals, schools, traumatic brain injury research, and orthopedic equipment.

In 2010, $50 million in OCO funds was used for the Guam Improvement Enterprise Fund. Last year, OCO funds were allocated to the following countries: Egypt, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Somalia, South Sudan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Yemen. Last year, OCO funds were used to combat trafficking in persons related to labor migration in the Kyrgyz Republic, and to establish a Tunisian-American Enterprise Fund.

In 2011, $89.36 million was used by the National Guard to support the southwest border of the United States.

This year, $218 million in OCO funding is being used for the TRICARE health care program.

These are some of the ways in the past OCO funding has been used. I am not here to argue about the wisdom of any of those expenditures. Many of them may well be valid. What I will say is the needs of our veterans are also valid. If we can spend OCO funds for the Guam Improvement Enterprise Fund, I think we can use OCO funds to protect the interests of our veterans. Again, this expenditure is less than 2 percent of the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I have heard my friends on the other side of the aisle call this a budget gimmick. I disagree. Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate have voted several times to count war-related savings as a reduction in the deficit.

For example, virtually every Republican in the House of Representatives and Senate voted for the fiscal year 2012 budget resolution, introduced by Representative PAUL RYAN, which counted $1 trillion in deficit reduction from ''phasing down overseas contingency operations''—not what I am saying, but what the Heritage Foundation points out.

If the savings from winding down wars can be counted as deficit reduction, clearly we owe it to our Nation's veterans to use a very small percentage of this fund to make their lives a little bit better at home.

To me, placing modest caps on OCO—overseas contingency operations—funding to pay for the most comprehensive veterans legislation in a decade is a no-brainer. This money was always intended to assure the well-being and success of those brave men and women who have served our great country.

Finally, I think we should be very clear: The cost of war does not end once the last shots are fired and the last battles are fought. When members of the military lose arms, legs, eyesight, come back with PTSD or TBI from fighting in wars which Congress authorized, we have a moral obligation to make sure those veterans receive all of the benefits they have earned and deserve. When American soldiers die in combat, we have a moral obligation to make sure the spouses and children they leave behind are taken care of as best as we possibly can.

This speaks to the funding of this legislation, and I hope we will have strong support from all of our colleagues.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for

his remarks, and for the relentlessness, enthusiasm, and passion which he has pursued putting together this extraordinarily strong bill for our veterans. I look forward to supporting it, and I commend him for his excellent work.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here because every week the Senate is in session, now for 59 weeks, I give my climate speech, hoping some day sparks will hit tinder.

I could give a whole separate speech about the evil done by the Supreme Court Citizens United decision, and I could give a separate speech about the gridlock which bedevils the Senate. But this week's climate speech will touch all three—Citizens United, gridlock, and climate change—to show how the three are connected.

We fail here in this Senate to address climate change because of the peculiar gridlock in Congress. And Congress is peculiarly gridlocked because of the evils of Citizens United. Our failure to address climate change is a symptom of things gone wrong in our democracy.

I have spoken before on the Senate floor about the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision, one of the worst and most disgraceful decisions ever made by the Supreme Court, destined to follow cases such as Lochner v. New York onto the ash heap of judicial infamy. But we are stuck with it now. Until the Supreme Court gets its bearings back, their Citizens United stands.

In a nutshell, the Citizens United decision says this: Corporations are people; money is speech; so there can be no limit to corporate money influencing American elections under constitutional principles of freedom of speech.

If that doesn't seem right, it is because it is not. To unleash that corporate power in our elections, the conservative Justices had to go through some pretty remarkable contortions: They had to reverse previous decisions by the Court which said the opposite; they had to make up facts which are demonstrably flat-out wrong; they had to create a make-believe world of independence and transparency in election spending; and they had to maneuver their own judicial procedures to prevent a factual record which would belie those facts they were making up. It was a dirty business, with a lot of signs of intention, and it has produced evil results.

Let's start with the contortions the conservative Justices had to go through to uncork all that corporate money. They had to first make the leap that corporations are people and money is speech to ensure corporate money is protected by the First Amendment. They went a more circuitous route, but that is where they ended up. And it is quite a leap when you think of how suspicious the Founding Fathers were of corporations. There is no mention of corporations in the Constitution. So much for these conservative Justices' fidelity to originalism—a constitutional theory the conservatives put a lot of credence in when it suits them.

To treat corporations as people and money as speech, the conservative Justices also had to overrule previous Supreme Court decisions which had said the exact opposite, which they did, upending a century of law. So much for fidelity to precedent.

The conservative bloc then had to deal with the inconvenience that First Amendment doctrine actually allows the government to regulate elections, to protect against either political corruption or even the appearance of corruption.

So how do you take away the people's ability to restrain corporate money in elections when protecting against corruption is a legitimate reason for restraints on corporate money? What you do—and what they did—is decide, by making a finding of fact, that corporations' money would not corrupt elections or politics; indeed, that no amount of corporate money could even appear to corrupt elections or politics. So much for fidelity to the judicial rule which appellate courts, State or Federal, are not supposed to engage in fact-finding.

This fact-finding about corruption by the conservative Justices caused another little inconvenience: The assertion that corporate money can't corrupt politics is laughably false. This meant the conservatives couldn't allow a factual record in the case. A factual record, with testimony and evidence about such a ludicrous proposition, would have blown it out of the water. So they let the little, narrow Citizens United case get all the way through the judicial process, including briefing and argument before them, and then they went back and changed the question into a big one.

This clever maneuver at the very end of the case guaranteed there would be no factual record developed on the new and larger question. And that freed their hand.

I should emphasize that this was a third transgression. The first transgression was for conservatives to ignore their own constitutional theory of originalism in getting to the ''corporations are people and money is speech'' result. The second transgression was violating the traditional rule that appellate courts were not supposed to engage in factfinding at all, let alone ludicrous factfinding. The third transgression was this maneuver with the question presented.

As a general rule, when cases come to a supreme court, State or Federal, the court defines the ''questions presented'' by the case. This may not seem like a big deal, just something in the ordinary course, but it is actually an important limit on judicial power under our constitutional separation of powers. It is what prevents a supreme court from roving willy-nilly into any question it wants any time. Courts have to wait until a case comes that presents a particular question, and then they identify what the question is. So it was odd indeed when the Chief Justice went back, after the case was briefed and argued, and did his own new ''question presented.'' But it did the job.

Now the court—with no record saying otherwise—could pretend that corporate money just plain can't corrupt American elections, can't do it, no way, no how—the conservative immaculate conception of corporate money.

Pretending that corporate money couldn't possibly corrupt or even appear to corrupt American elections allowed them to sweep away any interest of the people in keeping corporate corruption out of our politics and elections. People don't need to worry their little heads about corruption, they said. Corporate money in elections is immaculate and can't corrupt.

Bingo. That got them where they wanted. We, the people, could no longer limit corporate spending in our elections. As we have seen, the big money began to flood in.

Citizens United actually gets worse in its plain errors about how independent corporate money was going to be from candidates and how transparent it was going to be whose money was truly behind all of those negative ads. Independent? Transparent? Look at the last elections. How did that work out? Subsequent history shows the falsity of that nonsense.

Those contortionist justices completely ignored a big, important fact: what big money can do, big money can threaten to do or promise to do, and there is going to be nothing independent or transparent about those private threats and promises. The Citizens United decision opened this avenue to corruption while pretending corruption was impossible.

So on to the next step: How do the evils of this Citizens United decision lead to the evils of gridlock? Look around. Look at who is scared of whom and look at who is angry with whom around here.

Democrats and Republicans actually get along pretty well—at least Democrats and most Republicans. We are policy adversaries on many subjects, but Democrats and Republicans have been policy adversaries for decades. Democrat versus Republican is old news. It doesn't explain the new weirdness around here.

Look at what you see. The real fear and the real anger around here is between the mainstream Republicans and the tea party extremists. Look around. Ask around. Where do emotions run high? Where are the shouting matches? Where are the insults hurled? Where are Senators heckled by their colleagues? The worst of it is not between Democrat and Republican, it is between tea party and Republican.

Who is being told how they can and cannot vote and what they can and cannot say? Who is being bullied and punished when they don't follow the party line—the tea party line? Not

Democrats, Republicans. No one likes being bullied.

Is it the irrefutable logic of tea party argument that scares regular Republicans? Is it the clear grasp by the tea party of modern economic, cultural, and scientific realities that scares regular Republicans? Is it the broad way the tea party represents our great and diverse democracy that scares regular Republicans? Is it the keen political acumen of the tea party, say, shutting down the U.S. Government and darned near blowing the debt limit, that scares regular Republicans?

Those questions answer themselves, don't they? No. The thing that scares regular Republicans is the big money—the big corporate money, the billionaire money—behind the tea party.

The Koch brothers, for instance, may be a living cartoon of avarice, out to pollute even more and make even more money, but when the Koch brothers' big money comes in and bombs you in a small primary election, it is pretty scary. When the paid-for rightwing attack machine turns on you in your Republican primary, that can be pretty scary.

So the gridlock comes when the Republican party will not work with Democrats—not because we don't make sense and not because most Republicans don't want to make sense but because they are scared of tea party attacks funded by Citizens United money.

That brings us to climate change. As I have described in a recent speech, tens—perhaps even hundreds—of millions of dark-money dollars are being spent. Is all that money being spent having any effect on Republicans? Just look.

In this body we have Republican colleagues who have publicly acknowledged in the past carbon-driven climate change and have called for legislative action. In this body we have a former Republican Presidential nominee who campaigned for President on addressing climate change.

In this body we have Republicans who have spoken favorably about charging a fee on carbon, including the Republican original cosponsor of a bipartisan carbon pollution fee bill. We have a Republican colleague who cosponsored climate change legislation when he was in the House and another who voted for the Waxman-Markey cap-and-trade bill when he was in the House.

In this body we have Senators who represent historic villages now washing into the sea and needing relocation because of climate change and sea level rise, and Senators who represent great American coastal cities that are now overwashed by the sea at high tides because of climate change.

We have Republican Senators whose home State forests—by the hundreds of square miles—are being killed by the marauding pine beetle, and Republican Senators whose home States' glaciers are disappearing before their very eyes in their own lifetimes. We have Republican Senators whose home States are having to raise offshore bridges and highways before the rising seas.

We have Republican voters who actually get that climate change is real. It is the tea party that has the deniers. Sixty-one percent of nontea party Republicans say there is solid evidence the Earth is warming, but only 25 percent of tea partiers agree—a 36-point swing between Republicans and tea partiers.

Republicans outside of Congress, immune from the effects of Citizens United, have actually supported a carbon pollution fee so long as it is revenue neutral and doesn't add to big government. You could actually lower other taxes with it. But Republicans in Congress will now scarcely say a word about climate change—not since Citizens United; not since that disgraceful decision uncorked all that big, dark money and allowed it to cast its shadow of intimidation over our democracy.

So that is how Citizens United connects to climate change.

While our American democracy suffers and stalls, the evidence of climate change relentlessly mounts. The damage will be done in our atmosphere and oceans. The damage has already started.

I have to warn my colleagues that the denier machinery—the beast I described earlier this month—will ultimately be shown for the evil apparatus of lies that it is. When that happens, there will be more damage to go around. There will be damage to a party that allowed itself to be taken over and silenced by that corrupt apparatus, ignoring the plain facts in front of their faces.

There will be damage to a supreme court that went through such peculiar contortions to let that dark money loose, ignoring plain facts in front of their faces. We Americans, who hold our lamp high to the rest of the world as a beacon of democracy, will have some explaining to do about how we—to the dismay of the rest of the world—let our great democracy be stifled by greedy polluters, ignoring the plain facts the world faces.

The historian David McCullough spoke at the Library of Congress 2 weeks ago about John Adams and America's founding generation. He reminded us that when those men signed the Declaration of Independence, they were signing their own death warrants. When they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to this cause, it was not mere words. David McCullough explained: ''It was a courageous time.'' And look at us, our great democracy mired in polluters, lies, and money.

But I still believe this can be a courageous time. As Americans have in the past, we can shed the shackles of corrupting influence and rise to our duty. It just takes courage to make this a courageous time.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IRAN

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to address the significant and persistent national security threat stemming from Iran's unchecked nuclear program. I urge my colleagues to support the amendment to S. 1982 from the senior Senator from North Carolina which includes provisions to strengthen our sanctions against Iran should they fail to comply with their obligations under the joint plan of action.

Last November the Obama administration, without sufficient consultation with Congress, committed to an interim nuclear agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Under this agreement we are granting to Iran over $7 billion in sanctions relief in exchange for their commitments to decelerate their nuclear program—commitments which will be difficult, if not impossible, to verify or enforce.

In effect, we are delivering billions of dollars in repatriated oil sales proceeds, additional foreign trade, and currency—all in exchange for hollow promises of compliance with laws and U.N. Security Council resolutions they should already be following.

The stated U.S. policy, which American Presidents have repeated for decades, is to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. However, this agreement maintains Iran's nuclear weapons capability, and it allows Iran to continue to enrich uranium.

Moreover, Iran will not be required to destroy any centrifuges and will be permitted to replace centrifuges that become inoperable. The pact does little to reverse Iran's nuclear ambitions and sets a precedent for further sanctions relief in exchange for cosmetic concessions.

Rather than easing effective sanctions, we should be tightening existing sanctions until a better long-term deal can be reached. The United States must take a strong stance to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. If they do not agree to roll back their nuclear program, then they should face stronger sanctions.

That is why I strongly support provisions in the amendment from Senator BURR that would incorporate key provisions of the Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act into the pending veterans legislation.

Mr. President, 58 of my Senate colleagues have already signed on to this important freestanding legislation. They and I agree that the Government of Iran continues to expand its nuclear and missile programs in direct violation of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. Iran has a

demonstrated record of defiance and will continue to work toward stockpiling weapons grade nuclear material, sponsoring terrorism, and disregarding basic human rights.

Given these facts, it only makes sense that we take our own national security and commitment to our allies' security seriously by passing expanded sanction authorities, should Iran fail to uphold its end of the interim agreement.

Equally important, this legislation would give Congress the opportunity to review and—if necessary—disapprove of any final agreement with Iran.

I am hopeful Iran will come to the table with real, verifiable concessions in a final agreement on their nuclear program. However, hope is a poor national security strategy.

The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act would set the proper framework for ensuring Iran dismantles its illicit nuclear infrastructure, complies with all Security Council resolutions, cooperates with the International Atomic Energy Agency, respects human rights, and ceases to promote global terrorism.

Furthermore, the Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act implements President Obama's own policy. In his recent State of the Union Address, he stated that he will ''be the first to call for more sanctions'' should Iran fail to uphold the interim agreement.

By passing this legislation, we are ensuring that the United States has the ability to further penalize Iran for its continued noncompliance.

Nevertheless, President Obama has threatened to veto this legislation, further indicating his willingness to blindly concede to Iranian rhetoric.

Now is not the time for this Nation to exhibit weakness. Now is our chance to demonstrate to Iran and to the world that we are serious about nuclear nonproliferation and compliance with international laws and obligations.

For these reasons, I strongly support the Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act as presented in this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to act swiftly to pass this important measure.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the remaining time postcloture be yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, all time is yielded back.

The question is on the adoption of the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

COMPREHENSIVE VETERANS HEALTH AND BENEFITS AND MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY RESTORATION ACT OF 2014

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1982) to improve the provision of medical services and benefits for veterans, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2747

Mr. REID. On behalf of Senator SANDERS, I have an amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the Sanders amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID], for himself and Mr. SANDERS, proposes an amendment numbered 2747.

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of Tuesday, February 25, 2014 under ''Text of Amendments.'')

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2766

Mr. REID. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes amendment numbered 2766 to amendment numbered 2747.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, add the following:

This Act shall become effective 1 day after enactment.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I have a motion, cloture in nature, at the desk.

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

The 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, hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. 1982, the Comprehensive Veterans Health Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act.

Harry Reid, Bernard Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, Patty Murray, Michael F. Bennet, Mark Begich, Debbie Stabenow, Charles E. Schumer, Edward J. Markey, Richard Blumenthal, Ron Wyden, Maria Cantwell, Heidi Heitkamp, Christopher Murphy, Christopher A. Coons, Mazie K. Hirono, Tammy Baldwin.

MOTION TO COMMIT WITH AMENDMENT NO. 2767

Mr. REID. I have a motion to commit S. 1982. It has instructions, and that is also at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] moves to commit the bill to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs with instructions to report back forthwith with the following amendment No. 2767.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, add the following:

This Act shall become effective 3 days after enactment.

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2768

Mr. REID. I have an amendment to instructions at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 2768 to the instructions of amendment numbered 2767.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike ''3 days'' and insert ''4 days''.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2769

Mr. REID. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 2769 to amendment numbered 2768.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike ''4 days'' and insert ''5 days''.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I have a cloture motion at the desk.

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

The 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, hereby move to bring to a close debate on amendment No. 2747 to S. 1982, the Comprehensive Veterans Health Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act.

Harry Reid, Bernard Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, Patty Murray, Michael F. Bennet, Mark Begich, Debbie Stabenow, Charles E. Schumer, Edward J. Markey, Richard Blumenthal, Ron Wyden, Maria Cantwell, Heidi Heitkamp, Christopher Murphy, Christopher A. Coons, Mazie K. Hirono, Tammy Baldwin.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum for both cloture motions required under rule XXII be waived.

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

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 309.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion to proceed.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A motion to proceed to Calendar No. 309, S. 1086, a bill to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1982

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Thursday, February 27, during the Senate's consideration of S. 1982, but no later than 2 p.m., Senator SESSIONS, or his designee, be recognized to raise a budget point of order against the bill; that if such a point of order is raised, it be in order for Senator MURRAY, or her designee, to move to waive; that if a motion to waive is made, the vote on the motion to waive occur at 2 p.m. tomorrow; that if the motion to waive is successful, the Senate proceed to the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on amendment No. 2747; that if cloture is invoked on the amendment, all postcloture time be yielded back, amendment No. 2766 be withdrawn, and the Senate proceed to the vote on amendment No. 2747; that upon disposition of the amendment, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on S. 1982, as amended, if amended; that if cloture is invoked on the bill, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended, if amended; if the motion to waive is not successful, then the cloture motions be withdrawn; finally, the filing deadline for first-degree amendments to S. 1982 be at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday and the filing deadline for second-degree amendments to amendment No. 2747 and S. 1982 be 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM KING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize an innovative educator from my home State of Kentucky—Mr. William King—who, earlier this month, was awarded the prestigious Milken Education Award.

If you were to ask William King about his occupation, he may not respond that he is a ''teacher'' or ''educator.'' Instead, he is more inclined to give himself the label of ''educational entrepreneur.'' That's because in his 12 years in education, Mr. KING has been relentless in his search to find new and better ways to educate our Nation's schoolchildren.

In his current capacity as freshman principal at Bowling Green High School—his alma mater—William is charged with shepherding his students through the all-important transition from middle to high school. King has spearheaded initiatives such as TeachMeet Kentucky and TeachMeet Nashville—which are informal meetings where teachers gather to share ideas and best practices—and No Office Day, where school administrators spend an entire day with students in the classroom. It is his Jump Start program, however, that has earned him one of, if not the most, prestigious awards in education—the Milken Education Award.

William created Jump Start to help better prepare students to excel in their first year of high school. Now, I face a lot of challenges here in the Senate, but few are more trying than those faced by a teenager who is about to enter high school. Mr. King not only recognized just how daunting this transition can be for students, but he also had the ability and the selfless inclination to do something about it.

With his innovative program, King works with students and parents and also coordinates between eighth- and ninth-grade teachers to ensure that his kids are prepared for the academic challenges they are about to face.

The Milken Education Award is a prestigious one; it is not given out just for good intentions. Wining an ''Oscar of Teaching,'' as it's known by teachers across the country, requires results—and William King unquestionably delivers results. Since implementing Jump Start, ninth-grade retentions have dropped by 68 percent. For this, he was recognized with the Milken Education Award, as well as $25,000 to spend as he chooses, at a surprise assembly at Bowling Green High School.

Lowell Milken, chairman and co-founder of the Milken Family Foundation, once said, ''A sound education provides the opportunity to realize one's potential.'' William King has shown that he is wholeheartedly dedicated to this proposition, and that he is deserving of praise from this body. I ask that my Senate colleges join me in recognizing this exemplary Kentucky citizen.

The Park City Daily News recently published an article highlighting William's work and his award. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Park City Daily News, Feb. 12, 2014]

EDUCATOR RECEIVES $25,000 AWARD

(By Chuck Mason)

A Bowling Green High School administrator who graduated as a BGHS Purple in 1996 got the surprise of his life Wednesday morning.

Freshman Principal William King received a Milken Educator Award and $25,000 he can spend any way he wants. His Jump Start program working with freshman has reduced by 68 percent the number of BGHS freshmen who do not pass.

''I had no clue,'' said King after the ceremony. ''I had a list of all these names (of BGHS teachers) in my head (who could be receiving the award). ''It could have been anyone on our staff.''

King also has been instrumental in holding TeachMeet seminars, which are informal meetings for teachers to share best practices of how they use technology in their classrooms, at Western Kentucky University, in Nashville and other locations in the United States.

The Milken Educator Award, called the ''Oscars of Teaching'' by Teacher Magazine, was presented as the cheers of 1,200 students bounced off walls of the high school's arena. Many of the students cheering King have been under his leadership since they first entered the school halls four years ago. King was told the assembly was to honor the academic accomplishments of BGHS students, and it started that way before Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday took the microphone to make remarks and then introduced Jane Foley, senior vice president of the Milken Family Foundation. Foley made the surprise announcement that King is Kentucky's 2014 Milken Educator Award winner, after telling the students first how much the award was worth and that one educator in the arena was to receive it.

''We welcome you to our family of excellence,'' said Foley, who received her own Milken Educator Award in 1994.

Three south-central Kentucky educators previously received a Milken Educator Award, which was created in 1987.

King was surprised during the morning assembly. Principal Gary Fields said it was a challenge to keep the announcement secret from King. The winner said he wasn't even sure he was supposed to be in the arena that morning for the academic assembly. Fields read a lengthy list of BGHS students who excelled in academics, at one point, turning to Holliday and remarking, ''commissioner, I'm only halfway through the list.''

King, who monitors teacher and student success, founded the Jump Start program, in which teachers and parents ensure incoming freshmen are ready for high school. King spent a dozen years as an educator, including as an instructional assistant, social studies teacher, curriculum coordinator, literacy coach and freshman principal. He's a 1996 BGHS graduate and an Eagle Scout.

King ''always comes into our social studies class and talks with us,'' said Savannah Hanson, a junior at BGHS. She said the Milken Family Foundation made a good choice in honoring King.

Since 1987, the foundation has awarded more than $64 million to nearly 2,600 kindergarten through 12th-grade educators across the United States in awards. Total funding for the program, which includes resources for the winning educators, is more than $136 million. Fifty-two Kentucky teachers have received the award since 1993.

''A sound education provides the opportunities to realize one's potential, which is why the future belongs to the educated,'' Lowell Milken, chairman and co-founder, said in grant program information. ''Effective education equips each new generation with the knowledge and skills to make sound and independent judgments, as well as proceed to the next stage in learning and in life.''

The Milken awards were conceived to attract, retain and motivate talented people in the teaching profession.

Foley said the Milken Educator Award is not one that teachers or administrators can apply for. ''We don't accept nominations. You don't find us, we find you,'' Foley said.

''Not an accolade for lifetime achievement or the proverbial gold watch at the exit door, the Milken Educator Awards targets early- to mid-career education professionals for their already impressive achievements and, more significantly, for the promise of what they will accomplish in the future,'' the website noted.

Accompanying Holliday and Foley was Madeline Abramson, wife of Kentucky Lt. Governor Jerry Abramson.

After the award was announced, the students did a rousing chant with a Bowling Green Purples theme, clapping their hands in staccato fashion, then stamping their feet.

''There's no way I can top that,'' said Holliday, taking the microphone once again. Looking at King, the commissioner added, ''What an honor for Bowling Green High School and Kentucky.''

Milken award winners have exceptional educational talent as evidenced by effective instructional practices and student-learning results in the classroom and school; have exemplary educational accomplishments beyond the classroom that provide models of excellence for the profession; are individuals whose contributions to education are largely unheralded yet worthy of the spotlight; are early- to mid-career educators who offer strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership; and have an engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community, the website noted.

The last south-central Kentucky educator to receive a Milken Educator Award was Karen Branham in 2001. At the time, Branham was a teacher at Glasgow High School. She is now assistant superintendent for student learning for the Elizabethtown Independent School District.

The MFF is headquartered in Santa Monica, Calif.

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent from the votes during yesterday's session on Tuesday, February 25, 2014. Had I been present, I would have supported the nominations of James Donato and Beth Freeman to fill judicial emergency vacancies on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, and James Moody to fill a judicial vacancy on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas. I also would have voted in favor of the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 1982, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014.•

TRIBUTE TO KATHLEEN RICE

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I wish to pay special tribute to Kathleen B. Rice, a key member of my staff on the Select Committee on Intelligence. Kathleen will leave us shortly to join Boveri Murphy Rice, LLP, a boutique trial and litigation firm in South Bend, IN, which represents clients nationwide, ranging from Fortune 500 companies to smaller businesses and individuals. Kathleen has had a distinguished career in her 19.5 years of service to the Senate, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, and the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida. I am honored to have the opportunity to publicly thank her and note my appreciation for her outstanding service to the Select Committee on Intelligence during the past 7.5 years.

