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House of Representatives

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, 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 1:50 p.m.

HONORING INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, today, December 10, is International Human Rights Day. Sixty-five years ago in 1948 the first 58 members of the United Nations, fresh from the wounds and memories of World War II, adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They put aside profound disagreements about their political, economic, and social ideologies, their cultural and their religious differences.

Together they created a document remarkable for its breadth of human rights protections and outlined a bold vision of a world built on the premise that ''all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.'' The Universal Declaration articulated mankind's greatest aspirations to respect and protect the dignity of every person, regardless of his or her race, ethnicity, beliefs, or social standing.

The Universal Declaration became the cornerstone for developing international standards for the protection of human rights and helped inform the moral and legal basis for legislative action here in Congress. I am privileged to be the cochair of the bipartisan Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, dedicated to promoting human rights and educating our congressional colleagues on the importance of standing up for human rights.

Through hearings and initiatives, we have focused on some of the most critical human rights challenges around the world. This year we began the Defending Freedoms Project, where Members of Congress can adopt prisoners of conscience. I congratulate those Members who have adopted prisoners and boldly advocated for their release. I invite all my colleagues to join the Commission in its Defending Freedoms Project.

As my colleagues are aware, the U.S. Congress has a long history of standing up for the disenfranchised and the abused. It has stood on the side of immigrants and championed the rights of those whose governments forbid them to emigrate. It has worked on behalf of the disappeared and tortured in Chile and the gulags of the former Soviet Union. It has stood up for the rights of workers, journalists, and other human rights defenders. I hope this Congress and future Congresses will not abandon that history, but will continue to stand up for the rights of the disenfranchised, not just abroad but right here at home.

Along with my colleague FRANK WOLF, I am proud to carry on the tradition as the bipartisan sponsors of the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act, which Congress approved last year and the President signed into law. The Magnitsky Act responds to the ongoing pattern of brutality against those speaking out for truth and justice in Russia. It bans U.S. visas and freezes the assets of some of Russia's gross violators of human rights, and affirms our commitment to safeguarding human rights and fighting impunity regardless of where such transgressions occur.

In an increasingly interconnected world, the Universal Declaration challenges us to place our commitment to human rights firmly and uncompromisingly at the center of our foreign policy. Too often we fail this test. For example, despite China's relentless crackdown on the Tibetan people, we continue business as usual with China. The toll of this oppression on human dignity is seen in 19 self-immolations—Tibetans' desperate protest against China's policies and an appeal to the world for action.

The Universal Declaration also demands that we press our friends and allies when they are responsible for human rights abuses. In Bahrain, since the 2011 uprising, we have seen reports of torture, multiple cases of forced confession, and the unjust prosecution of medical personnel. Peaceful political and human rights leaders have been arbitrarily jailed to the detriment of political reform and stability. Instead of leveraging our good relations with Bahrain to achieve greater respect for human rights, we have chosen to renew military sales and abandon our past demands for increased human rights protections.

Finally, International Human Rights Day reminds us to recommit to respecting human rights in our own Nation. We must eliminate torture in all our policies. We must work harder to prevent human trafficking on our own soil, and we must protect and advance such basic rights as access to adequate food, a fundamental human right under article 25 of the Universal Declaration. Forty-eight million Americans, including 16 million children, don't have enough to eat in this country. Yet in September, we saw devastating cuts to our SNAP program, with maybe even more on the way in the final version of the farm bill. The Universal Declaration and our own American values demand that we do better.

With the passing of one of the greatest champions of human rights, Nelson

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Mandela, I would like to close with words he offered in this very Chamber to a joint meeting of Congress in 1990:

> To deny any person their human rights is to challenge their very humanity. To impose on them a wretched life of hunger and deprivation is to dehumanize them.

As we remember Nelson Mandela, let us draw inspiration from his dedication to the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration, and let us rise to the challenge of that document's vision to respect, protect, and promote the human dignity of every person so that we might achieve a more peaceful, just, secure world.

A TRIBUTE TO PAT GRANT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. BRIDENSTINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Mr. Speaker, Pat Grant passed away on November 26, 2013.

Whether you called her ''colonel,'' ''attorney'' or ''champ,'' Pat Grant was one of the most extraordinary women you would ever hope to meet. She dominated women's golf in Oklahoma during the 1930s and 1940s. In addition to her golf prowess, Grant served her country for 22 years in the United States Army. After the Army, Grant practiced law for 30 years.

It was said of Grant:

> She was not only the perfect example of an athlete; she was the type of American our country needs to look up to.

People started noticing Grant when she won the Oklahoma State High School Golf Championship as a 13-year-old freshman at Cushing High School. She would win it three times before graduating in 1938. Then it was on to Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee. There was no golf team at Oklahoma Baptist University at the time, but she was given a scholarship for teaching golf to other students. She graduated from OBU in 1942 and was the first woman to be inducted into the OBU Athletic Hall of Fame.

While at OBU and at the age of 18, Grant won the Oklahoma Women's State Amateur Championship in 1939. In 1940, at the Indian Hills Country Club in Tulsa, Grant won the State championship again. Her third straight championship came at the Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa. During that championship, she set a new course record for women at Southern Hills and won the championship match 9 and 8. She held the trophy for the fourth straight year with a 7 and 6 win in Shawnee. The legend was beginning to take shape. Grant became known for hitting long, booming drives, some as long as 250 yards. It was rumored that sometimes she even talked to her golf ball.

There was no State championship in 1943, 1944 or 1945 because of World War II; but when play resumed in 1946, Grant won the State Amateur Championship again. With that victory, Grant became the only person in Oklahoma history to win the State championship 5 years in a row. That record still stands today.

When World War II broke out, Grant put aside her ambition of becoming a professional golfer so she could serve her country. ''It seemed like the right thing to do,'' she said. ''We were at war, and I didn't want to sit around here and do nothing,'' she said. Her career in the Army was as illustrious as her accomplishments on the golf course.

Grant and her sister, Mary Margaret, enlisted in the Army in 1942. Grant went into the Women's Army Corps, and Mary enlisted in the Army Nurse Corps. Grant was commissioned as a lieutenant in April 1943. While in the military, Grant held duty assignments all over the globe, including assisting the chief legal counsel during the Nuremberg Trials. Grant also served as the personal escort to Eleanor Roosevelt when the former First Lady toured Germany in 1948.

Grant received 23 letters of commendation while in the Army and won golf tournaments all over the world. ''It was good publicity for the Army for me to be playing in all these golf tournaments,'' Grant said. ''It was great for me because the Army was paying my way. That's what you call a 'win-win,'' she added.

In 1965, after 22 years of Active Duty, Grant retired from the Army with the rank of lieutenant colonel. She was one of only 60 women to attain such a rank at that time. As if her life were not full enough, Grant landed in San Antonio to earn a law degree in 1966.

Just as she protected her country, Grant fought for rights and justice through her family law practice. Because of her service to others, Grant was named Woman of the Year by the Texas Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs in 1972. Retirement came for good in 1995. Grant moved to Cortez, Colorado. At the age of 90, she was still active and full of life. Grant flew an ultralight aircraft every Saturday morning when weather permitted.

''It has been a good trip,'' Grant recently said. ''God has chosen a life of adventure for me. I wouldn't trade it.''

Grant loved God, and she loved her neighbor, and she spent her life dedicated to family, friends, and country. She was inducted into the Women's Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame in April of 2010. She passed away on November 26, 2013, at the age of 90. She was a great role model for all Americans.

FLUSHING REMONSTRANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. MENG) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my legislation, the Flushing Remonstrance Study Act, H.R. 3222.

This bill directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the Flushing Remonstrance and significant local resources. The Flushing Remonstrance is an important part of my local history, and I would like to take a few moments to discuss its origins and influence on our country.

The Quakers of the mid-17th century were prohibited from practicing their religious traditions in the New Netherland, which included parts of what is now New York State. In response, a group of local activists wrote the Remonstrance as a declaration against religious persecution. Although 356 years old, its intent still shines brightly in the ideals our Nation embraces today.

On December 27, 1657, 30 English citizens stood against oppression and asserted the rights of Quakers and other religious minorities to practice their religion.

They wrote:

> We desire . . . not to judge lest we be judged, neither to condemn lest we be condemned, but rather let every man stand or fall to his own master.

This petition, known as the Flushing Remonstrance, made a forceful argument against judging and condemning others for what they believed. It was met with great opposition from the local government in what is known today as Flushing, Queens.

One of the greatest and most outspoken proponents of religious freedom at the time was an English immigrant named John Bowne. At great risk to himself, John invited the Quakers to hold religious services in his own home. He was arrested for doing so, fined, and then banished to his homeland of Holland for his crimes. While in Holland, John Bowne appealed to the influential Dutch West India Company to return home. His pleas of justice were accepted. Because of Bowne's empathy and strong convictions for religious freedom, the company demanded that religious persecution end in the colony.

□ 1215

Bowne's story of personal courage should not be forgotten. Our Nation was founded upon the ideals that foster a tolerant society, the same ideals that Bowne practiced every time he opened his door to a Quaker seeking refuge from persecution. Bowne's home, which served as a symbol of religious freedom to so many, was converted into a museum in 1947 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.

It is important that we continue to preserve and understand the historical significance of the Remonstrance, strengthening its ties to the Queens community and beyond. To help achieve this goal, I introduced the Flushing Remonstrance Study Act, which will help the Queens community connect to its rich past in possibly new and exciting ways. The Bowne House could benefit from further Federal study; and other associated locations, such as the Quaker Meeting House, should be considered for registry.

The story of the Flushing Remonstrance is not for New Yorkers alone. It is a precursor to a fundamental right to practice one's religion. It is a value in our First Amendment. I am proud to represent a district that tended to the early roots of religious freedom that have now grown into an unquestionable American right. I hope the Flushing Remonstrance Study Act and the December 27 anniversary will help us all remember the courage of John Bowne and the passion for religious freedom held by the authors of the Flushing Remonstrance.

PROTECTING MINNESOTA RATEPAYERS FROM WASHINGTON INACTION

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, recently, the D.C. Circuit Court ruled in favor of America's energy ratepayers.

For more than 30 years, the Department of Energy has assessed a special tax and a special assessment on my constituents and the residents of 40 other States around the country who receive their electricity from nuclear power. Minnesotans have paid over $400 million alone. The stated reason for this tax: to pay for the disposal of used fuels generated from nuclear energy. To date, the total amount collected is more than $24 billion, but little of that money has even been spent.

Since 1987, the law of the land remains that Yucca Mountain is the site for geological storage of nuclear spent fuel. Unfortunately for ratepayers, partisanship and bickering in Washington have nearly halted the program from moving forward. In classic Washington fashion, even with all of this inaction, the tax has continued to be assessed and the moneys have continued to be collected.

Fortunately, this court action will bring an end to this, but just for now. I have long been an advocate of stopping these payments. The government is not doing what it promised to do with used fuel; yet millions of ratepayers are still being forced to foot the bill. Minnesotans and Americans should not be taxed for a service that the government is not providing.

Mr. Speaker, we should be expanding the development of nuclear energy. It is safe, it is clean, and it is renewable. Storing these used fuels is a critical piece of that effort, and we need a permanent solution, whether it is at Yucca Mountain or somewhere else.

It is reasonable and fair that if the administration is going to continue to drag its feet on a permanent storage site, as they have for several years now, then ratepayers and taxpayers should not be forced to fund inaction.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the court's decision to protect Minnesota ratepayers and stopping these payments. In addition, it is time to get serious about the future of nuclear energy and moving forward with safe and proper storage facilities for the waste.

THE DO-NOTHING REPUBLICAN MAJORITY

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, well, here we go again. Our to-do list continues to pile up and Republican House leadership of this legislative body—if we can even use words like ''leadership'' and ''legislative'' to describe the House anymore—has officially cemented the first session of the 113th Congress as the ''least productive of all time.''

We have not passed a budget, have not passed a farm bill, have not fixed the Voting Rights Act, or done anything in our charge to make the people's voices heard in their Nation's Capital. In fact, if recent reports in the D.C. newspapers are any indication, House leadership seems to be more concerned with planning fund-raisers in New York City than getting anything done here in Washington, D.C.

The leadership of the people's House has continued to govern by sound bites and passing messaging bills that go nowhere—even shutting down the government for more than 2 weeks in the process, a painful exercise and expensive exercise.