Since becoming the vice chairman of the committee in 2011, I have routinely relied upon her impressive legal acumen and excellent advice on matters large and small. Kathleen is well known on the Hill and by the private sector as one of the leading congressional staff experts on cybersecurity legislative issues. During the 111th Congress, she distinguished herself as an authority in the field with her work on S. 3538, the National Cyber Infrastructure Protection bill, on behalf of Senators Kit Bond and ORRIN HATCH. Based upon that experience, I selected Kathleen to serve as the lead counsel for all of my cybersecurity legislative efforts. Since then, she has worked tirelessly to develop and negotiate legislative proposals consistent with my strong desire to get an effective cybersecurity information sharing bill enacted into law. During the last Congress, Kathleen was a crucial participant in the negotiations that led the ranking members of eight Senate committees to co-sponsor S. 2151 and S. 3342, the Strengthening and Enhancing Cybersecurity by Using Research, Education, Information, and Technology Act of 2012, more commonly known as ''SECURE IT.'' During this Congress, Senator FEINSTEIN and I have been working very hard to develop a bipartisan cybersecurity information sharing bill that we believe will be well-received by the private sector and our colleagues in the Senate and the House of Representatives. We are finally quite close to being able to mark up our cybersecurity information sharing bill and Kathleen played an integral role every step of the way.

Kathleen is a recognized legislative wizard. When negotiations have stalled, it is usually Kathleen who comes up with the textual solution that provides the basis for a practical and effective bipartisan compromise—a valuable skill that unfortunately has been in short supply on the Hill in recent memory. In addition to cyber, she has been a key staff contributor to the process of passing and enacting the committee's annual intelligence authorization bills. Her expertise on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) was invaluable during the negotiation and enactment of the Protect America Act of 2007, the FISA Amendments Act of 2008, Public Laws 111–141 and 112–14, extension of certain expiring FISA sunsets, and the FISA Amendments Act Reauthorization Act of 2012. She routinely monitors the legislative calendar to ensure that pending legislation does not negatively impact intelligence community activities and operations. She also works closely with the Members and staff of other committees on all issues related to national security.

Kathleen's mastery of criminal and national security law, coupled with her inexhaustible work ethic and sound judgment, have made her an indispensable member of the committee staff and an invaluable resource to other congressional committees. Her quick wit and good humor make her a pleasure to work with—less so, if you unwisely choose to work against the interests of her ''client''. Kathleen is a team player who makes everyone around her perform better. She has been an astute mentor and guide to the senior staff responsible for assisting the vice chairman and members of the committee with formulating and implementing the committee's legislative and oversight priorities. She also has done a terrific job interfacing and collaborating with my personal staff to ensure that my office is accurately transmitting my views on current national security issues and events.

My colleagues and I trust Kathleen's judgment implicitly. Her example of dedicated public service and exceptional day-to-day performance on the job has earned our respect and admiration, and it inspired a generation of staff who had the privilege to work alongside her. There is no doubt that Kathleen has a bright future in the private sector; however, should the right opportunity present itself, I would strongly encourage my Senate colleagues to entice her back into public service. We will miss Kathleen dearly, but her legacy will remain a part of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence for years to come.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD S. GIRVEN

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I wish to pay special tribute to Richard S. Girven, a key member of my staff on the Select Committee on Intelligence. Rich has a total of 33 years of distinguished service to the Senate and the U.S. Army. He will leave us shortly to join the Washington office of the Rand Corporation where he will serve as an associate director for the Intelligence Policy Center within the National Security Research Division. I am honored to have the opportunity to publicly thank Rich and note my appreciation for his outstanding service to the Select Committee on Intelligence during the past 5½ years.

Since becoming the vice chairman of the committee in 2011, I have often relied upon Rich's impressive analytical skills and teamwork on a wide range of intelligence issues. As the committee's director of analysis, he has routinely mentored our senior staff members in the execution of their substantive and regional portfolios. Rich is well known on the Hill and throughout the intelligence community as a leading expert on issues related to Asia and the Middle East, with special emphasis on South and Southeast Asia. He has also

done superlative oversight work on issues related to analytic quality, linguists in the intelligence community, human intelligence, technology, education and training, and intelligence authorities and reform. He has conducted and participated in many committee studies involving analysis, analytic tradecraft, and analyst technologies.

Rich even has a ''superpower''—he reads faster than anyone I have ever met. I have been told by reliable sources that he can read at least 1,600 words per minute. This sometimes worked to his personal disadvantage, because he was frequently tasked with reading very large bills, some in excess of 1,000 pages, to assess whether any provisions could negatively impact intelligence authorities and operations. Rich's inexhaustible work ethic and sound judgment have made him an indispensable member of the committee staff and an invaluable resource to other congressional committees. His quick wit and good humor make him a pleasure to work with. He is the consummate team player who improves the performance of everyone around him.

My colleagues and I trust Rich's judgment implicitly. His example of dedicated public service and exceptional day-to-day performance on the job has earned our respect, admiration, and it inspired a generation of staff who had the privilege to work alongside him. There is no doubt that Rich has a bright future at the Rand Corporation; however, should the right opportunity present itself, I would hope that he will consider another stint in public service. We will miss Rich deeply, but his legacy will remain a part of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence for years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING MAJOR GENERAL FLOYD L. EDSALL

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I wish to recognize an exceptional Nevadan and veteran, Army MG Floyd Edsall. On January 29, 2014, Nevada's humble servant was called home after 92 years of devoted community advocacy.

Born December 21, 1921, Mr. Edsall answered a call for military service at an early age through his involvement at UNR in their ROTC program. In 1944, he fought in World War II and was awarded the Silver Star and three Bronze Stars for his valiant bravery.

Upon his return from service with the Army's 63rd Infantry Division, Major General Edsall taught at Elko and Sparks High Schools as well as his alma mater UNR, where he coached football and track and field. Throughout his teaching and coaching career, he remained active in the Nevada Guard.

Major General Edsall is recognized as the Nevada National Guard's first full-time adjunct general. From 1967 to 1979, he commanded the Nevada Air and Army Guard all while maintaining a steadfast dedication to expanding the Guard's enlistments during the Vietnam war. His focus and recruitment abilities exhibited with the Guard were widely regarded, and Major General Edsall retained his role of leadership over the span of three Nevada gubernatorial administrations.

Recognizing a lifetime of commitment to service, the Nevada Army Guard dedicated a 1,697-acre training facility in his honor in 1997, and on May 10 of the same year, the Maj. Gen. Floyd Edsall Training Center opened to further the foundations of service his namesake bears.

Major General Edsall's passing is a great loss and his loyal commitment to the Silver State will never be forgotten. I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering the life of a devoted Nevadan and honoring his accomplishments.•

REMEMBERING WALTER ''DOC'' HURLEY

• Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, earlier this month, a Hartford icon, Walter ''Doc'' Hurley, passed away at the age of 91. For some, Doc was a teacher, for others a coach, and for many more he was a dedicated philanthropist and friend. No matter what role he played at any given time, Doc Hurley worked his entire life to positively impact the Hartford community, and he will be sorely missed.

Doc led an eclectic and inspiring life. After attending Weaver High School in the North End of Hartford, he served in World War II as a marine. Upon coming home from the war, he finished college, worked as a teacher in Virginia, and spent a brief stint as a professional football player in the All-American Football Conference before finally returning to Hartford in 1959.

It was when he became vice principal at Weaver High School in Hartford that he began in earnest his lifelong goal of inspiring students to pursue a college degree. The most visible piece of Hurley's lasting legacy in the community is the Doc Hurley Scholarship Foundation and the renowned Doc Hurley Scholarship Basketball Classic. Over the years, Doc's foundation was responsible for awarding more than $570,000 in scholarships to 550 high school seniors. Many of these students who went on to successful careers owe their start to Doc Hurley and his scholarship foundation. Doc was a once-in-a-generation mentor, coach, teacher, and positive inspiration for Hartford's youth.

Last October, I held an antiviolence basketball tournament for nearly 1,000 kids with the University of Connecticut men's basketball team in the field house that bears Doc Hurley's name at Weaver High School. I was proud to have had the chance to work with him on that basketball tournament and, more importantly I will work to continue his legacy of encouraging Hartford's students to achieve their highest potential.

I join everyone in Hartford and around Connecticut in celebrating the life of Walter ''Doc'' Hurley and mourning the loss of this great man.•

BROWN UNIVERSITY

• Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this March, Providence, RI, celebrates the 250th anniversary of the founding of Brown University, known as one of the world's great universities.

In 1764, the American Colonies were on a headlong course toward Revolution. Many of those who would lead the charge to independence also had a hand in establishing this great American college. Among the founding Fellows and Trustees of what was then called the College in the English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations were future signers of the Declaration of Independence, delegates to the Continental Congress and Congress of the Confederation, and members of the prominent Brown family of Providence. One of them, John Brown, was later in the 1772 attack on the royal customs vessel HMS Gaspee in Narragansett Bay, an act of violence against the crown that drew the first British blood in the conflict that led to the American Revolution, more than a year before the Boston Tea Party.

Since then, prominent Brunonians have included Secretaries of State John Hay and Charles Evans Hughes, Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen, and our own Governor Lincoln Chafee and Congressman DAVID CICILLINE, to name just a few. For two and a half centuries, bright and eager young Americans have arrived in Providence's beautiful College Hill neighborhood, greeted by historic architecture and the famous Van Wickle Gates. They brought their ambition and their talent and, inevitably, they left their mark and continue to leave their mark—on our State and our Nation.

Today, Brown University is a hub of research, innovation, and learning, and an integral partner in our capital city's culture and economy. As a magnet for talent and resources, Brown has helped fuel Providence's Knowledge District, and the university itself is the fifth-largest private employer in Rhode Island. Brown's Alpert Medical School has helped bolster our State's leadership in the health care field, with more than 1,700 physicians—43 percent of all physicians in the State—affiliated with the school. And Brown's heralded BrainGate program famously helped Cathy Hutchinson use a robotic arm to pick up a cup of coffee and take a sip 15 years after a stroke left her paralyzed and unable to speak. These and countless other contributions continue to put Rhode Island on the forefront of the innovation economy, and I am grateful for Brown's role in driving our Ocean State forward.

Brown is a wonderful place. As I travel the country and encounter Brown

graduates, and attend Brown functions and meet undergraduates, I have been struck at how much they love this college. For a great many of our best and brightest high school seniors, Brown is their decided first choice among all the great universities of the world.

In its original charter, it was said that Brown, ''to which the youth may freely resort for education in the vernacular and learned languages, and in the liberal arts and sciences, would be for the general advantage and honor of the government.'' Two hundred fifty years later, it is clear that Brown has lived up to that expectation.

I am proud to congratulate the president of Brown University, Christina Hull Paxson, Brown's trustees and faculty, and its students and alumni on 250 remarkable years.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

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

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

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:09 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1123. An act to promote consumer choice and wireless competition by permitting consumers to unlock mobile wireless devices, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1211. An act to amend section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Freedom of Information Act), to provide for greater public access to information, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1232. An act to amend titles 40, 41, and 44, United States Code, to eliminate duplication and waste in information technology acquisition and management.

H.R. 1423. An act to provide taxpayers with an annual report disclosing the cost and performance of Government programs and areas of duplication among them, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2530. An act to improve transparency and efficiency with respect to audits and communications between taxpayers and the Internal Revenue Service.

H.R. 2531. An act to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from asking taxpayers questions regarding religious, political, or social beliefs.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 1123. An act to promote consumer choice and wireless competition by permitting consumers to unlock mobile wireless devices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 1211. An act to amend section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Freedom of Information Act), to provide for greater public access to information, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 1232. An act to amend titles 40, 41, and 44, United States Code, to eliminate duplication and waste in information technology acquisition and management; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–4742. A communication from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Defense report on the joint strategy for readiness and training in a Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR)-denied environment (OSS No. 2014–0234); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4743. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''2014 Report to Congress on Sustainable Ranges''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4744. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers Project; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4745. A communication from the Acting Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Retrospective Analysis under Executive Order 13579'' (NRC–2011–0246) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4746. A communication from the Chief of the Permits and Regulations Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Migratory Bird Hunting; Revision of Language for Approval of Nontoxic Shot for Use in Waterfowl Hunting'' (RIN1018–AY59) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4747. A communication from the Acting Chief of the Branch of Listing, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Threatened Status for Eriogonum codium (Umtanum Desert Buckwheat) and Physaria douglasii subsp. tuplashensis (White Bluffs Bladderpod) and Designation of Critical Habitat'' (RIN1018–AX72; 1018–AZ54) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4748. A communication from the Chief of the Endangered Species Listing Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Chromolaena frustrata (Cape Sable Thoroughwort)'' (RIN1018–AZ51) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4749. A communication from the Acting Chief of the Branch of Listing, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Arctostaphylos franciscana (Franciscan Manzanita)'' (RIN1018–AY63) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 11, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4750. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; New Mexico; Transportation Conformity and General Conformity Requirements for Bernalillo County'' (FRL No. 9906–65–Region 6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 18, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4751. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Oklahoma; Regional Haze and Interstate Transport Affecting Visibility; State Implementation Plan Revisions; Revised BART Determination for American Electric Power/Public Service Company of Oklahoma Northeastern Power Station Units 3 and 4'' (FRL No. 9906–93–Region 6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4752. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Oklahoma; Regional Haze and Interstate Transport Affecting Visibility State Implementation Plan Revisions; Withdrawal of Federal Implementation Plan for American Electric Power/Public Service Company of Oklahoma'' (FRL No. 9906–81–OAR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4753. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Virginia; Prevention of Significant Deterioration and Nonattainment New Source Review; Fine Particulate Matter (PM 2.5)'' (FRL No. 9906–67–Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4754. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Ninety-Day Waiting Period Limitation and Technical Amendments to Certain Health Coverage Requirements Under the Affordable Care Act'' (RIN0938–AR77) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4755. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch,

Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Ninety-Day Waiting Period Limitation and Technical Amendments to Certain Health Coverage Requirements Under the Affordable Care Act'' ((RIN1545–BL50) (TD 9656)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4756. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Applicable Federal Rates—March 2014'' (Rev. Rul. 2014–8) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4757. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amount of the Life Insurance Reserves Taken into Account Under Section 807 of the IRC for Variable Contracts'' (Rev. Rul. 2014–7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4758. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safe Harbor for Disregarded Entities Under Section 108'' (Rev. Proc. 2014–20) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4759. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Update of Weighted Average Interest Rates, Yield Curves, and Segment Rates'' (Notice 2014–13) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4760. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for the Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal-State Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program; Data Exchange Standardization as Required by Section 2104 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012'' (RIN1205–AB64) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 21, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4761. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulations and Reports Clearance, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Extension of Expiration Dates for Several Body System Listings'' (RIN0960–AH61) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4762. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulations and Reports Clearance, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Change of Address for Requests: Testimony by Employees and the Production of Records and Information in Legal Proceedings, Claims Against the Government Under the Federal Tort Claims Act of 1948, and Claims under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees' Claim Act of 1964'' (RIN0960–AH65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 18, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4763. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the export to the People's Republic of China of items not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4764. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 14–003); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4765. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 13–171); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4766. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, the report of a rule entitled ''Visas: Waiver by Joint Action of Visa and Passport Requirements for Members of Armed Forces and Coast Guards of Foreign Countries'' (RIN1400–AD51) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2014; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4767. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, the report of a rule entitled ''Visas: Documentation of Nonimmigrants Under the Immigration and Nationality Act, As Amended; TN Visas from NAFTA Countries'' (RIN1400–AD29) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 5, 2014; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4768. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the interdiction of aircraft engaged in illicit drug trafficking; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4769. A communication from the Vice President, Office of External Affairs, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, transmitting, the report of final rules revising and updating the Agency's Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act, and Touhy regulations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–4770. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Current Good Manufacturing Practices, Quality Control Procedures, Quality Factors, Notification Requirements, and Records and Reports, for Infant Formula; Correction'' ((RIN0910–AF27) (Docket No. FDA–1995–N–0063)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 26, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4771. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medical Devices; Reports of Corrections and Removals; Technical Amendment'' (Docket No. FDA–2014–N–0011) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 21, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4772. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Administrative Detention; Corrections'' (Docket No. FDA–1997–N–0222) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 21, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4773. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medical Device Reporting: Electronic Submission Requirements'' ((RIN0910–AF86) (Docket No. FDA–2008–N–0393)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 21, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4774. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Current Good Manufacturing Practices, Quality Control Procedures, Quality Factors, Notification Requirements, and Records and Reports, for Infant Formula; Final Rule'' ((RIN0910–AF27) (Docket No. FDA–1995–N–0036)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 18, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4775. A communication from the Program Manager, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''World Trade Center Health Program: Amendments to List of WTC–Related Health Conditions; Cancer; Revision'' (RIN0920–AA50) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 18, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4776. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program'' (RIN1840–AD13) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 24, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4777. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Under Secretary, Science and Technology Directorate, Department of Homeland Security, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 21, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4778. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) for Fiscal Year 2012''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–196. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Iowa requesting the United States Congress to immediately enact a new federal food, farm, and jobs bill; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 102

Whereas, the United States Congress regularly establishes agricultural and food policy in an omnibus farm bill in a bipartisan spirit of cooperation, exemplified by the federal Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, Pub. L. No. 110–246 which originally was to expire in 2012, but was extended by the 112th

Congress in the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, Pub. L. No. 112–240; and

Whereas, a new food, farm, and jobs bill is critical to maintaining a strong agricultural economy and an abundant food supply that benefits all Americans, including by providing programs relating to farm commodity support, horticulture, livestock, conservation, nutrition assistance, trade, and international food aid, agricultural research, farm credit, rural development, bioenergy, forestry, and innovative strategies to revitalize this nation's rural economy by creating jobs in small towns and rural communities; and

Whereas, in Iowa, agricultural producers have faced a multitude of disasters, including drought, flood, and blizzard conditions which have been alleviated by disaster assistance under farm bill programs; and

Whereas, during 2013, the United States Senate and House of Representatives have been engaged in prolonged negotiations to enact a new food, farm, and jobs bill that is now in conference committee which is considering differences between the Senate version, titled the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013 (S. 954), and the House version, titled the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management (FARRM) Act of 2013 (H.R. 2642); and

Whereas, without the passage of a new food, farm, and jobs bill the United States will be subject to previously enacted permanent law, including commodity price support statutes effective in 1949; and

Whereas, the prolonged delay in passing a new food, farm, and jobs bill has created uncertainty for agricultural producers and will negatively impact the nation's overseas trade; and

Whereas, without the immediate passage of a new food, farm, and jobs bill consumers will increasingly suffer economic consequences: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That with the reconvening of the United States Congress after its holiday recess, the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate should enact a new food, farm, and jobs bill with all possible speed but no later than January 31, 2014; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate and the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to the Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the United States Senate, and the Honorable Frank Lucas, Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture of the United States House of Representatives; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to each member of the Iowa congressional delegation; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to the Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture.

POM–197. A joint resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio urging the Congress of the United States to propose a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution and applying to the Congress, pursuant to Article V of the United States Constitution, to call a convention for proposing a balanced budget amendment; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5

Be it resolved by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio:

The General Assembly of the State of Ohio urges the Congress of the United States to propose a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution and hereby applies to the Congress, under the provisions of Article V of the United States Constitution, for the calling of a convention of the states limited to proposing an amendment to the United States Constitution requiring that in the absence of a national emergency the total of all federal appropriations made by the Congress for any fiscal year may not exceed the total of all estimated federal revenues for that fiscal year, together with any related and appropriate Fiscal restraints; and

It is the intention of the General Assembly that matters shall not be considered at the convention that do not pertain to an amendment requiring that, in the absence of a national emergency, the total of all federal appropriations made by the Congress for any fiscal year may not exceed the total of all estimated federal revenues for that fiscal year, together with any related and appropriate fiscal restraints; and be it further

Resolved, The Secretary of State is hereby directed to transmit copies of this application to the President and Secretary of the Senate and to the Speaker and Clerk of the House of Representatives of the Congress, and copies to the members of the Senate and House of Representatives from the State of Ohio; also to transmit copies of this application to the presiding officers of each of the legislative houses of the several states, requesting their cooperation; and be it further

Resolved, This application is to be considered as covering the balanced budget amendment language of the presently outstanding balanced budget applications from other states, including previously adopted applications from Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Texas. This application shall be aggregated with those other applications for the purpose of attaining the two-thirds of states necessary to require the calling of a convention for proposing a balanced budget amendment, but shall not be aggregated with any applications on any other subject; and be it further

Resolved, If the convention called by the Congress is not limited to considering a balanced budget amendment, then any delegates, representatives, or participants from the State of Ohio asked to participate in the convention are authorized to debate and vote only on a proposed amendment or amendments to the United States, Constitution requiring that in the absence of a national emergency the total of all federal appropriations made by the Congress for any fiscal year may not exceed the total of all estimated federal revenues for that fiscal year, together with any related and appropriate fiscal restraints; and be it further

Resolved, This application constitutes a continuing application in accordance with Article V of the United States Constitution until the legislatures of at least two-thirds of the several states have made applications on the same subject or the Congress has proposed an amendment to the United States Constitution equivalent to the amendment proposed in this resolution. This application supersedes all previous applications by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio on the same subject.

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. WHITEHOUSE:

S. 2042. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the National Estuary Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. JOHANNS):

S. 2043. A bill to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from asking taxpayers questions regarding religious, political, or social beliefs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. JOHANNS):

S. 2044. A bill to improve transparency and efficiency with respect to audits and communications between taxpayers and the Internal Revenue Service; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2045. A bill to amend title 17, United States Code, to secure the rights of visual artists to copyright, to provide for resale royalties, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BROWN:

S. 2046. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide Medicare beneficiaries coordinated care and greater choice with regard to accessing hearing health services and benefits; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2047. A bill to prohibit the marketing of electronic cigarettes to children, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. LEE, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2048. A bill to include New Zealand in the list of foreign states whose nationals are eligible for admission into the United States as E–1 and E–2 nonimmigrants if United States nationals are treated similarly by the Government of New Zealand; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 2049. A bill to curb unfair and deceptive practices during assertion of patents, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. Res. 362. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of ''Career and Technical Education Month''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. BEGICH, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. KAINE, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. NELSON, Mr. COBURN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr.

KIRK, Mr. WICKER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. SCOTT, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. UDALL of Colorado):

S. Res. 363. A resolution celebrating Black History Month; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 315

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 315, a bill to reauthorize and extend the Paul D. Wellstone Muscular Dystrophy Community Assistance, Research, and Education Amendments of 2008.

S. 345

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 345, a bill to reform the Federal sugar program, and for other purposes.

S. 357

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 357, a bill to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty.

S. 411

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 411, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 623

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 623, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure the continued access of Medicare beneficiaries to diagnostic imaging services.

S. 810

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 810, a bill to require a pilot program on an online computerized assessment to enhance detection of behaviors indicating a risk of suicide and other mental health conditions in members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

S. 862

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 862, a bill to amend section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an additional religious exemption from the individual health coverage mandate.

S. 919

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 919, a bill to amend the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to provide further self-governance by Indian tribes, and for other purposes.

S. 1280

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1280, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the deductibility of charitable contributions to agricultural research organizations, and for other purposes.

S. 1323

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1323, a bill to address the continued threat posed by dangerous synthetic drugs by amending the Controlled Substances Act relating to controlled substance analogues.

S. 1332

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1332, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 1406

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1406, a bill to amend the Horse Protection Act to designate additional unlawful acts under the Act, strengthen penalties for violations of the Act, improve Department of Agriculture enforcement of the Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1410

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1410, a bill to focus limited Federal resources on the most serious offenders.

S. 1431

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1431, a bill to permanently extend the Internet Tax Freedom Act.

S. 1495

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1495, a bill to direct the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to issue an order with respect to secondary cockpit barriers, and for other purposes.

S. 1587

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1587, a bill to posthumously award the Congressional Gold Medal to each of Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods in recognition of their contributions to the Nation.

S. 1654

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1654, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to deny tax deductions for corporate regulatory violations.

S. 1756

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1756, a bill to amend section 403 of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act to improve and clarify certain disclosure requirements for restaurants, similar retail food establishments, and vending machines.

S. 1862

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1862, a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Monuments Men, in recognition of their heroic role in the preservation, protection, and restitution of monuments, works of art, and artifacts of cultural importance during and following World War II.

S. 1956

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1956, a bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to review the discharge characterization of former members of the Armed Forces who were discharged by reason of the sexual orientation of the member, and for other purposes.

S. 1982

At the request of Mr. KAINE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1982, a bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1982, supra.

S. 2000

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2000, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and improve Medicare payments for physicians and other professionals, and for other purposes.

S. 2012

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2012, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to more effectively regulate anabolic steroids.

S. 2024

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2024, a bill to amend chapter 1 of title 1, United States Code, with regard to the definition of ''marriage'' and ''spouse'' for Federal purposes and to ensure respect for State regulation of marriage.

S. 2036

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms.

HIRONO) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2036, a bill to protect all school children against harmful and life-threatening seclusion and restraint practices.

S. CON. RES. 32

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 32, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the need for investigation and prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, whether committed by officials of the Government of Syria, or members of other groups involved in civil war in Syria, and calling on the President to direct the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations to use the voice and vote of the United States to immediately promote the establishment of a Syrian war crimes tribunal, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 203

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 203, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding efforts by the United States to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a negotiated two-state solution.