But we are about to call it a year and skip town with so much left undone. Our unemployment—or employment—rate is at its lowest point in 5 years. But imagine how much lower it would be today if we would work together and focus on jobs instead of attempting to repeal the Affordable Care Act since 2011;

Rolling back sequestration and replacing it with a responsible budget that cuts where we can and invests where we must;

Passing comprehensive immigration reform to expand the American Dream to our friends and neighbors who want so desperately to contribute to the greatest country on the planet;

Updating the Voting Rights Act so that everyone is able to fulfill their basic human right and duty of going to the polls;

Increasing the minimum wage to restore dignity to those who have been forced to work two, and sometimes three, jobs simply to put food on the table;

Passing a farm bill—something that needs to be done and used to be routine—and empowering our Nation's family farms to ensure that our national food supply remains secure and remains plentiful;

Focusing on the clear and present danger that climate change has brought to the Midwest and to our shores along the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic coast.

I could go on and on, but I only have 5 minutes.

Tax reform, certainly commonsense gun reform like expanding background checks, and passing ENDA.

The fact is that there are about 10 to 15 pieces of major legislation that would improve our country and the quality of life for Americans of every race, orientation, political party, and socioeconomic status. But they are not being pushed by this House.

Almost all of these bills, if given a simple up-or-down vote, would pass with a bipartisan majority; but House leadership continues to act in the interest of a few extremists in their own party instead of doing what is right for our American people.

I, like many of my Democratic colleagues, have signed onto a resolution introduced by my good friend LOUISE SLAUGHTER, which would prevent Congress from adjourning unless the House agrees to a budget by December 13.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this resolution so that we stay in town until we perform at least one of our basic duties before leaving for the holidays. The American people deserve so much more than what we have given them in the past year.

It is my hope that when we gavel in next year, we will do so with a renewed willingness to work together and focus on the top priority for Americans, which is, indeed, putting people back to work. The American public expects and deserves nothing less.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 22 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

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

Almighty God of the Universe, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We join the world this day to ask Your blessing upon all worldwide who mourn the death of Nelson Mandela.

One of the great figures of human history, and most certainly of our own era, Madiba joined a small fellowship of heroic people whose commitment, ultimately, to nonviolence and reconciliation changed our world.

As today marks the 20th anniversary of the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, we ask that You give all who inhabit the Earth the will to intensify our efforts to fulfill our collective responsibility to promote and protect the rights and dignity of all people everywhere and the wisdom to know how best to do so.

Bless us this day and every day, and may all that is done within the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. KIRKPATRICK) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK 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.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT STANDS ON A SAND FOUNDATION

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, even the White House's best ObamaCare damage control efforts, waivers, delays, penalty deadline, adjustments, and temporary fixes sadly leave the so-called Affordable Care Act's sand foundation untouched.

Math undergirding the entire law remains structurally unsound and threatens the broader insurance market in this country. That is a shame for each and every American.

As someone who wants to see greater access and affordability in health care, and more options for Americans in the individual insurance market, it is my hope that the country moves toward a competitive, patient-centered system like the one outlined by the House Republican Study Committee in the American Health Care Reform Act.

Something as transformative as health care policy should never be forced on the American people on an embarrassingly unstudied and purely partisan basis, the way President Obama chose to proceed with the Affordable Care Act.

VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL FACILITY LEASES

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

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in favor of H.R. 3521, which authorizes medical facility leases for the Department of Veterans Affairs. I am a cosponsor of this bipartisan bill, and I am pleased that it allocates $20 million for community-based outpatient clinics in my home State of Arizona.

The Phoenix VA Health Care System serves the majority of our veterans. More than 300,000 veterans reside in this service area. Having an additional facility will help these men and women access the care they deserve.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for supporting this bill. Helping our veterans isn't a partisan issue; it is a national responsibility.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 9, 2013.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, U.S. Capitol, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in clause 2(h) of rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 9, 2013 at 6:06 p.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3626.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, the following enrolled bill was signed by Speaker pro tempore DENHAM on Monday, December 9, 2013:

H.R. 3626, to extend the Undetectable Firearms Act of 1988 for 10 years

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASE AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2013

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3521) to authorize Department of Veterans Affairs major medical facility leases, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3521

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Department of Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Lease Authorization Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASES.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility leases at the locations specified, and in an amount for each lease not to exceed the amount shown for such location (not including any estimated cancellation costs):

(1) For a clinical research and pharmacy coordinating center, Albuquerque, New Mexico, an amount not to exceed $9,560,000.

(2) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Brick, New Jersey, an amount not to exceed $7,280,000.

(3) For a new primary care and dental clinic annex, Charleston, South Carolina, an amount not to exceed $7,070,250.

(4) For the Cobb County community-based Outpatient Clinic, Cobb County, Georgia, an amount not to exceed $6,409,000.

(5) For the Leeward Outpatient Healthcare Access Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, including a co-located clinic with the Department of Defense and the co-location of the Honolulu Regional Office of the Veterans Benefits Administration and the Kapolei Vet Center of the Department of Veterans Affairs, an amount not to exceed $15,887,370.

(6) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Johnson County, Kansas, an amount not to exceed $2,263,000.

(7) For a replacement community-based outpatient clinic, Lafayette, Louisiana, an amount not to exceed $2,996,000.

(8) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Lake Charles, Louisiana, an amount not to exceed $2,626,000.

(9) For outpatient clinic consolidation, New Port Richey, Florida, an amount not to exceed $11,927,000.

(10) For an outpatient clinic, Ponce, Puerto Rico, an amount not to exceed $11,535,000.

(11) For lease consolidation, San Antonio, Texas, an amount not to exceed $19,426,000.

(12) For a community-based outpatient clinic, San Diego, California, an amount not to exceed $11,946,100.

(13) For an outpatient clinic, Tyler, Texas, an amount not to exceed $4,327,000.

(14) For the Errera Community Care Center, West Haven, Connecticut, an amount not to exceed $4,883,000.

(15) For the Worcester community-based Outpatient Clinic, Worcester, Massachusetts, an amount not to exceed $4,855,000.

(16) For the expansion of a community-based outpatient clinic, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, an amount not to exceed $4,232,060.

(17) For a multispecialty clinic, Chattanooga, Tennessee, an amount not to exceed $7,069,000.

(18) For the expansion of a community-based outpatient clinic, Chico, California, an amount not to exceed $4,534,000.

(19) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Chula Vista, California, an amount not to exceed $3,714,000.

(20) For a new research lease, Hines, Illinois, an amount not to exceed $22,032,000.

(21) For a replacement research lease, Houston, Texas, an amount not to exceed $6,142,000.

(22) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Lincoln, Nebraska, an amount not to exceed $7,178,400.

(23) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Lubbock, Texas, an amount not to exceed $8,554,000.

(24) For a community-based outpatient clinic consolidation, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, an amount not to exceed $8,022,000.

(25) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Phoenix, Arizona, an amount not to exceed $20,757,000.

(26) For the expansion of a community-based outpatient clinic, Redding, California, an amount not to exceed $8,154,000.

(27) For the expansion of a community-based outpatient clinic, Tulsa, Oklahoma, an amount not to exceed $13,269,200.

SEC. 3. BUDGETARY TREATMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITIES LEASES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Title 31, United States Code, requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to record the full cost of its contractual obligation against funds available at the time a contract is executed.

(2) Office of Management and Budget Circular A–11 provides guidance to agencies in meeting the statutory requirements under title 31, United States Code, with respect to leases.

(3) For operating leases, Office of Management and Budget Circular A–11 requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to record upfront budget authority in an ''amount equal to total payments under the full term of the lease or [an] amount sufficient to cover first year lease payments plus cancellation costs''.

(b) REQUIREMENT FOR OBLIGATION OF FULL COST.—Subject to the availability of appropriations provided in advance, in exercising the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into leases provided in this Act, the Secretary shall record, pursuant to section 1501 of title 31, United States Code, as the full cost of the contractual obligation at the time a contract is executed either—

(1) an amount equal to total payments under the full term of the lease; or

(2) if the lease specifies payments to be made in the event the lease is terminated before its full term, an amount sufficient to cover the first year lease payments plus the specified cancellation costs.

(c) TRANSPARENCY.—

(1) COMPLIANCE.—Subsection (b) of section 8104 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(7) In the case of a prospectus proposing funding for a major medical facility lease, a detailed analysis of how the lease is expected to comply with Office of Management and Budget Circular A–11 and section 1341 of title 31 (commonly referred to as the 'Anti-Deficiency Act'). Any such analysis shall include—

''(A) an analysis of the classification of the lease as a 'lease-purchase', 'capital lease', or 'operating lease' as those terms are defined in Office of Management and Budget Circular A–11;

''(B) an analysis of the obligation of budgetary resources associated with the lease; and

''(C) an analysis of the methodology used in determining the asset cost, fair market value, and cancellation costs of the lease.''.

(2) SUBMITTAL TO CONGRESS.—Such section 8104 is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h)(1) Not less than 30 days before entering into a major medical facility lease, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives—

''(A) notice of the Secretary's intention to enter into the lease;

''(B) a copy of the proposed lease;

''(C) a description and analysis of any differences between the prospectus submitted pursuant to subsection (b) and the proposed lease; and

''(D) a scoring analysis demonstrating that the proposed lease fully complies with Office of Management and Budget Circular A–11.

''(2) Each committee described in paragraph (1) shall ensure that any information submitted to the committee under such paragraph is treated by the committee with the same level of confidentiality as is required by law of the Secretary and subject to the same statutory penalties for unauthorized disclosure or use as the Secretary.

''(3) Not more than 30 days after entering into a major medical facility lease, the Secretary shall submit to each committee described in paragraph (1) a report on any material differences between the lease that was entered into and the proposed lease described under such paragraph, including how the lease that was entered into changes the previously submitted scoring analysis described in subparagraph (D) of such paragraph.''.

(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section, or the amendments made by this section, shall be construed to in any way relieve the Department of Veterans Affairs from any statutory or regulatory obligations or requirements existing prior to the enactment of this section and such amendments.

SEC. 4. BUDGETARY EFFECTS OF THIS ACT.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled ''Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation'' for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives, as long as such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3521, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3521, the Department of Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Lease Authorization Act of 2013, as amended, would authorize 27 major medical facility leases requested by VA in the fiscal year 2013 and 2014 budget submissions.

It would also make a number of congressional findings and establish certain requirements for the budgetary treatment of such leases to ensure that the legislation itself meets both the spirit and the intent of the House CutGo rule.

As we all know, when the committee was considering legislation to authorize VA's major medical facility leases last year, the Congressional Budget Office raised concerns about how to properly account for VA's lease authorizations.

In response to CBO concerns, section 3 of the bill would require VA to record an obligation at the time a contract is signed in an amount equal to either the total payment that would be made under its full term or an amount equal to the sum of the first annual lease payment and any specified cancelation costs.

For the last year, I have remained committed to working closely with VA, CBO, and our colleagues from both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Capitol to find a way forward for VA's major medical facility lease program on behalf of the veterans of this country, especially those in the 27 communities that will be impacted by the leases included in this piece of legislation.

To that end, I am grateful for the hard work and the leadership of our ranking member, MIKE MICHAUD of Maine, and the other committee members in advancing this piece of legislation to the floor.

At this time, I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3521, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 3521, the Department of Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Lease Authorization Act of 2013.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would authorize a number of major medical facility leases that will ensure veterans continue to receive care in safe, efficient, and modern clinics closer to home.

Last year, much to our disappointment, we were unable to pass a lease authorization bill. As a result, H.R. 3521 contains lease requests for fiscal years 2013 and 2014. Twenty-seven leases are included in this bill. From New Jersey to Hawaii, veterans can expect long awaited expansions to cramped community-based outpatient clinics, new clinical research space, and sorely needed replacement facilities.

This bill is a bipartisan bill and in the best interest of America's veterans. I appreciate the efforts of my colleagues across the aisle, especially Chairman MILLER, for the collaborative effort that permitted this important legislation to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I know you will agree with me that it is our obligation to ensure that our veterans are provided the best care possible in a timely and safe manner. I believe H.R. 3521, as amended, will do just that.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), vice chairman of the full Committee on Veterans' Affairs, somebody who has been a very strong supporter of veterans issue since the day he became a Member of this Congress.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3521, and I urge all my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation that will allow the VA to move forward with these 27 leases in order to better serve the veterans, our true American heroes, across the country.