AMENDMENT NO. 2752

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2752 intended to be proposed to S. 1982, a bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. LEE, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2048. A bill to include New Zealand in the list of foreign states whose nationals are eligible for admission into the United States as E–1 and E–2 nonimmigrants if United States nationals are treated similarly by the Government of New Zealand; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, today, I introduced bipartisan legislation that would promote trade and investment in America from a critical partner of ours in the Asia-Pacific region, New Zealand. I want to thank Senators LEE, MCCAIN, RUBIO, SCHUMER and MURRAY for cosponsoring this bill and for their support for this commonsense proposal.

The Encouraging Trade and Investment from New Zealand Act would extend eligibility for E–1 and E–2 visas to New Zealand citizens. E–1 visas are available to certain foreign nationals coming to the United States to engage in substantial trade, including trade in services or technology principally between the United States and their home country. E–2 visas are for certain foreign investors coming here to develop and direct the operations of an enterprise in which they invested a substantial amount of capital.

These non-immigrant visas are distinct from EB–5 investor immigrant visas, H1–B work visas and B–1 business visitor visas. Because of the unique structure of E–1 and E–2 visas, they are scrutinized closely by the State Department so that they directly support economic activity and jobs in the United States.

Allowing New Zealanders to apply for these visas would directly promote job creation. In 2010, New Zealand-owned U.S. firms in the United States supported 10,900 American jobs. By the end of 2011, the total value of direct investment from New Zealand to the United States reached $6 billion. While these positive trends continue, the New Zealand government and New Zealand businesses have indicated that the lack of E–1 and E–2 visas is a dominant factor impeding further investment in our country.

The Encouraging Trade and Investment from New Zealand Act would fix that. Because of the changes in our treaty practices, the E–1 and E–2 visas can only be extended to New Zealand through legislation. Historically, we extended trade and investment visas to any country possessing a treaty of friendship, commerce, and navigation with the United States or through other agreements.

Today more than 50 countries have access to E–1, trade, visas, and more than 80 countries have access to E–2, investors, visas. In recent years, the U.S. government has generally stopped pursuing treaties of friendship, commerce, and navigation.

Indeed, in 2012, Congress enacted legislation extending E–1 and E–2 visas to Israel. It is now the right time to do the same for New Zealand.

Attracting trade and investment capital from New Zealand would bolster the reach of the United States' economy in the fast growing Asia-Pacific region. President Obama has made engagement with the Asia-Pacific region a top economic and security priority, the so called ''pivot to Asia,'' and New Zealand is a valued strategic partner.

Extending trade and investment visas would bolster the bilateral relationship, increase foreign investment, and strengthen America's ties to the Asia-Pacific region. Every state will gain from greater trade and investment from New Zealand. In 2012 over 350,000 foreign traders and investors holding E–1 or E–2 visas came to our country and managed a business in all 50 states.

Substantial benefits will accrue to Hawaii—the United States' gateway to Asia and the Pacific. Hawaii has recently seen a substantial increase in tourism from New Zealand, fostered by increased direct flights between New Zealand and Hawaii. In fact, Hawaiian Airlines is the only U.S. airline offering direct service to New Zealand.

New Zealand recently announced that it would be opening a consulate in Honolulu, Hawaii. This consulate will help further bilateral ties and benefit from its proximity to the heart Hawaii's financial district and headquarters of U.S. Pacific Command.

U.S. citizens are already eligible for a similar visa in New Zealand. I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this important initiative to allow them to do the same here to create jobs in our country.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 362—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF ''CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH''

Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, and Ms. BALDWIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 362

Whereas a competitive global economy requires workers to be trained in skilled professions;

Whereas in a National Association of Manufacturers report, 80 percent of respondents indicate a moderate to severe shortage of qualified skilled production employees, including frontline workers, such as machinists, operators, craft workers, distributors, and technicians;

Whereas career and technical education (referred to in this preamble as ''CTE'') has proven to be an effective solution to ensure that competitive, skilled workers are ready, willing, and capable of holding jobs in high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand career fields, such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines, nursing, allied health, construction, information technology, energy sustainability, and many other fields that are vital in keeping the United States competitive in the global economy;

Whereas approximately 14,000,000 students are enrolled in CTE programs, which exist in each State and in nearly 1,300 public high schools and 1,700 2-year colleges across the United States;

Whereas 10 of the 20 fastest growing occupations in the United States require an associate's degree, or a degree with fewer requirements;

Whereas 13 of the 20 occupations with the largest number of new jobs projected require on-the-job training and an associate's degree or certificate, and nearly all such occupations require real-world skills that individuals can master through CTE;

Whereas CTE matches employability skills with workforce demand and provides relevant academic and technical coursework, leading to industry-recognized credentials for secondary and postsecondary education and adult learners;

Whereas CTE students are significantly more likely than non-CTE students to report developing problem-solving, project-completion, research, mathematics, college application, work-related, communication, time management, and critical thinking skills during high school; and

Whereas students at schools with highly-integrated, rigorous academic and CTE programs have significantly higher achievement in reading, mathematics, and science than students at schools with less integrated programs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the month of February as ''Career and Technical Education Month'' to celebrate career and technical education across the United States;

(2) supports the goals and ideals of Career and Technical Education Month;

(3) recognizes the importance of career and technical education in preparing a well-educated and skilled workforce in the United States; and

(4) encourages educators, counselors, and administrators to promote career and technical education as an option for students.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, today I am submitting a resolution with Senator PORTMAN designating February as Career and Technical Education month.

The key to America's continued success lies in improving our Nation's educational system. In a National Association of Manufacturers report, 80 percent of respondents indicate a moderate to severe shortage of qualified skilled production employees, including frontline workers, like machinists, operators, craft workers, distributors, and technicians. If we are to win the race for talent, we need a long-term plan that produces the best workforce in the world.

Career and technical education is a proven solution for creating jobs, retraining workers with the skills they need to fill open positions in the job market, and ensuring students of all ages and all walks of life are career and college ready. Career and technical education will also help close the skills gap to meet the needs of high-growth, skill intensive industries. Approximately 30 percent of jobs by 2018 will require some college or a two-year associate degree, a need which can be met by improved access to career and technical education programs.

Senator PORTMAN and I have also created the Senate Career and Technical Education Caucus, a bipartisan effort committed to strengthening access and improving career and technical education. Through these efforts, we will support students and grow our nation's workforce by ensuring our youth have access to high-quality, rigorous career and technical education that will prepare them for college and for their future careers.

SENATE RESOLUTION 363—CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. BEGICH, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. KAINE, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. NELSON, Mr. COBURN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. KIRK, Mr. WICKER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. SCOTT, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. UDALL of Colorado) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 363

Whereas in 1776, people imagined the United States as a new country dedicated to the proposition stated in the Declaration of Independence that ''all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness . . .'';

Whereas the first Africans were brought involuntarily to the shores of America as early as the 17th century;

Whereas African Americans suffered enslavement and subsequently faced the injustices of lynch mobs, segregation, and denial of the basic and fundamental rights of citizenship;

Whereas inequalities and injustices in our society still exist today;

Whereas in the face of injustices, people of the United States of good will and of all races have distinguished themselves with a commitment to the noble ideals on which the United States was founded and have courageously fought for the rights and freedom of African Americans;

Whereas African Americans, such as James Beckwourth, Bill Pickett, Lieutenant Colonel Allen Allensworth, and Clara Brown, along with many others, worked against racism to achieve success and have made significant contributions to the economic, educational, political, artistic, literary, scientific, and technological advancements of the United States, including the westward expansion;

Whereas the contributions of African Americans from all walks of life throughout the history of the United States reflect the greatness of the United States;

Whereas Muhammad Ali, Constance Baker Motley, James Baldwin, James Beckwourth, Clara Brown, Ralph Bunche, Shirley Chisholm, Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Ralph Ellison, Alex Haley, Dorothy Height, Lena Horne, Charles Hamilton Houston, Mahalia Jackson, Martin Luther King, Jr., the Tuskegee Airmen, Thurgood Marshall, Rosa Parks, Bill Pickett, Jackie Robinson, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Homer Plessy, the Greensboro Four, Simeon Booker, and Booker T. Washington each lived a life of incandescent greatness;

Whereas many African Americans lived, toiled, and died in obscurity, never achieving the recognition they deserved, and yet paved the way for future generations to succeed;

Whereas pioneers, such as Maya Angelou, Arthur Ashe, Jr., Carol Moseley Braun, Ronald Brown, Ursula Burns, Kenneth Chenault, David Dinkins, Alexis Herman, Mae Jemison, Earvin ''Magic'' Johnson, Sheila Johnson, James Earl Jones, David Paterson, Marian Wright Edelman, Alice Walker, Oprah Winfrey, General Colin Powell, Dr. Condoleezza Rice, and Clarence Thomas have all benefitted from their forefathers and have served as great role models and leaders for future generations;

Whereas on November 4, 2008, the people of the United States elected an African-American man, Barack Obama, as President of the United States;

Whereas African Americans continue to serve the United States at the highest levels of government and military;

Whereas on February 22, 2012, President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, along with former First Lady Laura Bush, celebrated the groundbreaking of the National Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall, in Washington, DC;

Whereas the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass inspired the creation of Negro History Week, the precursor to Black History Month;

Whereas Negro History Week represented the culmination of the efforts of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the ''Father of Black History'', to enhance knowledge of Black history through the Journal of Negro History, published by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, which was founded by Dr. Woodson and Jesse E. Moorland;

Whereas Black History Month, celebrated during the month of February, dates back to 1926 when Dr. Woodson set aside a special period in February to recognize the heritage and achievement of Black people of the United States;

Whereas Dr. Woodson stated: ''We have a wonderful history behind us. . . . If you are unable to demonstrate to the world that you have this record, the world will say to you, 'You are not worthy to enjoy the blessings of democracy or anything else.' '';

Whereas since the founding of the United States, the country imperfectly progressed towards noble goals; and

Whereas the history of the United States is the story of people regularly affirming high ideals, striving to reach such ideals but often failing, and then struggling to come to terms with the disappointment of such failure, before committing to trying again: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) acknowledges that all people of the United States are the recipients of the wealth of history provided by Black culture;

(2) recognizes the importance of Black History Month as an opportunity to reflect on the complex history of the United States, while remaining hopeful and confident about the path ahead;

(3) acknowledges the significance of Black History Month as an important opportunity to recognize the tremendous contributions of African Americans to the history of the United States;

(4) encourages the celebration of Black History Month to provide a continuing opportunity for all people in the United States to learn from the past and understand the experiences that have shaped the United States; and

(5) agrees that, while the United States began as a divided nation, the United States must—

(A) honor the contribution of all pioneers in the United States who have helped to ensure the legacy of the great United States; and

(B) move forward with purpose, united tirelessly as ''one Nation . . . indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.''.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2754. Mr. KAINE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2755. Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. BEGICH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2756. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2757. Mr. HELLER (for himself, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. MANCHIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him

to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2758. Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. BURR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2759. Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. BURR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2760. Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. BURR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2761. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2762. Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. BURR, Mr. LEE, and Mr. FLAKE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2763. Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2764. Ms. BALDWIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2765. Ms. STABENOW submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2766. Mr. REID proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2747 proposed by Mr. SANDERS to the bill S. 1982, supra.

SA 2767. Mr. REID proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1982, supra.

SA 2768. Mr. REID proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2767 proposed by Mr. REID to the bill S. 1982, supra.

SA 2769. Mr. REID proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2768 proposed by Mr. REID to the amendment SA 2767 proposed by Mr. REID to the bill S. 1982, supra.

SA 2770. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2771. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2772. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2773. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2774. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2775. Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. BALDWIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2776. Mr. UDALL, of New Mexico (for himself and Mr. HELLER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2777. Mr. UDALL, of New Mexico submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2778. Mr. BOOKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2779. Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2754. Mr. KAINE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 33, after line 18, add the following:

SEC. 207. COURSES UNDER EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AUTHORITIES ADMINISTERED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3679 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c) A course offered by an educational institution in a State that is a required element of the curriculum to be satisfied to obtain employment in an occupation or profession requiring the approval or licensure of a board or agency of that State may be treated as approved for purposes of this chapter by an individual seeking to obtain employment in that occupation or profession only if—

''(1) the successful completion of the curriculum fully qualifies a student to—

''(A) take any examination required for entry into the occupation or profession, including satisfying any State or professionally mandated programmatic and specialized accreditation requirements; and

''(B) be certified or licensed or meet any other academically related pre-conditions that are required for entry into the occupation or profession; and

''(2) in the case of State licensing or professionally mandated requirements for entry into the occupation or profession that require specialized accreditation, the curriculum meets the requirement for specialized accreditation through its accreditation or pre-accreditation by an accrediting agency or association recognized by the Secretary of Education or designated by that State as a reliable authority as to the quality or training offered by the institution in that program.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on August 1, 2014, and shall apply with respect to courses pursued on or after that date.

SEC. 208. REVIVAL OF PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall reestablish the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee of the Department of Veterans Affairs provided for under section 3689(e) of title 38, United States Code. The Committee shall be reestablished in accordance with the provisions of such section 3689(e), as amended by subsection (b), and shall carry out its duties in conformance with, and subject to the requirements of such section, as so amended.

(b) MODIFICATION OF AUTHORITIES AND REQUIREMENTS.—Section 3689(e) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by inserting ''(A)'' after ''(2)''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(B) In addition to the duties under subparagraph (A), the Committee shall—

''(i) develop, in coordination with other appropriate agencies, guidance to be used by the Department or other entities to perform periodic audits of licensure and certification programs to ensure the highest quality education is available to veterans and members of the Armed Forces; and

''(ii) develop, in coordination with the Department of Defense, appropriate certification agencies, and other appropriate nonprofit organizations, a plan to improve outreach to veterans and members of the Armed Forces on the importance of licensing and certification, as well as educational benefits available to them.'';

(2) in paragraph (3)(B), by striking ''and the Secretary of Defense'' and inserting ''the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of Education'';

(3) in paragraph (4), by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following new subparagraph:

''(B) The Committee shall meet with such frequency as the Committee determines appropriate.''; and

(4) in paragraph (5), by striking ''December 31, 2006'' and inserting ''December 31, 2019''.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the reestablishment of the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee of the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to this section, the Committee shall submit to Congress a report setting forth an assessment of the feasibility and advisability of permitting members of the Armed Forces to use educational assistance to which they are entitled under chapters 30 and 33 of title 38, United States Code, to obtain or pursue civilian employment certifications or licenses without the use of such assistance for that purpose being charged against the entitlement of such members to such educational assistance.

SA 2755. Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. BEGICH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 233, strike line 20 and all that follows through page 236, line 25, and insert the following:

SEC. 504. ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS FOR CERTAIN ACCOUNTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 117 is amended—

(1) by striking ''medical care accounts of the Department'' each place it appears and inserting ''covered accounts of the Department'';

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking ''medical care accounts of the Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs account'' and inserting ''accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs account'';

(B) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''Veterans Health Administration,'' after ''(1)'';

(C) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''Veterans Health Administration,'' after ''(2)'';

(D) in paragraph (3), by inserting ''Veterans Health Administration,'' after ''(3)'';

(E) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (3) as paragraphs (7) through (9), respectively;

(F) by inserting before paragraph (7), as redesignated by subparagraph (E), the following new paragraphs:

''(1) Veterans Benefits Administration, Compensation and Pensions.

''(2) Veterans Benefits Administration, Readjustment Benefits.

''(3) Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Insurance and Indemnities.

''(4) Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Housing Benefit Program Fund.

''(5) Veterans Benefits Administration, Vocational Rehabilitation Loans Program Account.

''(6) Veterans Benefits Administration, Native American Veteran Housing Loan Program Account.'';and

(G) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(10) Veterans Health Administration, Medical and Prosthetic Research.

''(11) National Cemetery Administration.

''(12) Departmental Administration, General Administration.

''(13) Departmental Administration, General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration.

''(14) Departmental Administration, Information Technology Systems.

''(15) Departmental Administration, Office of Inspector General.

''(16) Departmental Administration, Construction, Major Projects.

''(17) Departmental Administration, Construction, Minor Projects.

''(18) Departmental Administration, Grants for Construction of State Extended Care Facilities.

''(19) Departmental Administration, Grants for Construction of Veterans Cemeteries.'';

(H) in the subsection heading, by striking ''MEDICAL CARE ACCOUNTS'' and inserting ''COVERED ACCOUNTS''; and

(3) in the section heading, by striking ''**CERTAIN MEDICAL CARE ACCOUNTS**'' and inserting ''**CERTAIN ACCOUNTS**''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to fiscal year 2016 and each subsequent fiscal year.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking the first paragraph (37) and inserting the following:

''(37) information on estimates of appropriations for the fiscal year following the fiscal year for which the budget is submitted for the following accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs:

''(A) Veterans Benefits Administration, Compensation and Pensions.

''(B) Veterans Benefits Administration, Readjustment Benefits.

''(C) Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Insurance and Indemnities.

''(D) Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Housing Benefit Program Fund.

''(E) Veterans Benefits Administration, Vocational Rehabilitation Loans Program Account.

''(F) Veterans Benefits Administration, Native American Veteran Housing Loan Program Account.

''(G) Veterans Health Administration, Medical Services.

''(H) Veterans Health Administration, Medical Support and Compliance.

''(I) Veterans Health Administration, Medical Facilities.

''(J) Veterans Health Administration, Medical and Prosthetic Research.

''(K) National Cemetery Administration.

''(L) Departmental Administration, General Administration.

''(M) Departmental Administration, General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration.

''(N) Departmental Administration, Information Technology Systems.

''(O) Departmental Administration, Office of the Inspector General.

''(P) Departmental Administration, Construction, Major Projects.

''(Q) Departmental Administration, Construction, Minor Projects.

''(R) Departmental Administration, Grants for Construction of State Extended Care Facilities.

''(S) Departmental Administration, Grants for Construction of Veterans Cemeteries.''.

(d) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Such section is further amended by redesignating the second paragraph (37), as added by section 11(a)(2) of the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–352; 124 Stat. 3881), as paragraph (39).

SA 2756. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 291, after line 21, add the following:

Subtitle E—Other Matters

SEC. 641. IMPROVEMENTS TO AUTHORITY FOR PERFORMANCE OF MEDICAL DISABILITIES EXAMINATIONS BY CONTRACT PHYSICIAN.

(a) EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY AUTHORITY.—Subsection (c) of section 704 of the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–183; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2014'' and inserting ''December 31, 2016''.

(b) LICENSURE OF CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.—

(1) TEMPORARY AUTHORITY.—Such section 704 is further amended—

(A) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (e); and

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

''(d) LICENSURE OF CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any law regarding the licensure of physicians, a physician described in paragraph (2) may conduct an examination pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (b) at any location in any State, the District of Columbia, or a Commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States, so long as the examination is within the scope of the authorized duties under such contract.

''(2) PHYSICIAN DESCRIBED.—A physician described in this paragraph is a physician who—

''(A) has a current license to practice the health care profession of the physician; and

''(B) is performing authorized duties for the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (b).''.

(2) PILOT PROGRAM.—Section 504 of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended—

(A) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (d) and (e), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection (c):

''(c) LICENSURE OF CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any law regarding the licensure of physicians, a physician described in paragraph (2) may conduct an examination pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (a) at any location in any State, the District of Columbia, or a Commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States, so long as the examination is within the scope of the authorized duties under such contract.

''(2) PHYSICIAN DESCRIBED.—A physician described in this paragraph is a physician who—

''(A) has a current license to practice the health care profession of the physician; and

''(B) is performing authorized duties for the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (a).''.

(c) EXPANSION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—Subsection (b) of such section 504 is amended to read as follows:

''(b) LOCATIONS.—

''(1) NUMBER.—The Secretary may carry out the pilot program under this section through not more than 15 regional offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

''(2) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall select the regional offices under paragraph (1) by analyzing appropriate data to determine the regional offices that require support. Such appropriate data shall include—

''(A) the number of backlogged claims;

''(B) the total pending case workload;

''(C) the length of time cases have been pending;

''(D) the accuracy of completed cases;

''(E) the overall timeliness of completed cases;

''(F) the availability and workload of the examination units and physicians of the medical centers in the regional office; and

''(G) any other data the Secretary determines appropriate.

''(3) ANNUAL ANALYSIS.—The Secretary shall carry out the data analysis of the regional offices under paragraph (2) during each year in which the program under this section is carried out to determine the regional offices selected under paragraph (1) for such year.''.

SA 2757. Mr. HELLER (for himself, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. MANCHIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title IX, add the following:

SEC. 918. EXCLUSION FROM INCOME.

Section 3(b)(4) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)(4)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and any amounts'' and inserting '', any amounts'';

(2) by striking ''or any deferred'' and inserting '', any deferred''; and

(3) by inserting after ''prospective monthly amounts'' the following: '', and any reimbursement related to aid and attendance as detailed under section 1521 of title 38, United States Code''.

SA 2758. Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. BURR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 76, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

SEC. 330. PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION ON PROVISION OF HEALTH CARE BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish on an Internet database of the Department of Veterans Affairs available to the public information on the provision of health care by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) ELEMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each publication required by paragraph (1) shall include, with respect to each medical facility of the Department during the 180-day period preceding such publication, the following:

(i) An assessment of the outcomes of each surgical procedure with respect to each patient, including—

(I) the quality of such procedure;

(II) any complications that occurred during such procedure; and

(III) the safety of such patient in connection with such procedure.

(ii) The average length of stay for inpatient care.

(iii) A description of any hospital-acquired condition acquired by any patient.

(iv) The rate of readmission of patients within 30 days of release.

(v) The rate of mortality of patients within 30 days of release.

(vi) The rate at which opiods are prescribed to each patient.

(vii) An assessment of the outcomes of mental health treatment with respect to each patient, including—

(I) the suicide rate; and

(II) the safety of such patient in connection with such mental health treatment.

(viii) An assessment of the outcomes of nursing home treatment, if any, with respect to each patient, including the safety of such patient in connection with such nursing home treatment.

(ix) The average wait time for emergency room treatment.

(x) A description of any scheduling backlog with respect to patient appointments.

(B) ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS.—The Secretary may include in each publication required by paragraph (1) any additional information on the safety of facilities of the Department, health outcomes at such facilities, and quality of care at such facilities as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(3) SEARCHABILITY.—The Secretary shall ensure that the Internet database required by paragraph (1) is searchable by State, city, and facility.

(4) PERSONAL INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that personal information connected to information published under paragraph (1) is protected from disclosure as required by applicable law.

(b) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report setting forth recommendations for additional elements to be included with the information published under subsection (a) to improve the evaluation and assessment of the safety and health of individuals receiving care under the laws administered by the Secretary and the quality of care received by such individuals.

SA 2759. Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. BURR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 34, strike line 6 and all that follows through page 38, line 22.

SA 2760. Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. BURR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 76, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

SEC. 330. PROGRAM TO ALLOW INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH CARE FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO RECEIVE SUCH CARE FROM NON-DEPARTMENT ENTITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 17 is amended by inserting after section 1703 the following new section:

"§ 1703A. Program to allow individuals eligible for health care from Department to receive such care from non-Department entities

''(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) Commencing not later than one year after the date of the enactment of the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014, the Secretary shall carry out a program to provide health care and services to eligible individuals described in subsection (b) through non-Department providers and suppliers.

''(2) For purposes of this section:

''(A) The term 'provider' means a provider of services, as that term is defined in subsection (u) of section 1861 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x), participating in the Medicare program under title XVIII of such Act.

''(B) The term 'supplier' means a supplier, as that term is defined in subsection (d) of such section, participating in the Medicare program under title XVIII of such Act.

''(b) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—An eligible individual described in this subsection is an individual who—

''(1) is a veteran, surviving spouse of a veteran, spouse of a veteran, or a child of a veteran; and

''(2) is eligible for health care and services under the laws administered by the Secretary.

''(c) RESTRICTION ON CERTAIN PROVIDERS AND SUPPLIERS.—The Secretary may restrict a provider or supplier from providing care and services under the program if the Secretary determines that veterans have received substandard care from that provider or supplier.

''(d) PAYMENTS TO PROVIDERS AND SUPPLIERS.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2), payment rates to providers and suppliers for the provision of care and services under the program shall not exceed the payment rates under the fee-for-service program under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1355 et seq.) for a comparable item or service.

''(2) The Secretary shall ensure that the aggregate amount paid to non-Department providers and suppliers for the provision of care and services under the program does not exceed the cost of providing such care and services through the Department.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 17 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1703 the following new item:

''1703A. Program to allow individuals eligible for health care from Department to receive such care from non-Department entities.''.

SA 2761. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 76, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

SEC. 330. PILOT PROGRAM TO ALLOW INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE FOR HEALTH CARE FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO RECEIVE SUCH CARE FROM NON-DEPARTMENT ENTITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall commence a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of providing health care and services to eligible individuals described in subsection (b) through non-Department providers and at non-Department facilities.

(b) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—Eligible individuals described in this subsection are veterans, surviving spouses of veterans, spouses of veterans, and children of veterans (as those terms are defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code) who are eligible for health care and services under the laws administered by the Secretary.

(c) PROVIDERS AND FACILITIES.—In carrying out the pilot program under this section, the Secretary shall select such non-Department providers and such non-Department facilities as the Secretary considers appropriate to provide health care and services as described in subsection (a).