The veterans in and around the Tampa Bay area will be particularly served by this legislation. The VA recently approved a plan that would take the currently strained five existing clinics that are spread out over a large area and consolidate them into a convenient one-stop facility. This would allow the VA to better meet the growing needs of the veterans community with diverse health status. However, because of the technical issues we are solving today, this project had not been able to move forward.

By passing this bill, the House will allow for not only the consolidation of our five medical clinics in my congressional district into one property, but for 26 other equally important projects to move forward across the country improving access for our heroes. This would not have been done, Mr. Speaker, without our great chairman here, Mr. MILLER, and our ranking member, Mr. MICHAUD, so thank you so very much. I know that our true American heroes, our veterans, appreciate it very much.

I urge passage of this bill.

□ 1415

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY), who has been an advocate for this issue for quite some time and who has two of these facilities in his district.

Mr. BOUSTANY. I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3521. I want to applaud Chairman JEFF MILLER and the chairman of the Budget Committee, PAUL RYAN, and their respective staffs on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Budget Committee for advancing this important bill and improving veterans' access to medical care.

I also appreciate the work that the two Senators from my home State, Senators LANDRIEU and VITTER, have been doing. They have pledged their support in the Senate, and we hope to get this done before the end of the year.

This last year, more than 66 Members of Congress signed our bipartisan, bicameral letter calling for progress on the 27 major medical facility leases proposed by the Department of Veterans Affairs during the past 2 years.

Among these leases are two clinics promised by VA Secretary Eric Shinseki to Lake Charles and Lafayette in my congressional district. Without congressional authorization of these clinics, more than 3,000 south Louisiana veterans must travel in excess of 3 hours to receive medical care. A recent CBS Evening News story featured one of these wounded warriors in south Louisiana who goes without care because his family must miss work to drive him 3 hours. It is unacceptable.

The American people expect Congress to demonstrate that it can govern effectively in a bipartisan manner, and this is one way we can do it, by keeping our promise to our veterans.

The passage of this bill will improve medical access for more than 340,000 veterans in 22 States, and that's why I urge our House and Senate colleagues to send this bill to the President before the end of year.

Again, I thank the committee and Chairman MILLER for his fine work on this and for giving me the opportunity to speak.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, once again I would urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3521, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again I encourage all Members to support this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, today, the House will consider H.R. 3521, the Department of Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Lease Authorization Act of 2013, as Amended. H.R. 3521 authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out major medical facility leases at twenty-seven facilities requested by the Department of Veterans Affairs in their fiscal year 2013 and 2014 budget requests.

Since 1990, CBO has scored VA's major medical facility leases as operating leases and estimated the costs as being subject to appropriation (discretionary). In 2012, after receiving additional information from the Department of Veterans Affairs, CBO concluded that VA has been entering into capital leases, or binding obligations for the full period of the lease. In accordance with OMB Circular A–11 and the Anti-Deficiency Act, VA is required to obligate the budget authority upfront for the full amount of these obligations. This includes budgeting for both the estimated total payments expected to arise under the full term of the contract or, if the contract includes a cancellation clause, an amount sufficient to cover the lease payments for the first year plus an amount sufficient to cover the costs associated with termination of the contract. Up until this point, VA has not been properly budgeting for its leases according to the law.

CBO estimates that enacting this bill would provide contract authority of about $1.4 billion over the ten-year period.

HBC has worked closely with both HVAC and CBO on this issue and has produced lease authorization language, in addition to report language, that we believe adequately addresses the legitimate issues CBO raised with respect to how VA was budgeting for leases.

HBC believes this language forces VA to comply with budgeting laws, specifically that VA may only enter into binding commitments on behalf of the U.S. Government once funds have been appropriated for the purpose of that proposed commitment and that VA must then obligate the full cost of that commitment at the time it executes the lease. In addition, the language requires VA to submit to Congress a detailed analysis on how its leasing practices comply with these laws.

If the VA fails to faithfully execute the requirements in the bill and to comply with the longstanding laws governing obligations, we will revisit this issue in the context of future requests for leasing authority.

With these fiscal protections in place, I fully support H.R. 3521 moving forward to ensure continued access for our veterans to the highest quality medical care.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3521, the Department of Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Lease Authorization Act, introduced by my good friend and Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee, Mr. MILLER. This legislation authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out major medical facility leases at twenty seven facilities—including a facility in Cobb County, Georgia—that were requested by the Department of Veterans Affairs in their 2013 and 2014 budget submissions.

A change in Congressional Budget Office (CBO) accounting methods made the reauthorization of these leases very difficult, but this important legislation will allow authorization while increasing transparency.

This legislation, however, is about so much more than leases and definitional changes. This legislation is about ensuring the care of our veterans, and paying them the debt of gratitude we owe them.

The VA facility in Cobb County served 6,634 unique patients outpatients in Fiscal Year 2013, providing services in outpatient treatment, mental health, and lab work. These services are critical, provide convenience, and reduce driving time for veterans, many of whom would otherwise be forced to travel 70 miles or more round-trip to visit the overcrowded Atlanta VA Medical Center. With passage of the legislation before us today, the VA could authorize a lease for an expanded facility in Cobb County, one that would serve an estimated 64,000 veterans and provide more access to a greater variety of care. While mental health services, lab work, and outpatient treatment would still be provided, the expanded facility is intended to have the capability to provide eye care, physical and occupational therapy, radiology, and more.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is a way forward for that facility and several more like it across the country. It seeks to expand access to care for veterans, not bureaucratic federal policies.

Our men and women in uniform—who put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms—deserve the best care that we can give them. They deserve quality care that is convenient and accessible. This legislation provides us with an opportunity today to show our veterans that we are committed to those goals. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3521.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3521, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

VA EXPIRING AUTHORITIES EXTENSION ACT OF 2013

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass

the bill (H.R. 1402) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the authorization of appropriations for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay a monthly assistance allowance to disabled veterans training or competing for the Paralympic Team and the authorization of appropriations for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide assistance to the United States Paralympics, Inc., as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1402

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 ''VA Expiring Authorities Extension Act of 2013''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. References to title 38, United States Code.
Sec. 3. Scoring of budgetary effects.
Sec. 4. Extension of authorization of appropriations for payment of a monthly assistance allowance to disabled veterans training or competing in large-scale adaptive sports programs.
Sec. 5. Reauthorization and modification of adaptive sports assistance program.
Sec. 6. Extension of authority to transport certain individuals to and from Department of Veterans Affairs facilities.
Sec. 7. Extension of authority for operation of the Department of Veterans Affairs regional office in Manila, the Republic of the Philippines.
Sec. 8. Extension of requirement to provide nursing home care to certain veterans with service-connected disabilities.
Sec. 9. Extension of treatment and rehabilitation services for seriously mentally ill and homeless veterans.
Sec. 10. Extension of authority to provide housing assistance for homeless veterans.
Sec. 11. Extension of authority for the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans.
Sec. 12. Extension of authority for the Veterans' Advisory Commission on Education.
Sec. 13. Extension of requirements relating to vendee loans.
Sec. 14. Extension of authority for the performance of medical disabilities examinations by contract physicians.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. SCORING OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled ''Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation'' for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR PAYMENT OF A MONTHLY ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE TO DISABLED VETERANS TRAINING OR COMPETING IN LARGE-SCALE ADAPTIVE SPORTS PROGRAMS.

(a) REAUTHORIZATION AND USE OF CERTAIN FUNDS.—Subsection (d)(4) of section 322 is amended by striking ''through 2013'' and all that follows and inserting ''through 2015.''.

(b) COOPERATION WITH ORGANIZATION.—Subsection (b)(4) of such section is amended by striking ''cooperate with the United States Olympic Committee'' and all that follows through ''its partners;'' and inserting ''cooperate with entities with significant experience in managing large-scale adaptive sports programs;''.

(c) APPLICABILITY TO COMMONWEALTHS AND TERRITORIES OF THE UNITED STATES.—Such section is further amended by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f) and inserting after subsection (d) the following new subsection (e):

''(e) APPLICABILITY TO COMMONWEALTHS AND TERRITORIES OF THE UNITED STATES.—The provisions of this subsection shall apply in the same manner and to the same degree as to the United States Olympic Committee to the Paralympic sport entities the Secretary considers appropriate to represent the interests of each of the following:

''(1) American Samoa.

''(2) Guam.

''(3) Puerto Rico.

''(4) The Northern Mariana Islands.

''(5) The United States Virgin Islands.''.

SEC. 5. REAUTHORIZATION AND MODIFICATION OF ADAPTIVE SPORTS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) REAUTHORIZATION.—Subsection (a) of section 521A is amended to read as follows:

''(a) ADAPTIVE SPORTS PROGRAM.—(1) The Secretary may carry out a program under which the Secretary may make grants to eligible entities for planning, developing, managing, and implementing programs to provide adaptive sports opportunities for disabled veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces.

''(2) For purposes of this section, an eligible entity is an entity with significant experience in managing a large-scale adaptive sports program.''.

(b) ADDITIONAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Subsection (c)(2)(A) of such section is amended—

(1) by striking ''of all partnerships'' and all that follows through the end and inserting ''of—''; and

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

''(i) all partnerships referred to in paragraph (3) at the national and local levels that will be participating in such activities and the amount of grant funds that the eligible entity proposes to make available for each of such partnerships;

''(ii) the anticipated personnel, travel, and administrative costs that will be paid for by the eligible entity using grant funds;

''(iii) the financial controls implemented by the eligible entity, including methods to track expenditures of grant funds;

''(iv) the performance metrics to be used by the eligible entity to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities to be carried out using grant funds; and

''(v) the anticipated personnel, travel, and administrative costs that will be paid for by grantees under this subsection using grant funds; and''.

(c) USE OF FUNDS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Paragraph (4) of subsection (d) of such section is amended to read as follows:

''(4)(A) At the discretion of the Secretary, an eligible entity that receives a grant under this section may use a portion of the grant for the administrative expenses and personnel expenses of the eligible entity. The amount that may be used for such expenses may not exceed—

''(i) in the case of a grant made for adaptive sports opportunities taking place during fiscal year 2014, 10 percent of the total amount of the grant;

''(ii) in the case of a grant made for adaptive sports opportunities taking place during fiscal year 2015, 7.5 percent of the total amount of the grant; and

''(iii) in the case of a grant made for adaptive sports opportunities taking place during any subsequent fiscal year, 5 percent of the total amount of the grant.

''(B) For purposes of this paragraph, personnel expenses include any costs associated with an employee of the eligible entity other than reimbursement for time spent by such an employee directly providing coaching or training for disabled veterans or members of the Armed Forces.''.

(d) FUNDING.—Subsection (g) of such section is amended—

(1) by striking ''There is'' and inserting ''(1) There is'';

(2) by striking ''through 2013'' and all that follows and inserting ''through 2015.''; and

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

''(2) Amounts appropriated pursuant to this subsection shall remain available without fiscal year limitation.''.

(e) REAUTHORIZATION.—Subsection (l) of such section is amended by striking ''may not provide assistance under this section after December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''may only provide assistance under this section for adaptive sports opportunities occurring during fiscal years 2010 through 2016''.

(f) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the use of the grants, if any, awarded under section 521A of title 38, United States Code, as amended by this section, during the first program year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act. Such report shall include each of the following:

(1) An assessment of how the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, eligible entities that received grants under such section, and grantees under subsection (c) of such section have provided adaptive sports opportunities to veterans and members of the Armed Forces through grants awarded under such section.

(2) An assessment of how the Secretary oversees the use of funds provided under such section.

(3) A description of the benefit provided to veterans and members of the Armed Forces through programs and activities developed through grants awarded under such section.