(d) LOCATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (3), the Secretary shall carry out the pilot program at not more than 40 locations selected by the Secretary for purposes of the pilot program, which shall include at least one location within each Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN).

(2) PRIORITY.—In selecting locations under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall give priority consideration to those locations in which individuals seeking primary care appointments at the nearest medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs have the longest average wait time.

(3) ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS.—The Secretary may expand the pilot program to include more than 40 locations as the Secretary considers appropriate on the earlier of—

(A) the date that the Secretary determines that the pilot program—

(i) is cost effective, feasible, and advisable; and

(ii) has equal or better outcomes and satisfaction among veterans as compared to health care and services received through providers and facilities of the Department; or

(B) three years after the date of the commencement of the pilot program.

(e) PAYMENTS TO PROVIDERS AND FACILITIES.—

(1) PAYMENT RATES.—Subject to paragraph (2), in carrying out the pilot program under this section, the Secretary shall specify the rates by which non-Department providers and non-Department facilities are paid for the provision of care and services under the pilot program.

(2) LIMITATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that the aggregate amount paid to non-Department providers and non-Department facilities for the provision of care and services under the pilot program does not exceed the cost of providing such care and services through providers and facilities of the Department.

SA 2762. Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. BURR, Mr. LEE, and Mr. FLAKE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 367, after line 14, insert the following:

SEC. 817. LIMITATION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PROGRAMS AND EXPANSION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not implement any new program or expand any existing program pursuant to any provision of this Act until the Comptroller General of the United States certifies to Congress that the Secretary is meeting all strategic targets for every program measure established in the report of the Department

of Veterans Affairs entitled ''2013 Performance and Accountability Report''.

SA 2763. Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 291, after line 21, add the following:

Subtitle E—Other Claims Processing Matters

SEC. 641. INSPECTOR GENERAL INVESTIGATION INTO WHETHER EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DESTROYED FILES TO MISREPRESENT BACKLOG OF CLAIMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall commence an investigation to assess whether employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs have destroyed files in order to misrepresent the backlog of claims filed with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary.

(b) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General shall submit to Congress a report on the findings of the Inspector General with respect to the investigation carried out pursuant to subsection (a).

SA 2764. Ms. BALDWIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 131, after line 19, add the following:

SEC. 365. AGREEMENTS WITH ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO VETERANS WHO ARE SURVIVORS OF MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.

(a) MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into a memorandum of understanding with an organization described in subsection (b) to provide services to veterans who are survivors of military sexual trauma.

(b) COVERED ORGANIZATIONS.—Organizations described in this subsection are civilian organizations, including the following:

(1) Nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations.

(2) Religious or community-based organizations.

(3) Federally qualified health centers.

(4) The Indian Health Service.

(c) PURPOSE.—The purpose of a memoranda of understanding entered into under subsection (a) shall be to facilitate working and collegial relationships between the senior leadership of the Department of Veterans Affairs and an organization described in subsection (b) in order to assist the Department in better addressing military sexual trauma in one or more veteran communities.

(d) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not less frequently than once each year, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on any memoranda of understanding entered into under subsection (a).

(2) IN GENERAL.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) How many memoranda have been entered into and are currently in force.

(B) The strategies in such memoranda.

(C) The outcomes of the relationships sought through such memoranda.

(D) Such recommendations as the Secretary may have for legislative or administrative action to facilitate a relationship described in subsection (c) or otherwise better address military sexual trauma in a veteran community.

SEC. 366. REPORT ON FEASIBILITY AND ADVISABILITY OF SUPPORTING PARTNERSHIPS TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO VETERANS WHO ARE SURVIVORS OF MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the feasibility and advisability of supporting partnerships between local medical facilities (as defined in section 8101 of title 38, United States Code) with organizations described in subsection (b) to provide services (including mental health services and trauma-informed services) to veterans who are survivors of military sexual trauma.

(b) COVERED ORGANIZATIONS.—Organizations described in this subsection are civilian organizations, including the following:

(1) Nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations.

(2) Religious or community-based organizations.

(3) Federally qualified health centers.

(4) The Indian Health Service.

(c) CONTENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An assessment of the effect of the Patient-Center Community Care program of the Department of Veterans Affairs on the provision of specialty care for survivors of military sexual trauma.

(2) An assessment of the feasibility and advisability of supporting partnerships as described in subsection (a) in not fewer than three Veterans Integrated Service Networks.

(3) Recommendations as to the kinds or types of organizations to which medical facilities should partner as described in subsection (a), including recommendations on the following:

(A) Nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations, the primary purpose of which is to provide services to survivors of military sexual trauma, sexual assault, domestic violence, family violence, or stalking.

(B) Religious or community-based organizations that specialize in working with survivors described in subparagraph (A).

SA 2765. Ms. STABENOW submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 109, strike lines 18 through 22 and insert the following:

(2) The number of individuals participating in the pilot program at each site, disaggregated by—

(A) age;

(B) sex;

(C) disability rating;

(D) any illness or condition co-occurring with the mental health disorder for which the individual is receiving treatment under the pilot program and with which the individual has been previously diagnosed by the Department; and

(E) whether or not the individual is homeless.

(3) A detailed assessment of the effectiveness of the pilot program, including a survey of each veteran participating in the pilot program, to determine the impact of the program on—

(A) the success of such veteran in obtaining and maintaining gainful employment;

(B) the success of such veteran in pursuing and completing educational opportunities;

(C) the interpersonal relationships of such veteran, including relationships with family members; and

(D) the success of such veteran in achieving stable housing.

SA 2766. Mr. REID proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2747 proposed by Mr. SANDERS to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

This Act shall become effective 1 day after enactment.

SA 2767. Mr. REID proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

This Act shall become effective 3 days after enactment.

SA 2768. Mr. REID proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2767 proposed by Mr. REID to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; as follows:

In the amendment, strike ''3 days'' and insert ''4 days''.

SA 2769. Mr. REID proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2768 proposed by Mr. REID to the amendment SA 2767 proposed by Mr. REID to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; as follows:

In the amendment, strike ''4 days'' and insert ''5 days''.

SA 2770. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 155, strike line 8 and all that follows through page 157, line 17.

SA 2771. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 132, strike line 13 and all that follows through the matter preceding line 1 on page 134.

SA 2772. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 39, strike lines 18 through 25.

SA 2773. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the

provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 122, after line 20, insert the following:

SEC. 356. TERMINATION OF CERTAIN PROGRAMS RELATING TO DENTAL CARE.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM ON EXPANSION OF FURNISHING OF DENTAL CARE TO VETERANS.—Notwithstanding subsection (b) of section 352, the pilot program required by such section shall terminate not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) PROGRAM OF EDUCATION TO PROMOTE DENTAL HEALTH FOR VETERANS.—The program required by section 353 shall terminate not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) PILOT PROGRAM ON DENTAL INSURANCE.—Notwithstanding section 354(b), the dental insurance pilot program established by section 17.169 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, shall terminate not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2774. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 53, strike line 13 and all that follows through page 61, line 5.

SA 2775. Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. BALDWIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. 918. DEFINITION OF SPOUSE FOR PURPOSES OF VETERAN BENEFITS TO REFLECT NEW STATE DEFINITIONS OF SPOUSE.

(a) SPOUSE DEFINED.—Section 101 is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by striking ''of the opposite sex''; and

(2) by striking paragraph (31) and inserting the following new paragraph (31):

''(31)(A) An individual shall be considered a 'spouse' if—

''(i) the marriage of the individual is valid in the State in which the marriage was entered into; or

''(ii) in the case of a marriage entered into outside any State—

''(I) if the marriage of the individual is valid in the place in which the marriage was entered into; and

''(II)(aa) the marriage could have been entered into in a State; or

''(bb) the marriage was valid in the place in which all parties to the marriage resided at the time the marriage was entered into.

''(B) In this paragraph, the term 'State' has the meaning given that term in paragraph (20), except that the term also includes the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.''.

(b) MARRIAGE DETERMINATION.—Section 103(c) is amended by striking ''according to'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''in accordance with section 101(31) of this title.''.

SA 2776. Mr. UDALL of New Mexico (for himself and Mr. HELLER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 155, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

Subtitle I—Health Care for Rural Veterans

SEC. 391. PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE TO CERTAIN VETERANS IN RURAL AND HIGHLY RURAL AREAS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide mental health care to eligible veterans described in subsection (c) for which a determination has been made under subsection (d).

(b) USE OF OTHER PROVIDERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may provide mental health care under this section by contracting with or providing payments to mental health care providers that are not otherwise affiliated with the Department of Veterans Affairs and shall, to the extent feasible, use health care resources pursuant to existing arrangements, contracts, or agreements entered into under section 8153 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) PAYMENTS.—The Secretary may not provide payments described in paragraph (1) that exceed the amount that the Secretary would otherwise expend in providing similar mental health care through the Department or under such existing arrangements, contracts, or agreements.

(c) ELIGIBLE VETERANS.—An eligible veteran described in this subsection is a veteran that—

(1) has a mental health issue resulting from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, or any other health condition that was incurred or aggravated in line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service; and

(2) lives in a rural area or highly rural area.

(d) DETERMINATION.—The Secretary shall provide the care required by subsection (a) to an eligible veteran if the Secretary determines any of the following:

(1)(A) A mental health care provider affiliated with the Department is not available to provide mental health care services to the eligible veteran at the medical facility of the Department that is nearest to the residence of the eligible veteran; and

(B)(i) in-person and telehealth mental health care services from the Department are not available to the eligible veteran;

(ii) the eligible veteran requests that a mental health care provider affiliated with the Department provide mental health care services to the eligible veteran in private and the provider is unable or unwilling to do so; or

(iii) travel by the eligible veteran to a regional medical center of the Department is impractical or severely detrimental to the health of the eligible veteran.

(2) That—

(A)(i) a mental health care provider affiliated with the Department has recommended that a complementary and alternative therapy approved by the Food and Drug Administration be administered to the eligible veteran;

(ii) the eligible veteran is a member of an Indian tribe or a Native Hawaiian and requests a healing method that is a cultural tradition of the eligible veteran; or

(iii) a mental health care provider has recommended a treatment for the eligible veteran that, based on the medical knowledge of the health care provider, is safe and would assist the eligible veteran in coping with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, or another mental health issue; and

(B)(i) the eligible veteran has not received the therapy, healing method, or treatment described in subparagraph (A) because of the inaccessibility or unavailability of such treatment from a medical facility of the Department; and

(ii) the eligible veteran, as a result of the mental health condition of the eligible veteran—

(I) cannot work or maintain employment;

(II) is at increased risk of doing physical harm to the eligible veteran or others; or

(III) cannot adequately manage activities of daily life.

(e) INDIAN TRIBE DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''Indian tribe'' has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b).

SEC. 392. GRANTS TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION TO COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS FOR VETERANS IN RURAL AND HIGHLY RURAL AREAS.

(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may award grants to eligible entities to provide transportation to veterans in rural and highly rural areas who would otherwise be eligible for reimbursement for or payment of travel expenses by the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to section 111 or section 111A of title 38, United States Code.

(2) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The Secretary may not award a grant under this section in an amount that exceeds $100,000.

(3) NO MATCHING REQUIRED.—The Secretary may not require that an eligible entity provide a contribution of funds as a condition of receiving the grant.

(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—The Secretary may award grants under this section to any of the following entities:

(1) State veterans agencies.

(2) Veterans service organizations.

(3) Tribal organizations.

(c) USE OF GRANTS.—Eligible entities in receipt of a grant under this section may use the grant amount as follows:

(1) To provide transportation to veterans in rural and highly rural areas to and from medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including transportation by air or sea if necessary.

(2) To otherwise assist veterans in rural and highly rural areas with transportation in connection with the provision of medical care to those veterans, including transportation by air or sea if necessary.

(d) APPLICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible entity seeking a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require.

(2) CONTENTS.—Each application submitted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall contain a proposal for the manner in which the eligible entity seeks to provide the transportation described in subsection (a).

(e) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall give priority in the awarding of grants under this section to applications submitted under subsection (d) that contain proposals that comply with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) and regulations issued by the Secretary of Transportation under such section 504.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.—The term ''tribal organization'' has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b).

(2) VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION.—The term ''veterans service organization'' means

an organization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 393. PILOT PROGRAM ON HOUSING ALLOWANCES FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ACCEPTING ASSIGNMENT AT RURAL AND HIGHLY RURAL COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out a pilot program to assess the feasability and advisability of providing a housing allowance to health care providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs who accept assignment at rural or highly rural community-based outpatient clinics as a means of encouraging such health care providers to accept assignment to such Clinics.

(b) ELIGIBILITY.—An individual is eligible for participation in the pilot program if the individual—

(1) is a health care provider;

(2) is, or agrees to become, an employee of the Veterans Health Administration on a full-time basis in a health care position designated by the Secretary for purposes of the pilot program; and

(3) accepts an assignment in such position for a term of not less than 36 months at a rural or highly rural community-based outpatient clinic selected by the Secretary for purposes of the pilot program.

(c) CONDITIONS ON PAYMENT OF HOUSING ALLOWANCE.—Except as provided in subsection (d)(3), an individual may be provided a housing allowance under the pilot program only while—

(1) in good standing as a health care provider within the Veterans Health Administration; and

(2) assigned as a health care provider at a rural or highly rural community-based outpatient clinic.

(d) AMOUNT OF HOUSING ALLOWANCE.—

(1) MONTHLY AMOUNT DURING INITIAL TERM.—During the first 36 months of participation in the pilot program, the housing allowance provided a health care provider participating in the pilot program shall be provided on a monthly basis at a rate that is equivalent to the monthly rate of basic allowance for housing (BAH) payable under section 403 of title 37, United States Code, to members of the uniformed services whose grade, dependency status, and geographic location most closely equals, as determined by the Secretary, the grade of such provider under section 7404 of title 38, United States Code, and the dependency status and geographic location of such provider.

(2) MONTHLY AMOUNT FOR CERTAIN PROVIDERS FOR ADDITIONAL TERM.—If upon completion of the first 36 months in the pilot program a health care provider accepts continuing participation in the pilot program at a rural or highly rural community-based outpatient clinic for a term of not less than 12 additional months, the housing allowance provided the health care provider under the pilot program shall be provided on a monthly basis for such additional months at a rate determined in accordance with paragraph (1).

(3) BONUS AMOUNT.—

(A) COMPLETION OF INITIAL TERM.—Any health care provider who successfully completes 36 months of participation in the pilot program shall be paid upon completion of participation in the pilot program an amount equal to three months of the monthly rate of housing allowance provided the health care provider under paragraph (1) during the last month before the provider's completion of participation in the pilot program.

(B) COMPLETION OF ADDITIONAL ONE-YEAR TERM.—Any health care provider who successfully completes 48 months of participation in the pilot program shall be paid upon completion of participation in the pilot program an amount equal to 12 months of the monthly rate of housing allowance provided the health care provider under paragraph (2) during the last month before the provider's completion of participation in the pilot program.

(C) COMPLETION OF ADDITIONAL TWO-YEAR TERM.—Any health care provider who successfully completes 60 months of participation in the pilot program shall be paid upon completion of participation in the pilot program an amount equal to 13 months of the monthly rate of housing allowance provided the health care provider under paragraph (2) during the last month before the provider's completion of participation in the pilot program.

(D) NO REQUIREMENT TO REMAIN ON ASSIGNMENT.—An amount payable under this paragraph shall be paid whether or not the health care provider concerned remains in an assignment at a rural or highly rural community-based outpatient clinic.

(e) NATURE OF ALLOWANCE.—

(1) SUPPLEMENTAL AMOUNT.—Any housing allowance provided under the pilot program shall be in addition to any pay (including basic pay, special pay, and retirement or other bonus pay) payable to personnel of the Veterans Health Administration personnel under chapter 74 of title 38, United States Code, or any other provision of law.

(2) EXEMPTION FROM TAXATION.—For purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, any housing allowance provided under the pilot program shall not be included in gross income.

(f) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and not less frequently than once each year thereafter while the pilot program is in effect, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the pilot program.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A current description of the pilot program, including the current number of participants in the pilot program and the amounts of housing allowance being provided such participants.

(B) A current assessment of the value of the housing allowance under the pilot program in encouraging health care providers in accepting assignment to rural and highly rural community-based outpatient clinics.

(g) FUNDING.—Amounts for housing allowances under the pilot program shall be derived from amounts available for the Veterans Health Administration for Medical Services.

(h) SUNSET.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—No individual may commence participation in the pilot program on or after the date that is five years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) CONTINUATION OF ON-GOING PROVISION OF ALLOWANCE.—Nothing in paragraph (1) shall be construed to prohibit the Secretary from providing housing allowances under the pilot program to individuals who commence participation in the pilot program before the date that is five years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(i) RURAL OR HIGHLY RURAL COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''rural or highly rural community-based outpatient clinic'' means a community-based outpatient clinic of the Veterans Health Administration that predominantly serves veterans who live in rural and highly rural areas.

SEC. 394. PROGRAM ON TRAINING HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS FOR ASSIGNMENT AT COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS THAT PREDOMINANTLY SERVE VETERANS WHO LIVE IN RURAL AND HIGHLY RURAL AREAS.

(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a program to train health care professionals for assignment at community-based outpatient clinics that predominantly serve veterans who live in rural and highly rural areas.

(2) PARTNERSHIP WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the program, the Secretary may enter into partnerships with educational institutions.

(B) CONSULTATION.—If the Secretary enters into a partnership with an educational institution to carry out the program, the Secretary shall consult with the head of such educational institution with respect to the training and curriculum provided under the program at such educational institution.

(b) TRAINING.—The training provided to health care professionals under the program shall include the following courses:

(1) Courses on general professional development of health care professionals.

(2) Courses on providing health care to rural populations and specifically to rural veterans.

(c) CURRICULUM.—The program shall include training with respect to health issues that commonly afflict veterans as specified by the Secretary.

(d) HIRING PREFERENCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each health care professional that completes the program and completes a three-year assignment at a community-based outpatient clinic that predominantly serves veterans who live in rural and highly rural areas shall receive a preference in selection for employment in the Veterans Health Administration at the end of such three-year assignment.

(2) DEGREE OF PREFERENCE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The preference received under paragraph (1) shall be less than the preference given a veteran.

(B) VETERANS.—A veteran that receives a preference under paragraph (1) shall receive a greater preference than an individual that receives a preference under such paragraph who is not a veteran.

SEC. 395. ENCOURAGING AND FACILITATING TRANSITION OF MILITARY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS INTO EMPLOYMENT WITH VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

(a) ENCOURAGING EMPLOYMENT WITH VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly establish a program to encourage an individual who serves in the Armed Forces with a military occupational specialty relating to the provision of health care to seek employment with the Veterans Health Administration when the individual has been discharged or released from service in the Armed Forces or is contemplating separating from such service.

(b) MATCHING OF MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTIES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly identify military occupational specialties relating to the provision of health care and match such occupational specialties with occupations and positions of employment within the Veterans Health Administration for which experience in such military occupational specialty qualifies one for employment in such occupation or position of employment.

(c) FACILITATION OF TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT WITH VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and

the Secretary of Defense shall prescribe such regulations and take such actions as may be necessary to facilitate the transition of individuals with military occupational specialties identified under subsection (b) into the corresponding occupations and positions of employment with the Veterans Health Administration under such subsection.

SEC. 396. ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS IN RURAL AND HIGHLY RURAL AREAS.

(a) ASSESSMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a periodic assessment of community-based outpatient clinics in rural and highly rural areas to determine whether expansion and improvement of community-based outpatient clinics in those areas is feasible or advisable.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each periodic assessment required by subsection (a) shall include the following with respect to each community-based outpatient clinic assessed:

(A) An assessment of whether the facility—

(i) meets applicable building code requirements;

(ii) meets applicable health care requirements related to privacy;

(iii) has the capacity to handle the number of patients that seek care at the facility;

(iv) has sufficient parking for patients that seek care at the facility;

(v) has adequate access to broadband technology to allow the use or expansion of telehealth services at the facility; and

(vi) has the capacity to properly store and dispose of medical and other hazardous waste.

(B) A survey of health care providers who practice at the facility with respect to—

(i) strengths of the facility;

(ii) weaknesses of the facility; and

(iii) areas in which the facility may be improved.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than once each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report on the findings of the Secretary with respect to the most recently completed assessment conducted under subsection (a), including such recommendations as the Secretary may have for the expansion or improvement of community-based outpatient clinics in rural and highly rural areas.

SEC. 397. REPORT ON ESTABLISHMENT OF POLYTRAUMA REHABILITATION CENTERS OR POLYTRAUMA NETWORK SITES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN RURAL AREAS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the feasibility and advisability of establishing a Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center or Polytrauma Network Site in each area in which the nearest Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center or Polytrauma Network Site is more than 300 miles away.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The report required by this section shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the adequacy of existing Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers and Polytrauma Network Sites in providing care to veterans that live more than 300 miles from such facilities.

(B) An assessment of the adequacy of existing Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers and Polytrauma Network Sites in providing rehabilitation services pursuant to section 1710C of title 38, United States Code.

(C) An assessment of the feasibility and advisability of establishing a Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center or Polytrauma Network Site in each State in which there is a medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(D) An assessment of whether establishing new Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers and Polytrauma Network Sites would be beneficial—

(i) to the veteran population in general;

(ii) to veterans who live—

(I) more than 300 miles from the nearest Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center or Polytrauma Network Site; or

(II) in a State in which there is not a Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center or Polytrauma Network Site; and

(iii) to veterans who served in the active military, naval, or air service on or after September 11, 2001.

(2) BUDGET FOR ADDITIONAL FACILITIES.—If the Secretary determines that establishing additional Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers and Polytrauma Network Sites is feasible and advisable, the Secretary shall include with the report required by subsection (a) a budget and plan for the establishment of those additional facilities.

SEC. 398. REPORT ON EFFECTIVENESS OF COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE IN TREATING VETERANS WITH CERTAIN MENTAL ILLNESSES.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the effectiveness of complementary and alternative medicine used by the Department of Veterans Affairs in treating veterans with mental health conditions resulting from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, or any other health condition that was incurred or aggravated in line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service.

SEC. 399. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

(1) ACTIVE MILITARY, NAVAL, OR AIR SERVICE.—The term ''active military, naval, or air service'' has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) HIGHLY RURAL AREA.—The term ''highly rural area'' means an area located in a county that has less than seven individuals residing in that county per square mile.

(3) RURAL AREA.—The term ''rural area'' means any area that is not an urbanized area or a highly rural area.

(4) URBANIZED AREA.—The term ''urbanized area'' has the meaning given that term by the Director of the Bureau of the Census.

SA 2777. Mr. UDALL of New Mexico submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 33, after line 18, add the following:

SEC. 207. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO INCLUDE SERVICE ON ACTIVE DUTY IN ENTRY LEVEL AND SKILL TRAINING UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

(a) FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO SERVE BETWEEN 18 AND 24 MONTHS.—Section 3311(b)(5)(A) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''excluding'' and inserting ''including''.

(b) FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO SERVED IN OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM, OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, OR CERTAIN OTHER CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS.—Section 3311(b) of such title is amended in paragraphs (6)(A) and (7)(A) by striking ''excluding service on active duty in entry level and skill training'' and inserting ''including service on active duty in entry level and skill training for individuals who served on active duty in the Armed Forces in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, or any other contingency operation (as that term is defined in section 101 of title 10) and excluding service on active duty in entry level and skill training for all other individuals''.

SA 2778. Mr. BOOKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 110, between lines 13 and 14, insert the following:

SEC. 345. REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PATIENT-CENTERED COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 450 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than September 30 each year thereafter for two years, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the program described in subsection (b).

(b) PROGRAM DESCRIBED.—The program described in this subsection is the program carried out by the Veterans Health Administration that offers veterans access to non-Department of Veterans Affairs inpatient specialty care, outpatient specialty care, mental health care, limited emergency care, and limited newborn care, commonly known as the ''Patient-Centered Community Care Program''.

(c) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A description of the specific factors used by the Department to determine the use of the program described in subsection (b) by facilities of the Department.

(2) An analysis of the 10 health care services most frequently provided through the program and any recommendations by the Secretary to expand access to such services at facilities of the Department.

(3) An analysis of the quality of care provided through the program, including feedback from health care providers.

(4) An analysis of whether required medical documentation from health care providers participating in the program is provided to the Department in a timely and comprehensive manner for inclusion in the electronic health records of veterans.

(5) An analysis of the timeliness of payments made by the Department to health care providers for services provided through the program.

(6) A description of the specific factors used by the Department in determining if a veteran is eligible for care through non-Department providers, including such care that is not provided through the program.

(7) A description of the impact of the program on veterans participating in the program, including—

(A) the average increase or reduction in any travel required by such veterans for care;

(B) the average increase or reduction in wait-times by such veterans for care; and

(C) an analysis of the satisfaction of such veterans with the program.

(8) In response to information compiled or analyses conducted under paragraphs (1)

through (7), a description of any proposed mechanisms—

(A) to reduce travel required by veterans to receive care;

(B) to reduce wait-times for veterans receiving care; or

(C) to increase the quality of care received by veterans.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2779. Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 291, after line 21, add the following:

Subtitle E—Other Claims Processing Matters

SEC. 641. INSPECTOR GENERAL INVESTIGATION INTO WHETHER EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DESTROYED FILES TO MISREPRESENT BACKLOG OF CLAIMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall commence an investigation to assess—

(1) whether employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs have destroyed files; and

(2) whether the destruction of such files was carried out in order to misrepresent the backlog of claims filed with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary.

(b) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General shall submit to Congress a report on the findings of the Inspector General with respect to the investigation carried out pursuant to subsection (a).

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 26, 2014, at 10:30 a.m., to hold a hearing entitled ''Treaties.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 26, 2014, at 2:15 a.m., to hold a hearing entitled ''Prospects for Peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Great Lakes Region.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 26, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room S–216 of the Capitol Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 26, 2014, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Early Childhood Development and Education in Indian Country: Building a Foundation for Academic Success.''

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

PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 26, 2014, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Offshore Tax Evasion: The Effort to Collect Unpaid Taxes on Billions in Hidden Offshore Accounts.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ANTITRUST, COMPETITION POLICY, AND CONSUMER RIGHTS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy, and Consumer Rights, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on February 26, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''An Examination of Competition in the Wireless Market.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 26, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Social Security, Pensions, and Family Policy of the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 26, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Retirement Savings for Low-Income Workers.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 26, 2014, at 10 a.m.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Jason Dean, a military fellow in my office, be granted the privilege of the floor for the remainder of this Congress.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 1752 AND S. 1917

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, with the concurrence of Senator MCCONNELL, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 251, S. 1752; that if a cloture motion is filed on the bill, there be 2 hours of debate on S. 1752 and S. 1917, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate immediately proceed to the vote on the motion to invoke cloture; that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate immediately proceed to vote on passage of the bill; that no amendments, points of order or motions be in order to the bill prior to the vote on passage; that if the motion to invoke cloture on S. 1752 is not agreed to, the bill be returned to the calendar; that upon the conclusion of the consideration of S. 1752, the Senate immediately proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 293, S. 1917; that if a cloture motion is filed on the bill, the Senate immediately proceed to a vote on the motion to invoke cloture; that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate immediately proceed to vote on passage of the bill; that no amendments, points of order or motions be in order to the bill prior to the vote on passage; that if the motion to invoke cloture on S. 1917 is not agreed to, the bill be returned to the calendar.

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

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 363.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 363) celebrating Black History Month.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 363) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2014

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 27, 2014; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half; and that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of S. 1982, the veterans benefits bill, with the time until 2 p.m. equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senator SESSIONS controlling 30 minutes of the Republican time and Senator GRAHAM or his designee recognized at 1:45 p.m.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there will be a series of rollcall votes tomorrow starting at 2 p.m. We also expect to consider the nomination of Michael Connor to be Deputy Secretary of Interior tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:57 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, February 27, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

THE JUDICIARY

ROBIN L. ROSENBERG, OF FLORIDA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA, VICE ADALBERTO JOSE JORDAN, ELEVATED.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

LT. GEN. GREGORY A. BISCONE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. THOMAS J. TRASK

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. ANDREW J. TOTH

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COLONEL MARK W. ANDERSON
COLONEL DAVID P. BACZEWSKI
COLONEL JEFFREY W. BURKETT
COLONEL CONRAD C. CALDWELL III
COLONEL JEFFREY B. CASHMAN
COLONEL CHARLES W. CHAPPUIS
COLONEL JOEL A. CLARK
COLONEL PATRICK J. COBB
COLONEL THOMAS B. CUCCHI
COLONEL JOHN B. DANIEL
COLONEL GEORGE M. DEGNON
COLONEL WILLIAM D. DEHAES
COLONEL WILLIAM D. DOCKERY, JR.
COLONEL MICHAEL E. GUILLORY
COLONEL ANDREW E. HALTER
COLONEL TIMOTHY J. HARMESON
COLONEL PAUL G. HAVEL
COLONEL JILL L. HENDRA
COLONEL ALAN K. HODGDON
COLONEL JOSEPH M. JABARA
COLONEL WENDY K. JOHNSON
COLONEL TIMOTHY M. JONES
COLONEL THOMAS J. KENNETT
COLONEL KERRY L. MUEHLENBECK
COLONEL TIMOTHY A. MULLEN
COLONEL JOHN W. OGLE III
COLONEL RYAN T. OKAHARA
COLONEL THOMAS J. OWENS II
COLONEL RUSSELL A. RUSHE
COLONEL DAVID P. SAN CLEMENTE
COLONEL DIANA M. SHOOP
COLONEL JESSE T. SIMMONS, JR.
COLONEL DAVID A. SIMON
COLONEL MARK C. SNYDER
COLONEL JOHN G. SOTOS
COLONEL RONALD C. STAMPS
COLONEL RANDOLPH J. STAUDENRAUS
COLONEL FRANK H. STOKES
COLONEL SCOTT A. STUDER
COLONEL MICHAEL R. TAHERI
COLONEL RONALD B. TURK
COLONEL STEVEN C. WARREN
COLONEL ROGER E. WILLIAMS, JR.
COLONEL RONALD W. WILSON
COLONEL BRYAN F. WITEOF
COLONEL BRETT A. WYRICK
COLONEL RICKY G. YODER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be major

DARVIN E. WINTERS, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUALS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADES INDICATED IN THE REGULAR AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant colonel

BRUCE E. STERNKE

To be major

BRIAN D. LAYTON
ELIZABETH M. F. LIBAO

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR REGULAR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be major

JEFFREY A. UHERKA

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR REGULAR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY AS A CHAPLAIN UNDER TITLE 10, U.S. C., SECTIONS 531 AND 3064:

To be major

STEVEN K. WHITE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADES INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY NURSE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 3064:

To be lieutenant colonel

DANIEL B. THOMPSON

To be major

JOCHEBED B. ADEOSHIFOGUN
RENITA J. ELDERYETT
FESTINA R. HUMEDAWSON
MICHAEL W. KINSHELLA
TODD A. MORRIS

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 6222:

To be lieutenant colonel

JASON K. FETTIG

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 6222:

To be major

MICHELLE A. RAKERS

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant commander

OGWO U. OGWO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

WILLIAM RABCHENIA

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 5721:

To be lieutenant commander

MATTHEW M. ANTHONY
JOHN T. APPELBAUM
KURT C. ASTROTH
MICHAEL L. BECKMAN
CHRISTOPHER G. BOEHM
MARTY E. BURNS
MARK W. CARTWRIGHT
MARIO G. CASTELLANOS
DONALD E. COOMES
KEVIN M. DORE
HENRY P. ESHENOUR
STEVEN L. EVANS, JR.
TIMOTHY A. FOX
RYAN C. GEORGE
LEIF E. GUNDERSON
SAMUEL F. HARTLEY
PHILLIP C. HERNDL
ISAIABENETTE E. INFANTE
AMEIAN JEREMIAH
BJORN A. JOHNSON
LAUREN M. JOHNSON
PHILLIP C. JOLLEY
JOSHUA C. KING
KENNETH M. KIRKWOOD
REED A. KITCHEN
WILLIAM E. KNIPS
KERRY M. MAJOR
MICHAEL C. MARSH
NATHAN P. MATHERLY
STEVEN G. MAY
ALEXANDER M. MCMAHON
JAMES T. MCRANDLE
MATTHEW J. MINCK
BRAD W. MUSKOPF
ROBERT C. NEMETH
PAUL G. ODANIEL
ART K. PALALAY
LEON W. PLATT, JR.
TIMOTHY L. REEDER
CHRISTOPHER V. SEIVERS
JEFFREY M. SKLADZIEN
JUSTIN B. SMITH
MATTHEW E. SMITH
ROBERT B. SUTTER
THOMAS A. WILLIAMS

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING THE SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY'S BEYOND BOLLYWOOD EXHIBIT

HON. AMI BERA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center. This week, they open a new exhibition called ''Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation.'' One out of every 100 Americans traces his or her roots back to India, me included. As a first-generation Indian American born and raised in California, I am here today largely because of the Indian Americans of my parents' generation who paved the way with their dedication to hard work, education, and family. It is important for us to recognize this remarkable community's contributions to our country.

The new exhibit examines the daily experiences of Indian Americans and highlights the impacts they've had on our Nation, from breakthroughs in medicine and technology to the election of Dalip Singh Saund, the first Asian-American member of Congress, elected in 1956. It is the first exhibit of its kind to explore the Indian American experience and celebrate the history and achievements of this community's political, professional, and cultural contributions to American life and history. I commend the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History for their support and recognition of this country's 3.3 million Indian Americans and their dedication to furthering national dialogue about a community that has become integral to the fabric of American life.

A TRIBUTE TO TANNER MERRIFIELD

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor Tanner Merrifield, an 18-year-old senior at Southeast Polk High School from Runnells, Iowa, who has achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service in his community from the 2014 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program is our country's largest youth recognition program based entirely on volunteer community service. The program was created in conjunction with Prudential and the National Association of Secondary School Principals to honor middle and high school students for outstanding service to benefit others at the local, state, and national level. Since 1995, more than 345,000 American youths have participated in this excellent program.

Tanner was selected as one of Iowa's four distinguished finalists for undertaking an extensive project to restore two campsites that had fallen into disrepair at a local park. To tackle this task, Mr. Merrifield devoted months of hard work pursuing township approvals, soliciting donations, organizing volunteers, purchasing materials, and ultimately rebuilding the campsites. Following his hard work, each campsite now includes new trails, fire rings and landscaping. There is no doubt Tanner's selfless efforts will provide a lasting benefit to his community for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud Mr. Merrifield for his sincere dedication to positively impacting the lives of others in his community. Tanner's commitment to a cause greater than himself is a testament to the high-quality character and unwavering work ethic instilled in Iowans both young and old. Our future is bright with young people like Tanner, and it is an honor to represent him and his family in the United States Congress. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Tanner, thanking his supportive family, and thanking all of those involved in this wonderful project for their life-changing efforts.

HONORING LUKAS JAMES ERICKSON

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Lukas James Erickson. Lukas is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 75, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Lukas has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Lukas has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Lukas has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Lukas designed and constructed a privacy picket fence and rebuilt two long planter boxes at the outdoor classroom of Eugene Field Elementary in Maryville, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Lukas James Erickson for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

REMEMBERING FORMER STATE REPRESENTATIVE EUGENE SCHLICKMAN OF ILLINOIS

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember former State Representative Eugene Schlickman of Illinois who passed away on January 23rd at the age of 84.

Eugene Schlickman was born on December 17th, 1929 in Dubuque, Iowa, the oldest of four children. His family moved to Rockford, Illinois, where Schlickman grew up and where his father ran the Tydee Dydee Diaper Service. Eugene attended St. Thomas High School in Rockford and later became the first in his family to graduate from college, after which he went on to earn a law degree from Georgetown University.

Schlickman was elected to the Illinois General Assembly in 1964 and served for eight terms, where he was known for reaching across the aisle and promoting bipartisan cooperation. During his tenure in the General Assembly, he led initiatives on issues including higher education, parochial schools, children's services, and regional planning. After leaving the Legislature, Schlickman practiced law in Arlington Heights and coauthored biographies of former Governor Otto Kerner and Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to give my sincere condolences to Eugene Schlickman's family and friends in Rockford and throughout Illinois and honor his years of dedicated service to our state.

INTRODUCING THE ''SALMON SOLUTIONS AND PLANNING ACT''

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, American taxpayers and Pacific Northwest ratepayers have little to show for the more than $11 billion they have spent on salmon recovery efforts in the Columbia and Snake River Basin. Since being listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act in the early 1990s, most of the thirteen native salmon and steelhead species remain near the depressed levels that triggered their protected status in the first place.

The value of these fish populations is undeniable, holding major economic, environmental and cultural significance to the Pacific Northwest. Even now, at their historically low levels, salmon add over a billion dollars to the region's economy and constitute a vital part of communities throughout the Northwest.

While continuing our efforts to protect salmon and steelhead populations is critical, it is

clear that our current approach is not working. Over twenty years and $11 billion later, their vulnerable status remains virtually unchanged. Four Biological Opinions have been rejected by the courts as insufficient for fish survival. Last month's latest BiOp represents little change from the previous version, stoking the possibility of renewed court challenges.

It's time to reevaluate our failed efforts and consider the best approach forward, including the possibility of removing four dams on the lower Snake River. Last century, over 1,100 dams were removed throughout the country. Last month marked the start of the removal of yet another dam: the Rockford Dam on Iowa's Shell Rock River is being breached, among other reasons, to restore fish passage to 21.5 miles of the river. The legislation I am re-introducing today, the Salmon Solutions and Planning Act, commissions studies to focus our efforts so that all factors are taken into account when considering dam removal. Our salmon recovery efforts must be informed, cost effective, and successful.

Inaction is not an option. We must use the best available science to protect this vital American resource before it's too late.

IN HONOR OF THE CITY OF YUMA'S CENTENNIAL

HON. PAUL A. GOSAR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the centennial of Yuma, Arizona. Though it has been a city for 100 years, Yuma has a long and storied history. The Colorado River, on the banks of which Yuma lies, has had a shaping influence on the city and is an essential part of its history. Not only did the Colorado bring the area's first European visitors—Spanish explorers who sailed up the river in 1540 and discovered a thriving Native American village on its banks—it is also the reason for the very existence of the city.

Today it is the river's water that is most important to this desert city, providing drinking water to its residents and irrigation water to its surrounding farms. Because of the ample sunshine, the plentiful irrigation, and the rich soil, Yuma County, of which Yuma is the county seat, is the winter vegetable capital of the world: 90% of the country's leafy vegetables are grown there from November to March.

Prior to the early 1900s, however, it was the physical presence of the river that shaped Yuma. Though today the river is tame at Yuma, prior to the early 1900s the Colorado's banks were in constant flux, stretching up to 15 miles across at times. This made crossing the river a challenge. There was one point, however, at which 2 outcroppings made the river narrow. It was at this strategic point, called the Yuma Crossing, where the Native American settlement that would become Yuma was first established.

Variously known as Colorado City and Arizona City, the city at Yuma Crossing was incorporated under the laws of the State of Arizona in 1914. The Yuma Crossing was used by thousands of people during the California gold rush, establishing the site's importance in American history. Eventually the US Army built a fort at Yuma and used it as a supply base for its southwestern operations. Yuma was also the site of the infamous Arizona Territorial Prison, emblematic of the Wild West.

From its original Native American settlers to its Wild West days, Yuma's story is part of the American story. It has been an incorporated city for 100 years. Here's to 100 more.

HONORING MASTER SERGEANT ANTHONY DANIEL CUTTER

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Master Sergeant Anthony Daniel Cutter upon his retirement from the United States Air Force. I thank him for his twenty years of dedicated and honorable service to our country.

Sergeant Cutter was born and raised in Lake County, California. In December, 1993, he joined the United States Air Force. Throughout his career, Sergeant Cutter was stationed across the United States as well as overseas. He was deployed to South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq and Afghanistan. For his honorable service Sergeant Cutter received two Meritorious Service Medals, one upon his return from Afghanistan in 2011 and the other in Las Vegas in 2014.

Throughout his years of service, Sergeant Cutter remained a dedicated husband and father to his four children. When home on leave, he generously volunteered his time to support Operation Tango Mike; an organization that aims to support fellow service men and women by sending care packages to troops stationed overseas.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate at this time that we honor and thank Sergeant Cutter for his invaluable service to our country. His twenty years of service with the United States Air Force is both admirable and deserving of recognition. On behalf of a grateful community, I wish him a most enjoyable retirement.

COMMENDING SOCIAL SECURITY EMPLOYEES FOR FIGHTING FRAUD

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, millions of Americans pay into Social Security every week, knowing that when they need Social Security, it will be there for them. Without Social Security's dedicated, highly-trained workforce, we would not be able to stop fraud and errors and guard those contributions until they are needed.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) recently stopped two large fraud conspiracies, one in Puerto Rico and one in New York. I want to commend the hundreds of Social Security employees, investigators, and state disability determination services employees, as well as state, local, and federal prosecutors and law enforcement officers who worked tirelessly to detect, investigate, and prosecute these crimes. I would also like to particularly acknowledge some of the hard-working public servants who played especially key roles.

DDS Medical Consultant Dr. Ascisclo Marxuach; DDS Medical Consultant Dr. Vicente Sanchez; DDS Systems Manager Juan Ocasio; DDS Systems Manager Javier Ortiz; District Manager and former Disability Processing Unit Manager Diane Maldonado; Disability Program Administrator Annie Malave; Program Analyst Susan Palais; and Program Analyst Maria Lora.

Area Office Supervisor Awilda Montalvo; Assistant Regional Administrator Yvonne Bastide; Lead Disability Processing Specialist Kathleen Fitzpatrick; Lead Disability Processing Specialist Michael Warner; Deputy Assistant Regional Commissioner Frank Barry; Center for Disability Deputy Director Jose Colon; Special Agent-in-Charge Edward Ryan; Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge John Grasso; Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge Anthony Piazza; Resident Agent-in-Charge Sharon McDermott; Special Agent Peter Dowd; Special Agent Manuel Rivera; CDI Team Leader Angel Rodriguez; Management Support Specialist Jaimie Arce; CDI Specialist Amanda Rios; and CDI Specialist Karen Velez.

Mr. Speaker, I commend these patriotic Americans for their work to protect Social Security for American families.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, February 25, I missed a series of rollcall votes. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on #63 and #64.

A TRIBUTE TO QUINN WILSON

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor Quinn Wilson, a 17-year-old senior of Ankeny High School in Ankeny, Iowa, who has achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service in his community from the 2014 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program is our country's largest youth recognition program based entirely on volunteer community service. The program was created in conjunction with Prudential and the National Association of Secondary School Principals to honor middle and high school students for outstanding service to benefit others at the local, state, and national level. Since 1995, more than 345,000 American youths have participated in this excellent program.

Quinn was recently selected as one of Iowa's four distinguished finalists for creating and organizing a musical instrument collection program for young children who could not otherwise afford to pursue their musical passions. Quinn's program, "An Instrument in Every Hand," has assisted more than 40 local children by donating used or refurbished musical instruments. Mr. Wilson was inspired to pursue the initiative through his own experience

as the recipient of a donated instrument. To ensure his program was a success, Quinn recruited a group of volunteers, arranged and advertised an instrument drive, and coordinated necessary repair assistance with a local music store. There is no doubt Quinn's selfless efforts brought immeasurable joy and lasting benefits to the young people who benefited from An Instrument in Every Hand.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud Mr. Wilson for his sincere dedication to positively impacting the lives of others in his community. Quinn's commitment to a cause greater than himself is a testament to the high-quality character and unwavering work ethic instilled in Iowans both young and old. Our future is bright with young people like Quinn, and it is an honor to represent him and his family in the United States Congress. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Quinn, thanking his supportive family, and thanking all of those involved in this wonderful project for their life-changing efforts.

IN TRIBUTE TO THE HON. ELAINE O'BRIEN

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise with great solemnity to share with you the recent death of the Honorable Elaine O'Brien. Elaine O'Brien was a respected lawmaker and long-term resident of Suffield, Connecticut, where she served for the last 20 years as a community volunteer and a member of local government.

Originally from Medford, Massachusetts, Elaine's focus and tenacity saw her become the youngest female graduate from the Beverly Airport flight school in 1972 before going on to be a pilot and instructor.

Moving with her family of three sons to Suffield, Connecticut, Elaine became an active part of the town in posts including President of the Parent Teacher Association; a 13-year elected member of the School Committee; and President of the Suffield Rotary Club. Recognized as a respected advocate for local issues, Elaine was elected to the Planning and Zoning Commission in 1991 followed by the Board of Education in 1993. Serving for 12 years on the Board of Education, Elaine led infrastructure projects as chairman of the Facilities and Transportation Committee and played an important role in school program development as representative to the Capitol Region Education Council.

Widely supported by her local constituents in Suffield, East Granby, and Windsor, Elaine was elected to the Connecticut General Assembly in 2010 as the Representative for the 61st District. Elaine served on the House Appropriations, Commerce, and Transportation Committees. Garnering bipartisan support to form a manufacturing caucus in the Commerce Committee, Elaine has been credited by her colleagues for her promotion of job growth in Connecticut manufacturing. Working tirelessly to improve local infrastructure, Elaine won key grants for projects such as the extension of utilities near Bradley International Airport in Suffield, and the construction of an education and conference center for the New England Air Museum.

Re-elected to the District in 2012, Elaine continued as on as a passionate legislator for issues including worker safety, health care and gun control despite her diagnosis of cancer. Elaine also remained on as Suffield Town Clerk, a position she had held since 1998.

On February 21, 2014, Elaine lost her courageous battle with brain cancer at the age of 58, and will be sorely missed by her family and Connecticut community. Elaine is succeeded by her husband, three sons, and seven stepchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring the life and extraordinary service of Elaine O'Brien, and offering our condolences to the family and friends she leaves behind.

RECOGNIZING CHRIS TOMKY

HON. CORY GARDNER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chris Tomky, a farmer from Crowley County, Colorado who recently received the East Otero Conservation District 2013 Conservationist of the Year.

Chris comes from a long line of outstanding farmers. His grandfather, father and other family members are accomplished farmers. He grew up with farming in his blood, helping his family in any way he possibly could from a very young age.

Today, he is focused on producing successful yields while utilizing good farming practices that promote conservation. His efforts have ensured his operation will be as efficient and sustainable as possible for years to come.

Chris's hard work and dedication to conservation practices include installing water control structures, irrigation pipeline, grated pipe, concert ditches and land leveling on various sections of farm ground. His efforts have set a strong example for a new generation of farmers in Colorado.

I am pleased to join the East Otero Conservation District in recognizing Chris Tomky as the 2013 Conservationist of the Year.

HONORING RYAN OWENS

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Ryan Owens. Ryan is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 75, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Ryan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Ryan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Ryan has become a Member of the Tribe of Mic-O–Say. Ryan has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Ryan worked with First United Methodist Church of Maryville, Missouri, to set up a perpetual community assistance program and completed multiple projects as models for the program.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Ryan Owens for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF REGGIE MOORE

HON. JERRY McNERNEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. McNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life and legacy of Antioch's first African-American city council member, Reggie Moore.

Reggie's tireless commitment to serving others is an inspiration to me and the residents of my district. First elected to the Antioch City Council in 2006, Reggie quickly made his mark by championing causes that would benefit the city and its residents. He also started Antioch's annual Martin Luther King Day celebration, which honors Dr. King's work by promoting volunteerism and by providing scholarships for Antioch students.

Reggie worked tirelessly to improve the lives of others, and he was a strong advocate for labor and workers' rights. Under his leadership as President of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 444 from 2003 to 2007, Reggie fought to improve working conditions and benefits for the union's employees.

As Black History Month comes to a close, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of Reggie Moore—a trailblazer who was deeply committed to the cause of improving the lives of his fellow citizens.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF CHEFS FOR THEIR COMMUNITY SERVICE TO THE WYOMING VALLEY CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Brotherhood of Chefs of Northeastern Pennsylvania, who volunteered their time and expertise to host the third annual "Cooking for a Cause" event on February 24, 2014.

For the third year the Brotherhood of Chefs has donated their culinary skills to help a number of nonprofit agencies whose mission is to benefit children in need. Many of these organizations rely on events, like "Cooking for Cause," to support their daily programming costs and without their support might find the need to scale back basic services to children with special needs. An event like this offers an opportunity for the entire community to come together to celebrate and support many worthy childhood development agencies. "Cooking for

a Cause'' under the able leadership of Tom Malloy, President, Nello Allegrucci, Vice President, Ed Ancas, Secretary and Carmen Allegrucci, Treasurer, along with an extremely talented team of 20 chefs has made significant contributions in its brief history.

I join with other members of my local community in congratulating the Brotherhood of Chefs of Northeastern Pennsylvania for donating their time and unique talent to making our community a better place and for focusing their efforts on children in need in our community. I believe this effort reveals the American spirit of generosity and selfless giving that is one of our greatest virtues.

CONGRATULATING FLACHTEMEIR MONUMENT COMPANY ON THEIR 140TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Flachtemeier Monument Company in Freeport, Illinois, on the occasion of their 140th anniversary.

Flachtemeier Monument was founded in 1874 when Frederick Flachtemeier began his stone carving business in Freeport. Over the next 140 years, Flachtemeier Monument Company has supported grieving families and helped them memorialize their loved ones. Ric Knox, the current branch manager, loves that his job allows him to connect with the community, explaining that ''total strangers come into my life and invite me into their life.''

In honor of its 140th anniversary, Flachtemeier Monument Company is partnering with the Freeport Chamber of Commerce for a community event later this year. Additionally, the company plans to donate a portion of its sales to United Way of Northwest Illinois whenever a customer mentions one of their affiliated charities.

Mr. Speaker, I want to again congratulate Flachtemeier for reaching this impressive milestone. Ric Knox says of the people he memorializes that ''their legacy lives on, if I do my job right.'' Through Knox and his entire company, Frederick Flachtemeier's legacy has lived on for 140 years and will hopefully continue to thrive and support our community for many more.

TREE ACT

HON. BRUCE L. BRALEY

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced the Temporary Assistance for Emergency Eradication (TREE) Act to provide communities in my home state of Iowa, and across the nation, with assistance to deal with the emerald ash borer. The emerald ash borer, first found in Michigan by way of shipping crates from China, is an invasive beetle that is thriving in America as it decimates our ash tree populations in more than twenty states. In my state alone, it will cost approximately $3 to remove these trees that now pose a public safety hazard.