(g) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 521A, as amended by this section, is further amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the first sentence, by striking ''the United States Olympic Committee'' and inserting ''an eligible entity''; and

(B) in the second sentence, by striking ''The United States Olympic Committee'' and inserting ''An eligible entity that receives a grant under this section'';

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''the United States Olympic Committee'' the first time it appears and inserting ''an eligible entity''; and

(ii) by striking ''the United States Olympic Committee'' the second time it appears and inserting ''the eligible entity''; and

(B) in paragraphs (2) and (3), by striking ''the United States Olympic Committee'' each place it appears and inserting ''the eligible entity'';

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''The United States Olympic Committee'' and inserting ''An eligible entity that receives a grant under this section,'';

(ii) by striking ''a grant under this section'' and inserting ''the grant''; and

(iii) by striking ''the United States Olympic Committee'' and inserting ''the eligible entity''; and

(B) in paragraph (5), by striking ''the United States Olympic Committee'' and inserting ''an eligible entity that receives a grant under this section'';

(4) in subsection (e)—

(A) by striking ''the United States Olympic Committee'' and inserting ''an eligible entity''; and

(B) by striking ''the integrated adaptive sports program'' and inserting ''the adapted sports opportunities funded by the grant'';

(5) in subsection (f), by striking ''the integrated adaptive sports program'' and inserting ''adapted sports opportunities funded under this section''; and

(6) in subsection (j)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''the United States Olympic Committee'' the first place it appears and inserting ''an eligible entity'';

(ii) by striking ''the United States Olympic Committee'' the second place it appears and inserting ''the eligible entity'';

(iii) by striking ''the integrated adaptive sports program,'' and inserting ''the adapted sports opportunities funded by the grant,''; and

(iv) by striking ''the integrated adaptive sports program.'' and inserting ''such opportunities and programs.'';

(B) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following new paragraph (3):

''(3) If an eligible entity that receives a grant under this section for any fiscal year does not submit the report required by paragraph (1) for such fiscal year, the entity shall not be eligible to receive a grant under this section for the subsequent fiscal year.''; and

(7) by striking subsection (m).

(h) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) SECTION HEADING.—The heading of such section is amended to read as follows:

''§ 521A. Adaptive sports programs for disabled veterans and members of the Armed Forces''.

(2) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 5 is amended by striking the item relating to section 521A and inserting the following new item:

''512A. Adaptive sports programs for disabled veterans and members of the Armed Forces.''.

(i) IMPLEMENTATION.—To ensure the uninterrupted provision of adaptive sports for disabled veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces, any regulations that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines are necessary to implement the amendments made by this section may be promulgated by interim final rules to ensure the award of grants under section 521A of title 38, United States Code, as amended by this section, before the end of fiscal year 2014.

SEC. 6. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO TRANSPORT CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS TO AND FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES.

Section 111A(a)(2) is amended by striking ''the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this section'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''.

SEC. 7. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR OPERATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REGIONAL OFFICE IN MANILA, THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES.

Section 315(b) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''.

SEC. 8. EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE NURSING HOME CARE TO CERTAIN VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES.

Section 1710A(d) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''.

SEC. 9. EXTENSION OF TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR SERIOUSLY MENTALLY ILL AND HOMELESS VETERANS.

(a) GENERAL TREATMENT.—Section 2031(b) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''.

(b) ADDITIONAL SERVICES AT CERTAIN LOCATIONS.—Section 2033(d) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''.

SEC. 10. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS.

Section 2041(c) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''.

SEC. 11. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS.

Section 2066(d) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''.

SEC. 12. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR THE VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMISSION ON EDUCATION.

Section 3692(c) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''.

SEC. 13. EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO VENDEE LOANS.

Section 3733(a)(7) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2013'' each place it appears and inserting ''September 30, 2014''.

SEC. 14. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF MEDICAL DISABILITIES EXAMINATIONS BY CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.

Section 704(c) of the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–183; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous materials they may have on H.R. 1402, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of H.R. 1402, as amended, the VA Expiring Authorities Act of 2013. Mr. Speaker, to put it simply, this bill extends the legal authorization for several VA authorities. Without enactment of this bill before December 31, 2013, the authorization to run certain programs and exercise certain legal authorities would end. This would be very detrimental to veterans and their families.

For example, the bill extends VA's authority to ensure that severely disabled veterans have priority access to nursing home care, to include those who require that level of care for service-connected disabilities. It also extends VA's adaptive sports program, which is currently run through a partnership with the U.S. Paralympic committee. I have met with veterans who have benefited from this partnership and have seen firsthand the positive impact that the activities and events have had on them and their families.

H.R. 1402, as amended, would extend other legal authorities to help veterans, including the authorization for treatment and rehabilitative services for homeless and seriously mentally ill veterans, housing assistance for homeless veterans, authorization to permit the use of contract exam providers for disability claims, and several other important extensions.

I am pleased also to report that funding for these extensions was included in both the President's budget request and appropriation bills passed by the House and pending in the Senate.

I thank my good friend and ranking member of the full committee, Mr. MICHAUD, for his assistance to bring this piece of legislation to the floor. And again, I want to thank all of my colleagues in the Senate for reaching an agreement with us on this language, especially the Senate VA chairman, Mr. SANDERS, and the ranking member, Mr. BURR of North Carolina.

Once again, I want to encourage all Members to support the bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in full support of H.R. 1402, as amended, the VA Expiring Authorities Extension Act of 2013.

Mr. Speaker, this bill, as amended, would extend a number of critical programs administered by the VA. It is a bipartisan measure. I appreciate the highly collaborative efforts of the committee staffs and the cooperative efforts of our colleagues in the other body.

H.R. 1402, as amended, would extend the authorization of appropriations for the VA to provide monthly stipends to athletes competing in large-scale adaptive sports programs and extend the authority of the VA to provide grants to entities that plan and carry out adaptive sports programs. This bill represents a bipartisan and bicameral agreement to modify the existing program and to provide more stringent oversight of the program.

H.R. 1402, as amended, would also extend to the end of next year the authority of the VA to transport certain individuals to and from VA facilities, to operate the regional office in the Philippines, and to contract with non-

VA physicians to conduct medical disability examinations.

H.R. 1402, as amended, would also extend the requirement that VA provide nursing home care to certain veterans, extend the authority to provide treatment and rehabilitation services for seriously mentally ill and homeless veterans, and extend the authority of the VA to provide housing assistance for homeless veterans.

Finally, this bill would extend the authority for two advisory committees—the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans and the Advisory Committee on Education—as well as extend the authority for requirements relating to the sale of vendee loans by the VA.

Mr. Speaker, we have passed many veterans bills out of the House this year. It is my hope that some of these bills will become law before the year is out. I look forward to working with our colleagues in the Senate to make sure that we get this bill passed. The job at hand today is to pass this extenders bill, send it over to the Senate for quick consideration, and get it to the President's desk before the end of the year before the authority to continue these vital programs lapses.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that is necessary in order to bring a piece of legislation that has this many moving parts is somebody who has been involved very much in each of those pieces of legislation.