The intent of the funding in this legislation is to address the emerald ash borer problem. The TREE Act will provide critical assistance to communities by restoring funding to the US Department of Agriculture's office of Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) back to its previous level of $37 million to continue to ramp up their work to find a means to control and eradicate the emerald ash borer. Further, it will increase funding for grant programs that directly assist local and state governments dealing with this issue as they coordinate with their communities and private property owners impacted by the infestation of the emerald ash borer.

To do so, the TREE Act would provide an additional $15 million to the Forest Health Management Cooperative Land program to be used to help communities address emerald ash borer infestations. As well, an additional $5 million would be provided to the Urban and Community Forestry program to increase grants available for combating the ash borer infestation, and ''re-greening'' efforts as communities diversify their tree populations and replenish shade where ash trees have been lost.

REMEMBERING DOUG MOHNS

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, this month the city of Chicago lost a hockey legend, Doug Mohns. Doug was a member of the Chicago Blackhawks from 1964 to 1971, where he played left wing on one of the greatest lines in NHL history—the ''Scooter Line''—with Kenny Wharram and Stan Mikita.

Doug was a stalwart player in the NHL at a time when there were only six franchises. Rivalries were intense, no one wore helmets and players were intimately acquainted with the strengths and weaknesses of every opponent they faced.

Mohns earned the nickname ''Dougie the Diesel'' because his piston-like legs dug into the ice and propelled him like a locomotive. He enjoyed his best season with the Blackhawks in 1967, when he tallied 25 goals and 35 assists in just 61 games. His impact on the ice was instrumental to the Blackhawks' first ever regular season title. Mohns went on to have four 20-goal seasons with the Blackhawks.

Mohns' durability and versatility as a skater contributed to his remarkable longevity. During a span of 22 seasons in the NHL, he played in 1,390 games and seven all-star games, while amassing 248 goals and 462 assists.

I join the city of Chicago in remembering one of the greatest hockey players to ever step on the ice, Doug ''Dougie the Diesel'' Mohns.

RENEW THE WIND PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT

HON. JARED POLIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition to call on Congress to renew the wind production tax credit.

The wind production tax credit incentivizes clean, domestic energy generation, and has been critical to enhancing America's renewable energy renaissance. Wind energy creates jobs, saves consumers money on their utility bills, and reduces carbon emissions.

Wind energy, and the industry it supports, is important to Colorado. Wind power supplies over 800,000 Colorado homes and employs approximately 5,000 Coloradans. In addition, a thriving wind industry has brought over $4.2 billion in capital investments and provided land owners and communities with millions in land lease payments.

Most Americans support renewable energy. In fact, thirty states and the District of Columbia already have renewable generation standards and seven states have voluntary goals. Colorado has capitalized on its tremendous wind potential by enacting one of the highest Renewable Portfolio Standards in the nation—30 percent renewable energy generation by 2020. Colorado utilities are ahead of schedule in achieving this goal and in doing so they are discovering that wind energy makes economic sense for their ratepayers and their investors.

Last year I introduced the Renewable Electricity Standard Act with Representatives BEN RAY LUJÁN and ANN KUSTER. This legislation would build on the success of state-based renewable energy standards by implementing a 25 percent renewable energy goal by 2025. Providing tax credits for renewable energy development is not just important for meeting these goals, but is also important to level the playing field with our energy industries that receive a myriad of tax credits and incentives.

The wind production tax credit has fueled a thriving U.S. wind energy market. This tax incentive drives increased investments and stimulates the economy. As a former entrepreneur, I know that uncertainty about the production tax credit will slow wind energy deployment, put good quality jobs at risk, and cause capital investments to dwindle. That is why we must renew a long-term wind production tax credit.

The wind production tax credit is essential to American jobs, economic growth, and the success of the wind energy industry. We must renew the wind production tax credit.

HONORING ZANE ALEXANDER SMITH

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Zane Alexander Smith. Zane is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 216, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Zane has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Zane has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Zane has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Zane repainted three

signs for VFW Post 919 in Trenton, Missouri. This facility's signs were in need of aid and the VFW holds a special meaning to Zane due to his involvement with the Civil Air Patrol and military veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Zane Alexander Smith for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I was not able to be present for the following rollcall vote on February 25, 2014 and would like the record to reflect that I would have voted as follows: rollcall No. 63: "yes"; and rollcall No. 64: "no."

HONORING SARALEE McCLELLAN KUNDE

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Saralee McClellan Kunde, who passed away on January 26, 2014, after 66 remarkable years.

Saralee devoted her life to bettering the community and the people she so cherished. She was a tireless and passionate advocate for agriculture in Sonoma County. Raised on her family's dairy ranch, Saralee never wavered from promoting the agricultural legacy into which she was born.

She was an impassioned supporter of 4-H and the Future Farmers of America (FFA) as well as of the Sonoma County Fair and the Sonoma County Harvest Fair. She was equally as dedicated to promoting the Russian River Valley as a premiere wine region. Together with her husband, Richard Kunde, Saralee owned and operated a 265-acre vineyard that produced wine grapes for renowned wineries in the Sonoma and Napa Valleys as well as across our Nation. Perhaps most admirable about the Kunde estate was the private park Saralee and Richard created. Once an overgrown field, the park known as "Richard's Grove and Saralee's Vineyard," hosted countless community and charitable events.

Aside from her work to promote Sonoma County Agriculture, one of the most poignant examples of Saralee's devotion to bettering her community are the thousands of daffodils she planted each year along the highways and back roads of Sonoma County.

Her unwavering passion and dedication to the many causes and organizations she championed was an inspiration to all. And in turn, Saralee was beloved by all those who were fortunate enough to have known her. Saralee was inducted into the Sonoma County Farm Bureau Hall of Fame in 2013. She was honored as a Friend of Agriculture by the Sonoma County Harvest Fair, was awarded the Shining Star Award by the 4-H Foundation as well as with the Leadership in Agriculture Award by the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce.

Saralee was kind, magnetic and loving. Her zest for life and "can-do" attitude were contagious. Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate at this time that we honor and thank Saralee McClellan Kunde for her life of service to a grateful community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY FRAUD AND ERROR PREVENTION ACT OF 2014

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, for 77 years, Social Security has been the bedrock of economic security for American families. Generations of Americans have contributed to Social Security with every paycheck, knowing that they and their families will be protected if they die, become disabled, or retire. As a result of their contributions—$14.6 trillion over Social Security's lifetime—Social Security currently has a $2.7 trillion surplus.

Social Security benefits are modest—about $15,000 a year for an average senior and even less for a disabled worker—but for most recipients, their Social Security paycheck is more than half their monthly income.

As a representative of those Americans and the Ranking Democrat on the Social Security Subcommittee, I believe we have no more important responsibility than to make sure that Americans receive their earned Social Security benefits on time, and in full. That means protecting Social Security against fraud and errors, and it means doing so in a way that does not delay needed benefits for honest, hard-working Americans.

Social Security's overpayment rate is 0.22 percent. Most of these overpayments are because of errors, but a small part of it is fraud. But Social Security employees believe—and I agree with them—that we could do even more to safeguard Social Security.

Recently the Social Security Administration has uncovered several fraud conspiracies where Social Security contributions made by honest Americans were stolen to pay benefits to people who didn't earn them. In one of the conspiracies, the ringleaders even instructed people to pretend they were disabled as a result of the tragic events of September 11.

The good news is, when you invest in developing quality, well-trained employees to protect Social Security, it pays off. Social Security's front-line employees detected the fraud, and with the help of Social Security's trained investigators, the ringleaders have been charged with felonies and Social Security has begun the process of recovering the money stolen from the trust fund.

But the bad news is that these conspiracies show that Social Security is a tempting target for those willing to break the law, and Social Security's hardworking staff need more tools to fight them and to make sure Social Security only pays benefits to those who should receive them.

That's why my colleagues and I are introducing the Social Security Fraud and Error Prevention Act of 2014. Our bill gives Social Security new tools to find fraud and errors, recoup money that should be in the trust funds, and throw the book at people who steal from Social Security.

First, our bill makes sure that if you break the law, Social Security has the resources to make sure the crime is investigated and prosecuted. We would require SSA to have special fraud-busting investigative units covering all 50 states, provide the resources needed to staff them with the right people, and increase prosecutions of people who steal from Social Security.

Second, our bill makes sure the penalty is equivalent to the crime. Because Social Security requires applicants to prove they are eligible for benefits by providing extensive medical and vocational evidence, cheating Social Security usually requires collusion from trusted people like doctors, beneficiary representatives, and judges. Our bill would increase the monetary penalties for fraud, but most importantly, as Social Security's Inspector General recommends, we would significantly increase the penalty for fraud by those who know better. We'd make it a felony to conspire to defraud Social Security, so prosecutors can nail fraud ringleaders, and we allow prosecutors to ask for a long sentence—up to 10 years—against those who violated a position of trust to breach Social Security's defenses.

Third, our bill makes sure Social Security can afford to use the tools that have been effective in detecting and preventing fraud and errors before a single penny is paid out of the Trust Funds.

Over the years, Social Security has developed a number of proven techniques that significantly reduce fraud and errors.

What's holding them back?

To be frank, money.

Despite a growing number of Americans applying for and receiving Social Security, SSA's budget is lower now than it was four years ago. They've lost one out of ten front-line workers to budget cuts. And Republicans in Congress blocked hundreds of millions of dollars that the Budget Control Act authorized for SSA's most cost-effective methods of preventing waste, fraud and abuse.

Our bill would change that, providing SSA with guaranteed funding for their most effective strategies to prevent fraud and errors. The bill will also provide additional resources to recoup benefits that shouldn't have been paid, along with penalties, if the payments were the result of fraud.

We'd demand something in exchange for the guaranteed money: complete transparency and accountability. Social Security could only use the dedicated funds for the most important and effective strategies. They would have to report annually to Congress how much they spent and what savings their efforts generated for Social Security's trust funds. And the new funds would only be available for additional fraud and error fighting—not to replace what they're already spending out of their regular budget.

Our bill isn't the complete answer to protecting Social Security's trust fund. As we consulted Social Security employees, managers, experts, and beneficiary advocates, they all told us the same thing: The best defense against fraud and errors is a well-staffed, well-trained SSA. And for that to happen, Republicans in Congress have to agree to fund SSA's overall budget.

But providing guaranteed funding to fight fraud will at least spare SSA from having to choose between preventing fraud and processing applications so that Americans receive the benefits they earned on time and in full.

I hope we can work together in a bipartisan way to enact this bill and protect Social Security.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF JEFFREY HOUDE

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about Investigator Jeffrey Houde of Rockford, Illinois, who retired from the Rockford Police Department on January 17th.

Investigator Houde joined the Rockford Police Department on July 27th, 1987 as a Patrol Officer and served the city of Rockford for over 26 years. On September 29th, 1991, he was promoted to Detective and assigned to the Investigative Services Bureau Identification Unit. Houde remained with the Identification Unit until his retirement, eventually taking over day to day operations for five years before voluntarily returning to his role as an Investigator.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank Investigator Jeffery Houde for his years of dedicated service to our community and congratulate him on his retirement.

CELEBRATING THE EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY OF MR. FREDERICK W. ANTON III

HON. KEITH J. ROTHFUS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish Mr. Frederick W. Anton III a happy eightieth birthday and to congratulate him on a long and distinguished career as an innovator, leader, and faithful public servant.

Mr. Anton joined the Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association over five decades ago in 1962 and became its President and Chief Executive Officer in 1975.

Today, Mr. Anton continues to lead the organization that is the leading advocate for manufacturers and workers throughout the Commonwealth. The Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association continues to be a vibrant organization with a strong voice thanks in large part to his efforts.

Mr. Anton's public service extends far beyond his work at the Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association. He has long served as a strong voice for fiscal policies that will grow the economy, add jobs, and leave a better Pennsylvania for future generations.

In the late 1980s, as President Ronald Reagan was preparing to return to life as a private citizen, Mr. Anton observed that there was no policy infrastructure in place in Harrisburg to continue to advocate for the fiscal policies President Reagan championed while in office.

To fill that void, Mr. Anton set about the work of co-founding the Commonwealth Foundation and the Pennsylvania Leadership Conference. Today, both continue to serve as important beacons of conservative fiscal policy in our Commonwealth. In fact, the Pennsylvania Leadership Conference is celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of its founding this year.

Mr. Speaker, fellow Members, please join me in wishing Mr. Frederick W. Anton III a happy eightieth birthday and thanking him for his more than fifty years of service to manufacturers, workers, and all citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

IN RECOGNITION OF PATRICK J. SOLANO FOR HIS DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Patrick J. Solano for his lifelong commitment to public service. For his distinguished civic career, Mr. Solano has been selected as the recipient of the 2013 Attorney Joseph Saporito, Sr., Greater Pittston Lifetime of Service Award.

During World War II, Mr. Solano served in the U.S. Army Air Corps. While in the military, he completed 23 combat missions over Germany with the Eighth U.S. Army Air Corps Heavy Bombardment Group. For his exemplary service to our nation, Mr. Solano was awarded the Group Presidential Citation, the Air Force Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, and the European Combat Theatre Medal with two Bronze Stars.

Upon his retirement from military service, Mr. Solano dedicated himself to serving both his community and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Mr. Solano has been an integral part of the civic leadership of Greater Pittston. He has served on dozens of local committees, boards and organizations including the Pittston Township Bicentennial Committee. Since 1969, Mr. Solano has also held numerous positions in the state government and worked with ten Pennsylvania governors. He served as the acting secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources when it was first established and was recently honored by that agency for his dedication to Pennsylvania's state parks and forests.

Mr. Solano has received numerous other awards, including the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce's Lifetime Achievement Award and the United States Army Corps of Engineers Commander's Award.

I would like to thank Mr. Solano for his years of civic service on behalf of northeastern Pennsylvania and the entire Commonwealth. I am moved by his dedication and leadership, as I'm sure many others are. It is my pleasure to recognize his work, and I am certain that his dedication to our state will continue.

WIND POWER

HON. SCOTT H. PETERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. PETERS of California. Mr. Speaker, wind energy provides thousands of jobs in my home state of California, and it is powering us towards a clean energy economy. I am proud that California leads in all sources of renewable energy and that clean wind energy is creating 5,830 megawatts of power.

In California, we have attracted over $11 billion dollars in capital investment, and the land leases generate a least $27 million each year for the local government. Wind powers over 2.1 million homes in California. We have always been leaders in this area, and we will continue to lead in advanced energy.

In 2013, the advanced energy economy grew twice as fast as the global economy. In order for our wind companies to compete on a global level, we need to make sure that they have certainty in federal policy. Companies, wind or not, need stability in our policies so that they can plan their growth and investments accordingly. We cannot keep enacting one-year policies when it takes companies more than a year to apply for and receive appropriate permits. We must ensure that our tax policies, among others, are fair and encourage American businesses to grow.

Today, I would like to honor everyone who works in the American wind industry and all who benefit from its clean energy.

HONORING ZELMA LONG

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor my good friend, Zelma Long, as she celebrates her 70th birthday.

It is not uncommon to be knowledgeable about growing, producing and consuming wine in Napa and Sonoma Counties, but Ms. Long's fame and accomplishments elevate her far above the average. She and her then-husband Bob Long established Long Vineyards in my home town of St. Helena, which the two of them continue to operate today. Here she found her calling in viticulture and in producing some of the finest wines to come out of Napa and Sonoma.

She first worked with the legendary Robert Mondavi as Chief Enologist at his winery in Napa County, before becoming Vice President of Business Development at Chandon Estates winery in Napa Valley. Ms. Long moved over to Sonoma County as Vice President and later President and CEO of Simi Winery in Healdsburg. At the time, she was the first woman to assume senior management of a California winery.

Ms. Long was the first President of the Americana Vineyard Foundation and one of its founding members. This organization helped finance research in enology and viticulture. She was also a founding member of the American Viticulture and Enology Research Network. In 2000 she established her own international wine consulting business, with clients in California, Washington, Italy, France and Argentina. She and her husband, Dr. Phil Freese, are California joint venture partners in Vilafonte Vineyards in South Africa, the only South African winery to have been nominated twice for designation as "New World Winery of the Year."

She has been inducted into the James Beard Hall of Fame, named a California Wine Pioneer by Wine Spectator Foundation, selected to receive one of Italy's most prestigious wine awards, the MASI, and honored

as Alumni of the Year by both Oregon State University, where she did her undergraduate work, and the University of California Davis, where she did her graduate work.

While continuing to make global wines she finds the time to further her education at UC Davis in a Ph.D. program in Performance Studies and Native American Studies, which she began in the fall of 2009.

Mr. Speaker, Zelma Long is a giant in the wine industry, a woman with a long list of accomplishments and a good friend. It is appropriate that we recognize and honor her today and wish her a very Happy 70th Birthday.

HONORING KENNETH SCHWEIZER

HON. CORY GARDNER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Kenneth Schweizer, from Rocky Ford, Colorado, who was recently named the West Otero Conservation District 2013 Conservationist of the Year.

Raised to be a farmer and rancher, at age 6, Kenneth began driving a tractor. He rented his first farm when he was just a junior in high school.

From the beginning, conservation practices were a priority for Ken. He has dedicated himself to promoting good farming practices that make his farm efficient and sustainable. His conservation practices include utilizing underground irrigation pipe, gated pipe, water control structures, pumping plants and center pivots. Ken also has a passion for building things with his hands and has built a hay stacker and a High Boy sprayer.

In addition to his farm operations, he is an active member of his community, serving in the Otero County Farm Bureau, Rocky Ford Growers Coop Association, Future Farmers of America Advisory Board, Manzanola Methodist Church, Otero County 4–H Foundation, the Horse Creek Grazing Association and the Colorado State Farm Bureau. He and his wife Arlene have contributed greatly to strengthening their community.

I am pleased to join the West Otero Conservation District in recognizing Kenneth Schweizer as the 2013 Conservationist of the Year.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF EULESS POLICE OFFICER RON WILLIAMSON

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize retiring Sergeant Ron Williamson for his many years of public service as a police officer with the City of Euless.

Ron began his career in law enforcement in the late 1970s when he served as a reserve officer for the Bedford Police Department. While serving the City of Bedford, Ron was promoted to Reserve Sergeant and was briefly employed as a Bedford Police Officer.

In 1980, Ron was hired as a patrol officer by the Euless Police Department where he served continuously until his retirement in February of 2014. Throughout his career with the City of Euless, Ron has accomplished many achievements such as obtaining the ranks of Corporal in 1991 and Sergeant in 1993. Additionally, Ron has served a decorated career earning over 40 personnel commendations, Police Officer of the Year in 1983, Supervisor of the Year in 1996, Life Saving Award in 1999, and the prestigious Blackie Sustaire Award in 2011.

Ron has a diverse background in law enforcement as evident in the following departments in which he operated. He served in the Patrol Division from 1980 to 1985, Criminal Investigation Division from 1985 to 1999 and 2001 to 2004, Community Service from 1999 to 2001, and Administrative Internal Affairs from 2004 to 2014. In each department listed, Ron has held a supervisory position. Ron has been an important leader in the Euless Police Department, and his guidance will be missed.

Ron has also earned a number of certifications and academic degrees within the field of law enforcement. The distinctions Ron has received over the years include the Basic Police Certification in 1980, Intermediate Police Certification in 1987, Dare Officer Certification in 1988, Advanced Police Certification in 1991, and Master Police Certification in 1999. In 1994, Ron graduated from the Southwest Law Enforcement Institute School of Police Supervision; additionally, he completed Basic SWAT Operations Training in 1989 to become a supervising SWAT leader. Overall, Ron received over 2,600 hours of in-service training throughout his career.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 24th Congressional District of Texas, I ask all my distinguished colleagues to join me in thanking Ron Williamson for his 34 years of public service as a Euless Police Officer.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 56, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

IN RECOGNITION OF THE OUTSTANDING DETERMINATION AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT OF STEPHANIE JALLEN, A 2014 WINTER PARALYMPIC GAMES ALPINE SKIER

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Stephanie Jallen for her remarkable and inspirational perseverance and resolve. Ms. Jallen will represent the U.S. at the 2014 Winter Paralympic Games in Sochi, Russia, which take place March 7–16, and she has also been recognized by the Sunday Dispatch of Pittston, Pennsylvania as the Greater Pittston Person of the Year for 2013.

Ms. Jallen was born on February 13, 1996 with CHILD syndrome (Congenital Hemidysplasia with Ichthyosiform Erythroderma and Limb Defects Syndrome), a rare genetic birth disorder that mostly affects girls. Consequently, the left side of her body is underdeveloped. Ms. Jallen has only one leg and one fully developed arm. Despite a life-altering condition, Stephanie has thrived.

At the age of nine, Stephanie was first introduced to skiing by the Pennsylvania Center for Adapted Sports. She met and trained with Mau Thompson, who would help her enter multiple NorAm ski races. With Mr. Thompson's assistance, Stephanie became involved with the U.S. Paralympics Alpine Skiing Team and was named to her first national team for the 2011–12 season. Since then, she has been a part of the two most recent national teams. She has competed in countries across the globe, including Germany and Australia.

Ms. Jallen is the epitome of a student-athlete. She trains and competes while also balancing academics. Stephanie is a senior in my district at Wyoming Area Secondary Center, and she has been accepted to Kings College in Wilkes-Barre where she will be starting in the fall as a freshman.

I would like to commend Stephanie Jallen on her determination to compete on a global stage and wish her the best of luck as she proudly represents our country in the 2014 Winter Games. Her remarkable story has brought her community together like few things can, and she has inspired many fellow students and citizens of northeastern Pennsylvania to be the best they can be.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $17,413,220,474,647.90. We've added $6,786,343,425,734.82 to our debt in 5 years. This is over $6.7 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

REMEMBERING DOUG JARRETT

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, this month the city of Chicago lost Doug Jarrett, a hockey legend who dedicated 11 years of his career to keeping the Blackhawks in Stanley Cup contention during the 1960s and early 1970s. The well-respected defenseman was not only known for his strong defensive play, but also for his outgoing personality, which contributed to the team's tight-knit chemistry.

Standing 6′3″, the "Chairman of the Boards" presented a stern test for opposing forwards. Rather than rely solely on brute strength, however, the crafty defender used his superior reach to stay in position and out

of the penalty box. He was also considered a clean hitter, whose hip check was among the best in the league.

Aside from his defensive prowess, Doug was known for his sense of humor and engaging personality, which was always evident when he got together with his teammate and close friend Dennis Hull. Together, Jarrett and Hull raised team spirits during the long and often challenging seasons.

Doug Jarrett's distinguished NHL career spanned over 775 regular season games and 99 post season games where he amassed 220 points. A London, Ontario native, Doug was inducted into the London Ontario Sports Hall of Fame in 2011.

For over a decade with the Blackhawks, Doug Jarrett was an outstanding defensemen and an uplifting spirit for the team. I join the city of Chicago in mourning the loss of one of our city's sports icons.

CHARLES AND DAVID KOCH

HON. MIKE POMPEO

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. POMPEO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit the following:

''We are disappointed, but not surprised, that Senate Majority Leader Reid has once again falsely attacked Charles Koch and David Koch today on the Senate floor. The Democrats in general and Senator Reid in particular have targeted Charles Koch and David Koch and tried to silence their disagreement on important public policy issues since 2010, using references to the IRS on occasion to do so. Senator Reid's attack today—his third against Koch since January 30th—is particularly troubling because he appears to reference a television advertisement produced by Americans for Prosperity in which a Michigan woman suffering from leukemia shared her experiences under Obamacare. While Charles Koch and David Koch were not responsible for the advertisement in question, we believe it is disgraceful that Senator Reid and his fellow Democrats are attacking a cancer victim as part of their campaign against Charles Koch and David Koch.''

PHILIP ELLENDER,
President, Koch Companies Public Sector, LLC, Government and Public Affairs.

HONORING THERESA BURROUGHS DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2014

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue my commitment to paying homage to influential African Americans from the state of Alabama during this Black History Month. Today, we pause to pay tribute to one of Alabama's most courageous and daring heroines of the civil rights movement, Mrs. Theresa Burroughs. In Alabama, this American treasure is celebrated for her role in providing a safe haven to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during his visit to Greensboro, Alabama in 1968.

Mrs. Burroughs was born on August 14, 1929 in Greensboro, Alabama. She attended Hale County Training School. At just ten years old, Burroughs was certain that her calling was in style and beauty. It was at that age that she built a clientele of women in her neighborhood who sought Burroughs for her impeccable skills as a hairstylist. She charged 25 cents for her services and built a lasting reputation with the women of Greensboro that would sustain her for the rest of her life. Her passion for beauty led her to the Besteda School of Cosmetology in Mobile and Tuscaloosa. After graduating, she returned to Greensboro to open up her very own hair salon.

But, while she found lifelong success and gratification in the business, Burroughs recalls that she grew restless over the hardships blacks endured at the hands of racism and inequality. At 18, she joined with the Rev. J.J. Simmons, a local minister that would take blacks to the Hale County courthouse to attempt to register to vote. Every first and third Monday of each month, Burroughs and others would be turned away. But after 10 attempts, the group was successful.

Burroughs credits Rev. Simmons with encouraging her to continue her role in the movement. As a result, she was on the frontlines during ''Bloody Sunday'' in Selma, Alabama and was among the countless marchers who were beaten during the demonstration. Her salon was also used as a meeting place for Dr. King and others as they gathered for planning sessions. She became so influential in the movement that some of her clients were instructed not to patronize her salon because she was deemed an ''agitator.'' Nonetheless, she remained committed to doing her part.

In March 1968, just two weeks before his death, Dr. King came to Greensboro to speak at a mass meeting. After the meeting, Dr. King was warned that members of the Klan planned to assassinate him if he attempted to leave Greensboro and travel to Selma. He sought refuge in the home of Mrs. Burroughs' parents as churches were burned along his travel route. He along with the Rev. Ralph Abernathy and their driver Bernard Lee remained undetected at the home until 4 a.m. Burroughs along with others kept watch as Klansmen swarmed the streets of Greensboro in search of Dr. King.

In a recent Birmingham News article, Burroughs recalled what it meant to her to have a role in keeping Dr. King alive if only for a short time. ''We helped keep Martin safe that night only to see him die two weeks later and you are tempted to think what good did we really do,'' said Burroughs. ''But I know it mattered because Martin had another two weeks to do his work and two weeks in the life of a man like him was a lot.''

Today, Burroughs continues to tell her compelling story through her work as director of the ''Safe House Museum'' in Greensboro, Alabama. The museum is housed in the same home where Dr. King took refuge in 1968. Mrs. Burroughs donated her parent's property to the city to preserve the historic site for future generations. At the museum, visitors are given a glimpse into what it was like for Dr. King and others on that night in 1968.

It is indeed an honor to share the story of this heroine with our nation. Her selfless contributions to the Civil Rights movement should never be forgotten. Mrs. Burroughs risked her life to protect the most important figure in the Civil Rights movement and for that, she should be celebrated. As a benefactor of the blood that she and so many others shed, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mrs. Theresa Burroughs, an American hero.

INTRODUCING THE ''SALMON SOLUTIONS AND PLANNING ACT''

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, American taxpayers and Pacific Northwest ratepayers have little to show for the more than $11 billion they have spent on salmon recovery efforts in the Columbia and Snake River Basin. Since being listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act in the early 1990s, most of the thirteen native salmon and steelhead species remain near the depressed levels that triggered their protected status in the first place.

The value of these fish populations is undeniable, holding major economic, environmental and cultural significance to the Pacific Northwest. Even now, at their historically low levels, salmon add over a billion dollars to the region's economy and constitute a vital part of communities throughout the Northwest.

While continuing our efforts to protect salmon and steelhead populations is critical, it is clear that our current approach is not working. Over twenty years and $11 billion later, their vulnerable status remains virtually unchanged. Four Biological Opinions have been rejected by the courts as insufficient for fish survival. Last month's latest BiOp represents little change from the previous version, stoking the possibility of renewed court challenges.

It's time to reevaluate our failed efforts and consider the best approach forward, including the possibility of removing four dams on the lower Snake River. Last century, over 1,100 dams were removed throughout the country. Last month marked the start of the removal of yet another dam: the Rockford Dam on Iowa's Shell Rock River is being breached, among other reasons, to restore fish passage to 21.5 miles of the river. The legislation I am re-introducing today, the Salmon Solutions and Planning Act, commissions studies to focus our efforts so that all factors are taken into account when considering dam removal. Our salmon recovery efforts must be informed, cost effective, and successful.

Inaction is not an option. We must use the best available science to protect this vital American resource before it's too late.

RECOGNITION FOR ANNA JOLIVET

HON. RON BARBER

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Anna Jolivet, a renowned and deeply respected educator in Tucson, Arizona who passed away late last month at age 85.

Ms. Jolivet retired from the Tucson Unified School District as an assistant superintendent

in 1989. But she continued to have influence in our community as a civic activist and supporter.

Ms. Jolivet was born in Tucson and grew up in an era when Tucson elementary and high schools were racially segregated. In 1950, she was one of three African-American women to graduate from the University of Arizona, where she received bachelor's and master's degrees in elementary education and a doctorate in education administration.

She served her community primarily as an educator—but also as a community advocate and cultural leader. She served as a member of the boards of directors for numerous local, regional and national organizations.

Ms. Jolivet was the first African-American woman to be appointed principal of a Tucson Unified School District school. And in 1996, she was the first African-American woman to be named Woman of the Year by the Tucson Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Jolivet was a founding member of the America-Israel Friendship League's Tucson chapter and of the Educational Enrichment Foundation. Anna and I founded the Educational Enrichment Foundation in 1983. The Foundation continues to serve children attending Tucson schools. In 2010, the Educational Enrichment Foundation honored Ms. Jolivet with its Ray Davies Lifetime Humanitarian Achievement Award for her involvement in programs and institutions that promote quality education and serve Tucson's youth.

On March 1, Ms. Jolivet will be honored by the Tucson Urban League at its first annual Equal Opportunity Day Awards Dinner—an event that will be held to remind the Tucson community that the greatness of our country rests upon the principle of equal opportunity for everyone. This principle was the foundation in which Anna served the children of Tucson and our community at large.

I am proud to recognize Anna Jolivet—an outstanding citizen of Tucson who has left a strong legacy that we celebrate today.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF LORI EDWARDS

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize the service of Lori Edwards. Lori has been the Supervisor of Elections in Polk County, Florida, since January 2001. As the Executive Officer responsible for administering fair elections, maintaining voter rolls, and providing voter registration services, Lori has conducted more than 150 successful elections while serving in this non-partisan elected position.

Lori is active in the leadership of the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections, where she currently serves as president. She has created a task force to recruit and train bilingual election workers to ensure Florida's growing population of Hispanic voters are accommodated. She has also conducted many regional educational workshops for election administrators focusing on a variety of topics including redistricting, voter education and absentee voting.

Lori's recent efforts have included an emphasis on modernizing Florida's voter registration system and advocating for the advancement in voting machine technology nationwide.

As a member of the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission (EAC) Standards Board, she serves with advisors from around the nation who review voluntary voting system guidelines and provide guidance to the EAC on the administration of Federal elections.

In addition to state certification in her field, Lori earned designation as a Certified Elections Registration Administrator from The Election Center in cooperation with Auburn University. This is the profession's highest recognition, and serves as national certification. Most recently, she attended the International Center for Parliamentary Studies in London, England where she earned a Professional Certificate in Electoral Processes.

Prior to her service as Supervisor of Elections, Lori served four two-year terms in the Florida House of Representatives representing the residents of eastern Polk County in the Florida Legislature. Her major legislative projects included restructuring Florida's juvenile justice system, performance-based budgeting, worker's compensation laws, and welfare reform.

Lori has also worked for the Center for Policy Alternatives in Washington, DC, helping to develop curricula and train new State Legislators at bi-annual retreats. Training topics included conflict, values, power, and communications.

A committed environmentalist, Lori served as Florida Coordinator of the National Audubon Society's ''Population and Habitat'' campaign, organizing and training Florida activists to raise awareness of the impact of population growth on the environment. She is currently studying to become a Florida Master Naturalist through the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences program.

Lori is an alumna of Executive Education at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, where she studied the Art and Practice of Leadership Development and participated in a program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government. She was also chosen to participate in the Program for Emerging Political Leaders offered by the Darden Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of Virginia. Lori was a Flemming Fellow at the Center for Policy Alternatives in Washington, D.C. and earned her Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management from Warner University in Lake Wales.

I am happy to honor Lori Edwards, during Women's History Month, for her service to the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF COMMISSIONER PATTY SHEEHAN

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize the contributions of Commissioner Patty Sheehan. Commissioner Sheehan was first elected to the Orlando City Council in 2000. She served as President of the Colonialtown North Neighborhood Association, and is proud to come from a servant leadership background. She attended the University of Central Florida where she earned her B.A. in art. Commissioner Sheehan was formerly an Administrator with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. She serves her constituents full time and is well known for her advocacy of pedestrian safety, safe neighborhoods, historic preservation, and a thriving downtown.

Currently, she serves as Vice Chair of the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council. The Council established some of the first neighborhood horizon planning processes, which led to successful developments like SoDo, Mills Park, and Baldwin Park.

Commissioner Sheehan has been recognized multiple times by Orlando Weekly and Orlando Magazine. She was also named ''Best Elected Official'' by Watermark newspaper. She was listed as one of the ''Top 25 Inflectional Women'' by Orlando Life Magazine. Commissioner Sheehan was also awarded the ''Diversity Champion Award'' by the Asian American Chamber of Commerce in 2013. She has twice been a finalist for ''Downtowner of the Year.'' She was also recognized as a ''Woman of Distinction'' by the Girl Scouts of America, Citrus Council.

Commissioner Sheehan is proudest of her role in the restoration of the iconic Lake Eola Fountain, the addition of 1.3 acres to Lake Eola Park, the preservation of the Eola House, and construction of sidewalks for children walking to and from school. She was the first openly gay elected official in Central Florida, and passed domestic partnership legislation and non-discrimination protections for the LGBT community. She is an urban agriculture advocate, and championed community gardens and urban chickens. She also worked with the Trust for Public Land to acquire the Orlando Urban Trail (OUT).

Commissioner Sheehan is a huge supporter of small business and Orlando's Mainstreet Districts. She represents the Downtown South, Mills50 and Thornton Park Mainstreets. She also lobbied and passed a Florida State Law allowing for Doggie Dining on outdoor patios in downtown Orlando. She is also the founder and chairperson for Wheels for Kids, which has provided over 1,000 bicycles to needy elementary and middle school students in Reeves Terrace public housing.

Commissioner Sheehan enjoys many outdoor activities including gardening, paddle boarding and Dragon Boat racing. As a local artist who exhibits her ''Bad Kitty'' paintings in local clubs and shops, she is an avid proponent of the Arts and Culture in Orlando. She lives in a 1928 bungalow with her Chinese Crested dog, Maxine, Nina Simone (a diva kitty) and Jazz (a wild English Springer Spaniel), along with Peep, Cheep, & Bleep (her mini flock of urban chickens).

I am happy to honor Commissioner Patty Sheehan, during Women's History Month, for her leadership and service to the Central Florida Community.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ANNA ESKAMANI

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize Anna Eskamani. An Iranian-American and Central Florida native, Anna graduated from the University of Central Florida (UCF) in the spring of 2012 with dual degrees in Political Science and Women's Studies, and a Certificate in Service Learning.

As an undergrad, Anna spent the majority of her time writing, advocating, and organizing for social justice. She first began her advocacy work in the environmental movement, but quickly became an advocate for international human rights via her Vice Presidency of the Iranian Student Organization. In the summer of 2010, Anna turned her focus to domestic issues, when she became Vice President of the College Democrats at UCF and the Women's Caucus Chair of the Florida College Democrats. In April 2011, Anna founded

"Keep PBS In Orlando," an initiative to preserve Central Florida's local PBS station. The campaign helped create WUCF–TV.

Anna continued to write, not only in leading publications like The Huffington Post and Orlando Sentinel, but also academically. In March 2011, Anna completed her undergraduate honors thesis focusing on feminism in Iran. Anna presented her thesis, which received high remarks, at several research conferences.

Upon graduation Anna was awarded the Order of Pegasus, the highest honor that a UCF senior can receive. She also graduated with the highest GPA in the College of Undergraduate Studies, an achievement that allowed her to be a part of UCF's Platform Party during commencement ceremonies.

Anna didn't stop there. Now a graduate student at UCF pursuing dual master's degrees in Public Administration and Nonprofit Management, Anna works full-time at Planned Parenthood of Greater Orlando as the organization's External Affairs Manager. In her position, Anna maintains the organization's development and public affairs programs.

Anna continues to be very involved in the UCF and Central Florida community. In February 2013, she launched an on-campus initiative called "Project Bithlo," with the goal of engaging UCF students, faculty, and staff in the transformative work occurring in the historically neglected community of Bithlo. Only a year after its founding, Project Bithlo has connected hundreds of UCF students to Bithlo. The project is succeeding in bringing together both the College Democrats and College Republicans in an effort to show solidary with the families of this overlooked community.

Anna also sits on the board of numerous organizations, including the Orange County League of Women Voters, Orange County Democratic Executive Committee, Democratic Women's Club of Greater Orlando, Democratic Women's Club Florida, UCF Women's Studies Advisory Council, and Planned Parenthood's Network of Volunteer Advocates.

A lifelong feminist, Anna is excited to continue her work to better the lives of women and her local community.

I am happy to honor Anna Eskamani, during Women's History Month, for her leadership and service to the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE LEADERSHIP OF IDA V. ESKAMANI

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize Ida V. Eskamani, a young woman with a passion for public service. A first-generation Iranian-American born and raised in Orlando, Florida, Ms. Eskamani believes that individual success is directly tied to the success of her community, and is committed to serving underserved and underrepresented communities.

She began her career in public service as an undergraduate at the University of Central Florida (UCF), where she was active in several campus organizations focused on women's rights, equality, environmental justice, and social justice. As President of the College Democrats at UCF, she worked to empower and educate thousands of students through voter registration drives, rallies, and marches, and established the organization as an integral part of Central Florida's progressive movement. Ms. Eskamani earned dual degrees from UCF in Political Science and Sociology in 2012. She was also awarded the national President's Service Award for devoting more than 500 hours to community service in a 12-month period; as well as UCF's most prestigious award, the Order of Pegasus, for exemplary achievements in academics, service, and leadership.

Following graduation, Ms. Eskamani led the development team of the Orange County Democratic Party, helping them to break fundraising records. She also joined Senator BILL NELSON's re-election campaign as the youngest staff member, working as a Press and Research Assistant. Following the 2012 elections, Ida was selected out of thousands of applicants to serve as a White House Intern in the Office of Presidential Personnel for the spring 2013 term. Upon her return to the Sunshine State, she spent her time as a Digital and Community Organizer with Florida CHAIN, an organization dedicated to increasing access to affordable healthcare, and as a member of the finance team for State Representative Joe Saunders' re-election campaign.

Ms. Eskamani joined Equality Florida, the states' lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender civil rights organization in 2014 as a Development Associate based in Orlando. In her role she assists in organizing and executing fundraising and development programs in Sarasota, Orlando, Jacksonville, and Tallahassee. She is also currently pursuing dual master's degrees in Public Administration and Nonprofit Management at UCF.

I am happy to honor Ida Eskamani, during Women's History Month, for her leadership and service to the Central Florida community.

HONORING ODESSA WOOLFOLK DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2014

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Black History Month, I continue to pay tribute to outstanding African Americans from Alabama. Today, I rise to honor one of Alabama's most beloved and brilliant civic leaders, Ms. Odessa Woolfolk. As a student in Birmingham's segregated public schools to, later, becoming one of the city of Birmingham's most persuasive civic leaders, Ms. Odessa Woolfolk transcended the racial and socioeconomic challenges of her time.

Ms. Odessa Woolfolk was born in the Titusville Community of Birmingham, Alabama and graduated from A.H. Parker High School. She earned her bachelor's degree in History and Political Science from Talladega College and later went on to earn her Masters in Urban Studies from Occidental College in California. She completed additional graduate work at the University of Chicago and was a National Urban Fellow at Yale University.

Ms. Woolfolk began her career as a teacher at Birmingham's Ullman High School, at the height of the civil rights movement. She displayed outstanding and fearless leadership both in her classroom and community during this turbulent time. Following her tenure as an educator, Ms. Woolfolk worked in public policy with the following organizations: the Urban Reinvestment Task Force in Washington, DC., New York State Urban Development Corporation in New York City, the YWCA in Utica, New York, the Arbor Hill Community Center and the Inter-Racial Council in Albany, New York.

After working in New York and Washington, DC., Ms. Woolfolk returned to Alabama to serve as executive director of the Birmingham Opportunity Industrialization Center and associate executive director of the Jefferson County Committee for Economic Opportunity. For twenty-one years, she served as director of the Center for Urban Affairs at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and lectured in political science and public affairs. She also served as staff associate at the Center for International Programs and was an Assistant to the President for Community Relations.

Ms. Odessa Woolfolk's tremendous contributions to the University of Alabama at Birmingham were recognized with the establishment of the Odessa Woolfolk Presidential Community Service Award. Due to her outstanding and extensive service at UAB, Ms. Woolfolk received the UAB Honorary Alumni Award, Outstanding Faculty Award, the President's Medal, and many other awards.

Ms. Woolfolk is most known for her instrumental role in creating the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. She was its founding administrator and chair of the task force that planned and directed its development. Annually, nearly 150,000 people honor her as they pass through the Odessa Woolfolk Gallery at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

Throughout her life, Ms. Woolfolk has served on the boards of numerous Birmingham and statewide organizations, including the YWCA, Region 2020, the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, UAB African American Studies Program, Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, UAB Educational Foundation, Birmingham Museum of Art, and the Birmingham Urban League. Ms. Woolfolk served as the State Chair of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, was the first African American President of Operation New Birmingham's Board of Directors, founding member of Leadership Birmingham and was the founding co-chair of the Martin Luther King Unity Breakfast.

Because of her influence in the city of Birmingham and the state of Alabama, Ms. Woolfolk was honored by Birmingham's Mayor and City Council and was inducted into the Birmingham Gallery of Distinguished Citizens. She was also inducted into the Alabama Academy of Honor and is the well-deserved recipient of the Humanities Award from the Alabama Humanities Foundation. She has received honorary doctorates from her alma mater, Talladega College, from Birmingham-Southern College and the University of the South in Tennessee.

Ms. Odessa Woolfolk is one of Birmingham's brightest luminaries. Through her continued commitment to improving her community, the State of Alabama and her nation, she remains an inspiration to all who know her. And as one of her mentees, it is my honor to recognize her on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. Our generation owes trailblazers such as Ms. Odessa Woolfolk a debt of gratitude. Today, I invite my colleagues to pay tribute to Ms. Odessa Woolfolk, an exceptional woman whose contributions have made her a shining example of exemplary service to all mankind.

TRIBUTE TO CHERRI BRANSON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Cherri Branson on the occasion of her retirement from the United States House of Representatives, after more than twenty-four years of faithful and dedicated service. She is the kind of public servant who brings credit to this institution and the people we are honored to serve.

Cherri began her long and multi-faceted career in the House in 1989 and, over two decades, has served in various policy, legal and legislative positions, including Legislative Counsel, Legislative Director, and Committee Counsel.

I first became familiar with Cherri in the late 1990s, in the course of pursuing justice for African-American farmers who, for decades, had been systematically discriminated against by the Agriculture Department. That long-fought effort culminated in the enactment of statutory language that set the stage for a landmark discrimination settlement for impacted farmers (Pigford v. Glickman).

It was not until 2005, when I became the Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, that Cherri began working for me. In her time on the Committee, she rose through the ranks and, at retirement, was serving as the Chief Counsel for Oversight.

Among her key accomplishments on the Committee was the oversight work she led in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The investigations that she oversaw in the wake of this massive disaster shed light on waste, fraud, and unfair practices that harmed not only impacted individuals, but the American taxpayer. This oversight set the stage for meaningful reforms to help bring about a fair and equitable distribution of resources to survivors of the disaster, better processes to ensure distribution of immediate relief in a timely manner, and more opportunities for impacted local, small, minority and women-owned businesses to participate in recovery efforts.

On the Committee, she has led investigations of national significance, including the investigation of the White House State Dinner Security Breach (the Salahi case) which led to tightened security procedures within the Secret Service's Presidential Protection process.

Prior to joining the Committee, Cherri conducted investigations with the House of Representatives Government Reform (Oversight) Committee. The most notable outcomes of those investigations included the strengthening of protections for children involved in medical clinical trials, equitable tax treatment for Holocaust survivors, and several reviews of federal policies concerning illicit drugs.

During her career in the House, Cherri has directly served on the staffs of Members of Congress from diverse geographic and demographic areas, including New York, Texas, Michigan, Illinois, Hawaii, California and Mississippi. Through her work on behalf of Committee Members, she has come to know and appreciate the concerns of Americans in nearly every corner of the country.

In her work in the House, Cherri displayed that rare combination of steadfast and reliable care for ordinary Americans and a skillful ability to do battle on their behalf.

Even as Cherri closes a chapter of distinction and accomplishment in the House of Representatives, she continues to dedicate her diverse talents to serving others. She, quite literally, is living the famous adage coined by former Speaker of the House, Thomas P. O'Neill Jr.—"all politics is local"—by taking on the responsibility of representing the residents of Maryland's Montgomery County District 5 on the County Council.

On behalf of myself, the Democratic Members of the Committee on Homeland Security, and this institution, I extend my sincere appreciation to Cherri for all her great work. I also wish to acknowledge her loving family—husband Donald, and son, Avery—on their contributions. I urge Members to join me in extending our best wishes to Cherri upon her retirement and in her future endeavors.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, February 27, 2014 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 4

10 a.m.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Stanley Fischer, of New York, Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, and Lael Brainard, of the District of Columbia, all to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Gustavo Velasquez Aguilar, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and J. Mark McWatters, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Credit Union Administration.
SD–538

3 p.m.
Committee on Foreign Relations
Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs
To hold hearings to examine strengthening United States alliances in Northeast Asia.
SD–419

MARCH 5

Time to be announced
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.
SR–253

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SH–216

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of L. Reginald Brothers, Jr., of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary for Science and Technology, and Francis Xavier Taylor, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, both of the Department of Homeland Security.
SD–342

10 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of Defense
To hold hearings to examine national security space launch programs.
SD–192

Committee on Veterans' Affairs
To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of Veterans of Foreign Wars.
SD–G50

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
To hold hearings to examine developments in the Western Balkans and policy responses, focusing on policy approaches of the United States toward the countries of the Western Balkans.
SD–106

10:30 a.m.
Committee on the Budget
To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2015.
SD–608

Committee on Finance
To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2015.
SD–215

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship
Business meeting to consider the nomination of Maria Contreras-Sweet, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.
SR–428A

2:15 p.m.
Special Committee on Aging
To hold hearings to examine income security and the elderly, focusing on securing gains made in the war on poverty.
SD–562

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
To hold hearings to examine nuclear forces and policies in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–222

MARCH 6

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine United States Central Command and United States Africa Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for

fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–G50

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of the American Veterans (AMVETS), Blinded Veterans Association, Jewish War Veterans, Military Officers Association of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, National Guard Association of the United States, The Retired Enlisted Association, Vietnam Veterans of America.

CHOB–345

10 a.m.

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Timothy G. Massad, of Connecticut, to be Chairman, Sharon Y. Bowen, of New York, and J. Christopher Giancarlo, of New Jersey, all to be a Commissioner, all of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

SR–328A

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight

To hold an oversight hearing to examine contractor performance information.

SD–342

11 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety, and Security

To hold hearings to examine enhancing our rail safety, focusing on current challenges for passenger and freight rail.

SR–253

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine Syria spillover, focusing on the growing threat of terrorism and sectarianism in the Middle East.

SD–419

MARCH 11

2:15 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities

To hold closed hearings to examine United States Special Operations Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217 following the open session.

SR–222

MARCH 12

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the situation in Afghanistan.

SH–216

10 a.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of multiple veterans service organizations.

SD–G50

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

To hold hearings to examine military space programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–222

MARCH 13

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine United States Northern Command and United States Southern Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–G50

MARCH 25

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Forces Korea in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–G50

MARCH 26

10 a.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of The American Legion.

SD–G50

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support

To hold hearings to examine the the current readiness of United States forces in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–232A

MARCH 27

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Navy in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–G50

APRIL 3

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Army in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–G50

APRIL 10

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Air Force in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–106

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1133–S1186

Measures Introduced: Eight bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2042–2049, and S. Res. 362–363. **Pages S1174–75**

Measures Passed:

Black History Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 363, celebrating Black History Month. **Pages S1185–86**

Measures Considered:

Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act—Agreement: Senate began consideration of S. 1982, to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, after agreeing to the motion to proceed, and taking action on the following amendments and motions proposed thereto: **Page S1168**

Pending:

Reid (for Sanders) Amendment No. 2747, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S1168**

Reid Amendment No. 2766 (to Amendment No. 2747), to change the enactment date. **Page S1168**

A motion was entered to close further debate on Reid (for Sanders) Amendment No. 2747 (listed above), and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, and pursuant to the unanimous-consent agreement of Wednesday, February 26, 2014, a vote on cloture will occur at approximately 2 p.m. on Thursday, February 27, 2014. **Page S1168**

Reid motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Veterans Affairs, with instructions, Reid Amendment No. 2767, to change the enactment date. **Page S1168**

Reid Amendment No. 2768 (to (the instructions of the motion to commit) Amendment No. 2767), of a perfecting nature. **Page S1168**

Reid Amendment No. 2769 (to Amendment No. 2768), of a perfecting nature. **Page S1168**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of Reid (for Sanders) Amendment No. 2747. **Page S1168**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that on Thursday, February 27, 2014, during the Senate's consideration of the bill, but no later than 2 p.m., Senator Sessions, or designee, be recognized to raise a budget point of order against the bill; that if such a point of order is raised, it be in order for Senator Murray, or designee, to move to waive; that if a motion to waive is made, the vote on the motion to waive occur at 2 p.m., on Thursday, February 27, 2014; that if the motion to waive is successful, Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on Reid (for Sanders) Amendment No. 2747 (listed above); that if cloture is invoked on the amendment, all post-cloture time be yielded back, Reid Amendment No. 2766 (listed above) be withdrawn, and Senate vote on Reid (for Sanders) Amendment No. 2747; that upon disposition of Reid (for Sanders) Amendment No. 2747, Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the bill, as amended, if amended; that if cloture is invoked on the bill, all post-cloture time be yielded back, and Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, if amended; that if the motion to waive is not successful, then the cloture motions be withdrawn; and that the filing deadline for first-degree amendments to the bill be 10:30 a.m., on Thursday, February 27, 2014, and the filing deadline for second-degree amendments to Reid (for Sanders) Amendment No. 2747, and to the bill be 1:30 p.m., on Thursday, February 27, 2014. **Page S1169**

A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the bill at approximately 10:30 a.m., on Thursday, February 27, 2014, with the time until 2 p.m. equally divided and controlled between the two Leaders, or their designees, with Senator Sessions controlling 30 minutes of the Republican time, and Senator Graham, or his designee, recognized at 1:45 p.m. **Page S1186**

Child Care and Development Block Grant Act: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990. **Page S1169**

Military Sexual Assault Bills—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at a time to be determined by the Majority Leader, with the concurrence of the Republican Leader, Senate begin consideration of S. 1752, to reform procedures for determinations to proceed to trial by court-martial for certain offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice; that if a cloture motion is filed on the bill, there be two hours of debate on S. 1752, to reform procedures for determinations to proceed to trial by court-martial for certain offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and S. 1917, to provide for additional enhancements of the sexual assault prevention and response activities of the Armed Forces, equally divided between the two Leaders, or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture; that if cloture is invoked, all post-cloture time be yielded back, and Senate vote on passage of the bill; that no amendments, points of order or motions be in order to the bill prior to the vote on passage; that if the motion to invoke cloture on S. 1752 is not agreed to, the bill be returned to the calendar; that upon the conclusion of the consideration of S. 1752, Senate proceed to the consideration of S. 1917, to provide for additional enhancements of the sexual assault prevention and response activities of the Armed Forces; that if a cloture motion is filed on the bill, Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the bill; that if cloture is invoked, all post-cloture time be yielded back and Senate vote on passage of the bill; that no amendments, points of order, or motions be in order to the bill prior to the vote on passage; that if the motion to invoke cloture on S. 1917 is not agreed to, the bill be returned to the calendar.

Page S1185

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Robin L. Rosenberg, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

50 Air Force nominations in the rank of general.

Routine lists in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy. Page S1186

Messages from the House: Page S1172

Measures Referred: Page S1172

Executive Communications: Pages S1172–73

Petitions and Memorials: Pages S1173–74

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S1175–76

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Pages S1176–77

Additional Statements: Pages S1171–72

Amendments Submitted: Pages S1177–85

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S1185

Privileges of the Floor: Page S1185

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6:57 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 27, 2014. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1186.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

RISING COST OF ALZHEIMER'S IN AMERICA

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine the rising cost of Alzheimer's in America, focusing on families and the economy, after receiving testimony from former Representative Dennis Moore, Lenexa, Kansas; Francis S. Collins, Director, Richard J. Hodes, Director, National Institute on Aging, and Story C. Landis, Director, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, all of the National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services; Michael D. Hurd, The RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, California; and Seth Rogen, Los Angeles, California.

MILITARY SEXUAL ASSAULT, POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER, AND SUICIDE

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Personnel concluded a hearing to examine the relationships between military sexual assault, posttraumatic stress disorder and suicide, and on Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs medical treatment and management of victims of sexual trauma, after receiving testimony from Karen S. Guice, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs, Jacqueline Garrick, Director, Suicide Prevention Office, Nathan W. Galbreath, Senior Executive Advisor, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, Lance Corporal Jeremiah J. Arbogast, USMC (Ret.), and Jessica Kenyon, former Private First Class, USA, all of the Department of Defense; and Susan J. McCutcheon, National Mental Health Director, Family Services, Women's Mental Health and Military Sexual Trauma, and Margret E. Bell, Director for Education and Training, National Military Sexual Trauma Support Team, both of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support concluded a hearing to examine Department of Defense information technology acquisition processes, business transformation, and management practices in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program, including H.R. 1232, to amend titles 40, 41, and 44, United States Code, to eliminate duplication and waste in information technology acquisition and management, after receiving testimony from Katrina G. McFarland, Assistant Secretary for Acquisition, Kevin J. Scheid, Acting Deputy Chief Management Officer, and Teresa M. Takai, Chief Information Officer, all of the Department of Defense; and David A. Powner, Director, Information Technology and Management Issues, Government Accountability Office.

RETIREMENT SAVINGS FOR LOW-INCOME WORKERS

Committee on Finance: Subcommittee on Social Security, Pensions and Family Policy concluded a hearing to examine retirement savings for low-income workers, after receiving testimony from J. Mark Iwry, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Retirement and Health Policy; Diane Oakley, National Institute on Retirement Security, Washington, D.C.; Stephen P. Utkus, Vanguard, Malvern, Pennsylvania; and Judy A. Miller, American Society of Pension Professionals and Actuaries, Arlington, Virginia.

TREATIES

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Protocol Amending the Convention between the United States of America and the Swiss Confederation for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed at Washington on October 2, 1996, signed on September 23, 2009, at Washington, as corrected by an exchange of notes effected November 16, 2010 and a related agreement effected by an exchange of notes on September 23, 2009 (Treaty Doc. 112–1), Protocol Amending the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital, signed on May 20, 2009, at Luxembourg (the ''proposed Protocol'') and a related agreement effected by the exchange of notes also signed on May 20, 2009 (Treaty Doc. 111–8), Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Hungary for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed on February 4, 2010, at Budapest (the ''proposed Convention'') and a related agreement effected by an exchange of notes on February 4, 2010 (Treaty Doc. 111–7), Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Chile for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital, signed in Washington on February 4, 2010, with a Protocol signed the same day, as corrected by exchanges of notes effected February 25, 2011, and February 10 and 21, 2012, and a related agreement effected by exchange of notes (the ''related Agreement'') on February 4, 2010 (Treaty Doc. 112–8), and Protocol Amending the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, done at Paris on May 27, 2010 (the ''proposed Protocol''), which was signed by the United States on May 27, 2010 (Treaty Doc. 112–5), after receiving testimony from Robert Stack, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Tax Affairs; Thomas A. Barthold, Chief of Staff, Joint Committee on Taxation; William Reinsch, National Foreign Trade Council, Inc., and Nancy L. McLernon, Organization for International Investment, both of Washington, D.C.; and Paul B. Nolan, McCormick and Company, Inc., Sparks, Maryland.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine prospects for peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Great Lakes Region, after receiving testimony from former Senator Russell D. Feingold, U.S. Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Roger Meece, former U.S. Ambassador and former United Nations Special Representative to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Seattle, Washington, both of the Department of State; Raymond Gilpin, National Defense University Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Washington, D.C.; and Ben Affleck, Eastern Congo Initiative, Los Angeles, California.

OFFSHORE TAX EVASION

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations concluded a hearing to examine offshore tax evasion, focusing on the effort to collect unpaid taxes on billions in hidden offshore accounts, after receiving testimony from James M. Cole, Deputy Attorney General, and Kathryn Keneally, Assistant Attorney General, Tax Division, both of the Department of Justice; and Brady Dougan, and Rob Shafir, both of

New York, New York, and Romeo Cerutti, and Hans-Ulrich Meister, both of Zurich, Switzerland, all of Credit Suisse.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine early childhood development and education in Indian country, focusing on building a foundation for academic success, after receiving testimony from Linda K. Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services and Inter-Departmental Liaison for Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families; Danny Wells, Chickasaw Nation Division of Education, Ada, Oklahoma; Barbara Fabre, White Earth Nation Child Care/Early Childhood Program, White Earth, Minnesota, on behalf of the National Indian Child Care Association; Jacquelyn Power, Blackwater Community School, Coolidge, Arizona, on behalf of the Family and Child Education Program; and Elizabeth Jane Costello, Duke University School of Medicine, Durham, North Carolina.

COMPETITION IN THE WIRELESS MARKET

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights concluded a hearing to examine competition in the wireless market, after receiving testimony from Eric B. Graham, C Spire Wireless, Ridgeland, Mississippi; Roslyn Layton, Aalborg University, Denmark; Randal S. Milch, Verizon Communications Inc., New York, New York; Jonathan Spalter, Mobile Future, Berkeley, California; and Kathleen O'Brien Ham, T–Mobile USA, Inc., and Matthew F. Wood, Free Press, both of Washington, D.C.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 14 public bills, H.R. 4090–4103; and 1 resolution, H. Res. 491, were introduced. **Pages H2000–01**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H2001–02**

Report Filed:

A report was filed today as follows:

H. Res. 492, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 899) to provide for additional safeguards with respect to imposing Federal mandates, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 113–362). **Page H2000**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Ros-Lehtinen to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H1941**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:39 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H1945**

Suspension: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measure:

Taxpayer Transparency Act of 2014: H.R. 3308, amended, to require a Federal agency to include language in certain educational and advertising materials indicating that such materials are produced and disseminated at taxpayer expense. **Pages H1947–50**

Suspension—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measure which was debated yesterday, February 25th:

Private Property Rights Protection Act: H.R. 1944, to protect private property rights, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 353 yeas to 65 nays, Roll No. 67. **Page H1960**

Stop Targeting of Political Beliefs by the IRS Act of 2014: The House passed H.R. 3865, to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from modifying the standard for determining whether an organization is operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare for purposes of section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, by a recorded vote of 243 ayes to 176 noes, Roll No. 69. **Pages H1960–71**

Rejected the Van Hollen motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Ways and Means with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a yea-and-nay vote of 191 yeas to 230 nays, Roll No. 68. **Pages H1968–70**

Rejected the Polis amendment to the title by a recorded vote of 177 ayes to 241 noes, Roll No. 70. **Page H1970**

Pursuant to the rule, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted. **Page H1961**

H. Res. 487, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 3865) and (H.R. 2804), was agreed to by a recorded vote of 231 ayes to 185 noes, Roll No. 66, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 224 yeas to 192 nays, Roll No. 65. **Pages H1950–60**

All Economic Regulations are Transparent Act of 2014: The House began consideration of H.R. 2804, to amend title 5, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to publish information about rules on the Internet. Consideration of the measure is expected to resume tomorrow, February 27th. **Pages H1971–95**

Pursuant to the rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113–38 shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform now printed in the bill. **Page H1979**

Agreed to:

Brady (TX) amendment (No. 4 printed in H. Rept. 113–361) that requires federal agencies to identify in any Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPR) the achievable objective of the proposed rule and the metrics to be used. The amendment also requires federal agencies in issuing final rules to certify that the rule meets the objectives the agency identified in the NPR; **Pages H1992–93**

Rigell amendment (No. 5 printed in H. Rept. 113–361) that expands the requirements of initial regulatory flexibility analyses to include an analysis of any impairment of the ability of small entities to have access to credit; and **Pages H1993–95**

Tipton amendment (No. 6 printed in H. Rept. 113–361) that makes a technical correction that ensures the current requirement, under the Regulatory Flexibility Act, that each agency annually publish a list of regulations to be reviewed pursuant to its periodic review plan, remains so. **Page H1995**

Rejected:

Johnson (GA) amendment (No. 1 printed in H. Rept. 113–361) that sought to strike the six month moratorium on finalizing rules and **Pages H1989–90**

Murphy (FL) amendment (No. 2 printed in H. Rept. 113–361) that sought to cut titles II and IV from the bill. **Pages H1990**

Proceedings Postponed:

Rothfus amendment (No. 3 printed in H. Rept. 113–361) that seeks to add terms to define a negative-impact on jobs and wages rule, help agencies identify a negative-impact on jobs and wages rule, and require agency heads approving a negative-impact on jobs and wages rule to submit a statement that they approved the rule knowing of its negative-impact on jobs and wages. **Pages H1990–92**

H. Res. 487, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 3865) and (H.R. 2804), was agreed to by a recorded vote of 231 ayes to 185 noes, Roll No. 66, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 224 yeas to 192 nays, Roll No. 65. **Pages H1950–60**

Board of Trustees of Gallaudet University—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Trustees of Gallaudet University: Representatives Yoder and Butterfield. **Page H1995**

British-American Interparliamentary Group—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Member on the part of the House to the British-American Interparliamentary Group: Representative Roe (TN). **Pages H1995–96**

Discharge Petition: Representative Bishop (NY) presented to the clerk a motion to discharge the Committee on Education and the Workforce from the consideration of H.R. 1010, to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage (Discharge Petition No. 7).

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H1971.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes and three recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1959, H1959–60, H1960, H1969–70, H1970, and H1970–71. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Committee Meetings

EFFORTS TO STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies held a hearing entitled "The State of Efforts to Stop Human Trafficking". Testimony was heard from Cindy McCain, Co-Chairperson, Arizona Governor's Task Force on Human Trafficking; William Woolf, Detective, Fairfax County, Virginia Police Department; and public witnesses.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held a hearing on Oversight of Internal Revenue Service. Testimony was heard from John Koskinen, Commissioner, Internal Revenue Service; J. Russell George, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration; and Nina E. Olson, National Taxpayer Advocate, Internal Revenue Service.

QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE MILITARY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies held a hearing on Quality of Life in the

Military. Testimony was heard from Sergeant Major Raymond F. Chandler, III, Sergeant Major of the Army; Master Chief Petty Officer Michael D. Stevens, Petty Officer of the Navy; Sergeant Major Michael P. Barrett, Marine Corps; and Chief Master Sergeant James A. Cody, Sergeant of the Air Force.

U.S. ASSISTANCE TO PROMOTE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY IN COUNTRIES WITH REPRESSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs held a hearing on oversight of U.S. Assistance to Promote Freedom and Democracy in Countries with Repressive Environments. This was a closed hearing.

POSTURE OF THE U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND AND U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND

Committee on Armed Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The Posture of the U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Southern Command''. Testimony General Charles H. Jacoby, Jr, USA, Commander, U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command; and General John F. Kelly, USMC, Commander, U.S. Southern Command.

DEFENSE HEALTH AGENCY

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing on Defense Health Agency. Testimony was heard from Brenda S. Farrell, Director, Defense Capabilities and Management, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Lieutenant General Douglas J. Robb, Director, Defense Health Agency; and Jonathan Woodson, Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs, Department of Defense.

PROVIDING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, FLEXIBLE HEALTH PLANS THROUGH SELF-INSURANCE

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions held a hearing entitled ''Providing Access to Affordable, Flexible Health Plans through Self-Insurance''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

HOW CMS' ATTACK ON THE PART D PROGRAM WILL INCREASE COSTS AND REDUCE CHOICES FOR SENIORS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled ''Messing with Success: How CMS' Attack on the Part D Program Will Increase Costs and Reduce Choices for Seniors''. Testimony was heard from Jonathan Blum, Principal Deputy Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; and public witnesses.

ALLEGATIONS OF IMPROPER LOBBYING AND OBSTRUCTION AT THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Inspector General Report: Allegations of Improper Lobbying and Obstruction at the Department of Housing and Urban Development''. Testimony was heard from David Montoya, Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General, U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

DOD-FRANK ACT'S IMPACT ON ASSET-BACKED SECURITIES

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Capital Markets and Government Sponsored Enterprises held a hearing entitled ''The Dodd-Frank Act's Impact on Asset-Backed Securities''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING THREATS TO CONSERVATION AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''International Wildlife Trafficking Threats to Conservation and National Security''. Testimony was heard from Kerri-Ann Jones, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Department of State; Daniel M. Ashe, Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior; and Robert G. Dreher, Acting Assistant Attorney General, Environment and Natural Resources Division, Department of Justice.

U.S. POLICY TOWARD SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a hearing entitled ''U.S. Policy Toward Sudan and South Sudan''. Testimony was heard from Donald Booth, Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan, Department of State; and public witnesses.

THE SECRETARY'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE—CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

Committee on Homeland Security: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The Secretary's Vision for the Future—Challenges and Priorities''. Testimony was heard from Jeh Johnson, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security.

ENFORCING THE PRESIDENT'S CONSTITUTIONAL DUTY TO FAITHFULLY EXECUTE THE LAWS

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Enforcing the President's Constitutional Duty to Faithfully Execute the Laws''. Testimony was heard from the following Representatives: Gerlach; Rice (SC); Black; DeSantis; and public witnesses.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law held a hearing on H.R. 2992, the ''Business Activity Tax Simplification Act of 2013''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

AMERICAN ENERGY JOBS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing entitled ''American Energy Jobs: Opportunities for Veterans''. Testimony was heard from Mary Pletcher, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Capital and Diversity, Department of Interior; and public witnesses.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation held a hearing on the following legislation: H.R. 503, the ''National Desert Storm and Desert Shield War Memorial Act''; H.R. 712, to extend the authorization of the Highlands Conservation Act through fiscal year 2024; H.R. 1192, the ''Mount Jessie Benton Fre 'mont''; H.R. 1501, the ''Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument Preservation Act''; H.R. 1744, the ''Multispecies Habitat Conservation Plan Implementation Act''; H.R. 2569, the ''Upper Missisquoi and Trout Wild and Scenic Rivers Act''; H.R. 3222, the ''Flushing Remonstrance Study Act''; H.R. 3366, to provide for the release of the property interests retained by the United States in certain land conveyed in 1954 by the United States, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, to the State of Oregon for the establishment of the Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center of Oregon State University in Hermiston, Oregon; H.R. 3802, to extend the legislative authority of the Adams Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in honor of former President John Adams and his legacy, and for other purposes. Testimony was heard from the following Representatives: Roe (TN); Frelinghuysen; Jeffries; Welch; Meng; Walden; and Lynch; and Victor Knox, Associate Director, Park and Planning, Facilities and Lands, National Park Service, Department of Interior; Michael Nedd, Assistant Director, Energy, Minerals and Realty Management, Bureau of Land Management, Department of Interior; Aaron Baker, City Liaison Officer, Mesquite, Nevada; and public witnesses.

LIMITLESS SURVEILLANCE AT THE FDA: PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF FEDERAL WHISTLEBLOWERS

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Limitless Surveillance at the FDA: Protecting the Rights of Federal Whistleblowers''. Testimony was heard from Senator Grassley; and Walter Harris, Chief Operating Officer and Acting Chief Information Officer, Food and Drug Administration; Jeffrey Shuren, M.D., Director, Center for Devices and Radiological Health, Food and Drug Administration; Ruth McKee, Associate Director, Management Center, Devices and Radiological Health, Food and Drug Administration; and a public witness.

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION CONDUCTING A SERIOUS INVESTIGATION OF IRS TARGETING

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Job Creation and Regulatory Affairs held a hearing entitled ''Is the Obama Administration Conducting a Serious Investigation of IRS Targeting?''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

UNFUNDED MANDATES INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2013

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 899, the ''Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act of 2013''. The Committee granted, by record vote of 9–4, a structured rule for H.R. 899. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the bill shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill. The rule makes in order only those amendments printed in the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in

the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Testimony was heard from Representatives Foxx and Cummings.

OVERSIGHT OF PASSENGER AND FREIGHT RAIL SAFETY

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials held a hearing entitled ''Oversight of Passenger and Freight Rail Safety''. Testimony was heard from Joseph Szabo, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration; Cynthia L. Quarterman, Administrator, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration; Robert L. Sumwalt, National Transportation Safety Board; and public witnesses.

VA ACCOUNTABILITY: ASSESSING ACTIONS TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO SUBCOMMITTEE OVERSIGHT

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled ''VA Accountability: Assessing Actions Taken in Response to Subcommittee Oversight''. Testimony was heard from Robert Petzel, M.D., Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

PREVENTING DISABILITY SCAMS

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Social Security held a hearing entitled ''Preventing Disability Scams''. Testimony was heard from Carolyn Colvin, Acting Commissioner, Social Security Administration; William B. Zielinski, Deputy Commissioner of Systems and Chief Information Officer, Social Security Administration; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D158)*

S.J. Res. 28, providing for the appointment of John Fahey as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution. Signed on February 21, 2014. (Public Law 113–84)

S.J. Res. 29, providing for the appointment of Risa Lavizzo-Mourey as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution. Signed on February 21, 2014. (Public Law 113–85)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2014

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine United States Strategic Command and United States Cyber Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Full Committee, to resume closed hearings to examine responses to questions from the open session on current and future worldwide threats to the national security of the United States, 2:30 p.m., SVC–217.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the semiannual Monetary Policy Report to Congress, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard, to hold hearings to examine North Pacific perspectives on Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization, 10:30 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Water and Power, to hold hearings to examine S. 1419, to promote research, development, and demonstration of marine and hydrokinetic renewable energy technologies, S. 1771, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to adjust the Crooked River boundary, to provide water certainty for the City of Prineville, Oregon, S. 1800, to require the Secretary of the Interior to submit to Congress a report on the efforts of the Bureau of Reclamation to manage its infrastructure assets, S. 1946, to amend the Reclamation Safety of Dams Act of 1978 to modify the authorization of appropriations, S. 1965, to amend the East Bench Irrigation District Water Contract Extension Act to permit the Secretary of the Interior to extend the contract for certain water services, S. 2010 and H.R. 1963, bills to amend the Water Conservation and Utilization Act to authorize the development of non-Federal hydropower and issuance of leases of power privileges at projects constructed pursuant to the authority of the Water Conservation and Utilization Act, S. 2019, to reauthorize and update certain provisions of the Secure Water Act, and S. 2034, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program to facilitate the transfer to non-Federal ownership of appropriate reclamation projects or facilities, 2:30 p.m., SD–366.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine international parental child abduction, 11:15 a.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: business meeting to consider the nominations of Vivek Hallegere Murthy, of Massachusetts, to be Medical Director in the Regular Corps of the Public Health Service, and to be Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, Portia Y. Wu, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor, Christopher P. Lu, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor, Heather L. MacDougall, of Florida, to be a Member of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, Massie Ritsch, of the

District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary of Education for Communications and Outreach, and any pending nominations, Time to be announced, Room to be announced.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine promoting college access and success for students with disabilities, 10 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine recycling electronics, focusing on a common sense solution for enhancing government efficiency and protecting our environment, 1:30 p.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 1675, to reduce recidivism and increase public safety, S. 149, to provide effective criminal prosecutions for certain identity thefts, and the nominations of Steven Paul Logan, John Joseph Tuchi, Diane J. Humetewa, Rosemary Marquez, Douglas L. Rayes, and James Alan Soto, all to be a United States District Judge for the District of Arizona, Robin S. Rosenbaum, of Florida, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit, Bruce Howe Hendricks, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina, Mark G. Mastroianni, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, and Leslie Ragon Caldwell, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, hearing on the Federal Investments in Neuroscience Research Oversight, 10 a.m., H–309 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services, and Education, hearing on Public Health Emergency Medical Countermeasure Enterprise Oversight, 10 a.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The Posture of the U.S. Special Operations Command and U.S. Transportation Command'', 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, hearing entitled ''Seapower and Projection Forces Capabilities to Support the Asia Pacific Rebalance'', 2 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education; and Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training, joint hearing entitled ''Exploring Efforts to Strengthen the Teaching Profession'', 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Counterfeit Drugs: Fighting Illegal Supply Chains'', 10 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Energy and Power, hearing entitled ''Benefits of and Challenges to Energy Access in the 21st Century: Electricity'', 10:15 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Health, markup on the following legislation: H.R. 3548, the ''Improving Trauma Care Act of 2013''; H.R. 1281, the ''Newborn Screening Saves Lives Reauthorization Act of 2013''; H.R. 1528, the ''Veterinary Medicine Mobility Act of 2013''; and H.R. 4080, the ''Trauma Systems and Regionalization of Emergency Care Reauthorization Act'', 4:30 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 2548, the ''Electrify African Act'', 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies, hearing on H.R. 4007, the ''Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Authorization and Accountability Act of 2014'', 10 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Use of Storefront Operations'', 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Full Committee, markup on the following legislation: H.R. 1103, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide that Alexander Creek, Alaska, is and shall be recognized as an eligible Native village under that Act, and for other purposes; H.R. 1259, the ''Coltsville National Historical Park Act''; H.R. 2015, the ''Las Vegas Valley Public Land and Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument Act of 2013''; H.R. 3110, the ''Huna Tlingit Traditional Gull Egg Use Act''; and H.R. 3605, the ''Sandia Pueblo Settlement Technical Amendment Act'', 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs, hearing on the following legislation: H.R. 3105, the ''Aquaculture Risk Reduction Act''; H.R. 3280, the ''Lacey Act Clarifying Amendments Act''; H.R. 3324, the ''Lacey Act Paperwork Reduction Act''; and H.R. 4032, the ''North Texas Invasive Species Barrier Act'', 1:30 p.m., 1334 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing entitled ''Obama Administration Oversight: GAO Report—Interior Hiring and Retention Challenges'', 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Job Creation and Regulatory Affairs, hearing entitled ''The Administration's Proposed Restrictions on Political Speech: Doubling Down on IRS Targeting'', 9:30 a.m., 2247 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on National Security, hearing entitled ''Afghanistan: Honoring the Heroes of Extortion 17'', 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Energy Policy, Health Care, and Entitlements, hearing entitled ''Examining the Endangered Species Act'', 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Mars Flyby 2021: The First Deep Space Mission for the Orion and Space Launch System?'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, hearing entitled

''Improving the Nation's Highway Freight Network'', 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, hearing entitled ''Review of the Effectiveness of VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program'', 10 a.m., 334 Cannon.

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Ongoing Intelligence Activities'', 10 a.m., 304–HVC.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Thursday, February 27

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond one hour), Senate will continue consideration of S. 1982, Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act, with a series of votes beginning at 2 p.m.

Also, Senate expects to consider the nomination of Michael L. Connor, of New Mexico, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Thursday, February 27

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Complete consideration of H.R. 2804—All Economic Regulations Are Transparent Act of 2014.

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