I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year I introduced, along with Representative MARK TAKANO, H.R. 1402, the Veteran Paralympics Act, and I am happy to see that this legislation is now poised to pass the House floor along with other important programs for veterans.

My portion of this legislation will extend this joint program, operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Olympic Committee, that funds grants to adaptive sports programs for disabled veterans all across our country.

Paralympic programs are adaptive sports for physically disabled athletes, and research has shown that Paralympic sports and other forms of physical activity are an impactful aspect for the successful rehabilitation for these wounded warriors.

The Veterans Paralympics Act will ensure that disabled veterans in local communities throughout our country will continue to have opportunities for rehabilitation, stress relief, and higher achievement through adaptive sports. Currently, there are dozens of partnership organizations in Colorado and over 300 nationwide that are helping our veterans with their rehabilitation through adaptive sports.

During committee hearings, I discussed the Veterans Paralympics Act with Charlie Huebner, the U.S. Olympic Committee's Paralympics chief. He stated that this extension would help more than 16,000 disabled veterans in communities throughout America receive adaptive sports rehabilitation.

Mr. Huebner and I both emphatically agree that participation in adaptive sports and other athletic activities can help speed the rehabilitation process for disabled veterans, and this legislation, if passed, will ensure rehabilitative opportunities for disabled veterans in local communities throughout the country. I am proud to lead this effort to extend and support this important program.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maine, the ranking member, for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the Veterans Paralympic Act, a bipartisan piece of legislation that would extend the funding for adaptive sport programs for disabled veterans.

Through the Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Olympic Committee, this joint program has provided sports and other athletic activities that help speed up the rehabilitation process for our Nation's heroes. By extending the funding through 2018, and improving access to adaptive sports programs, this legislation would provide the greatest opportunity for rehabilitation through sports our veterans have ever had. The sacrifice of these heroes is immeasurable, and I believe that Congress should be doing all it can to help their rehabilitation process.

I thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN) for introducing this bill, and I look forward to its passage.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD).

Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1402 that extends VA housing programs for homeless veterans.

The California district which I represent is home to over 20,000 veterans. Like the Nation, homelessness among veterans is a serious problem in my district. It will take continued coordination between VA and local organizations to ensure that veterans are able to take advantage of housing assistance programs.

As a member of the House VA Subcommittee on Health, in August of this year I hosted a town hall with the VA and local organizations. Over 200 veterans attended and signed up for VA veterans benefits for the very first time. This is a great example of better coordination in helping our veterans.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again thank Chairman MILLER for his collaborative effort in bringing both of these bills before the House today and his continued support to make sure that we do everything we can to pass legislation that will help our veterans. I also want to thank the staffs on both the majority and the minority side for working so well together to get these bills before the floor. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1402, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1430

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I, too, urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1402, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1402, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CHAFFETZ) at 4 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 3521, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 1402, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASE AUTHORIZATION 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. 3521) to authorize Department of Veterans Affairs major medical facility leases, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 346, nays 1, not voting 84, as follows:

[Roll No. 630]

YEAS—346

Amash
Andrews
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Becerra
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Hastings (FL)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Higgins
Himes
Holding
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Levin
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Massie
Matheson
Matsui
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, George
Moran
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NAYS—1

Duncan (SC)

NOT VOTING—84

Aderholt
Amodei
Bass
Beatty
Bishop (GA)
Black
Blumenauer
Brady (TX)
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Carson (IN)
Castro (TX)
Clarke
Coble
Conaway
Conyers
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Cummings
Doyle
Ellison
Fudge
Garrett
Gowdy
Grayson
Green, Al
Grijalva
Guthrie
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Hultgren
Hunter
Jackson Lee
Johnson, Sam
Kaptur
King (NY)
Labrador
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Lee (CA)
Lewis
Lipinski
Marino
McCarthy (NY)
McDermott
McMorris Rodgers
Meeks
Miller, Gary
Moore
Mulvaney
Neal
Nugent
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pingree (ME)
Radel
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Richmond
Rigell
Rogers (KY)
Runyan
Rush
Schock
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Sewell (AL)
Smith (WA)
Thompson (MS)
Turner
Vela
Walorski
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Wilson (FL)

□ 1626

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 630, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

VA EXPIRING AUTHORITIES EXTENSION 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. 1402) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the authorization of appropriations for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay a monthly assistance allowance to disabled veterans training or competing for the Paralympic Team and the authorization of appropriations for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide assistance to United States Paralympics, Inc., as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 353, nays 0, not voting 78, as follows:

[Roll No. 631]

YEAS—353

Aderholt
Amash
Andrews
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Becerra
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Hastings (FL)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Higgins
Himes
Holding
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Levin
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Massie
Matheson
Matsui
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, George
Moran
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan

Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—78

Amodei
Bass
Beatty
Bishop (GA)
Black
Blumenauer
Brady (TX)
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Carson (IN)
Castro (TX)
Clarke
Coble
Conaway
Conyers
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Cummings
Doyle
Fudge
Gowdy
Grayson
Green, Al
Grijalva
Guthrie
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Herrera Beutler
Hinojosa
Hunter
Jackson Lee
Johnson, Sam
Kaptur
King (NY)
Labrador
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Lee (CA)
Lewis
Lipinski
Marino
McCarthy (NY)
McDermott
McMorris Rodgers
Meeks
Miller, Gary
Moore
Mulvaney
Neal
Nugent
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Radel
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Richmond
Rigell
Rogers (KY)
Runyan
Rush
Sánchez, Linda T.
Schock
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Sewell (AL)
Smith (WA)
Thompson (MS)
Vela
Walorski
Waters
Watt
Waxman

□ 1633

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 630 on H.R. 3521, on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, "the Department of Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Lease Authorization Act of 2013, as amended", I am not recorded because I was absent due to the birth of my daughter. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 631 on H.R. 1402, on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, "VA Expiring Authorities Extension Act of 2013, as amended", I am not recorded because I was absent due to the birth of my daughter. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

POLICIES FOR ENERGY PRODUCTION

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, in October, natural gas production in the Marcellus shale region reached 12 billion cubic feet a day. That is six times the production rate in 2009.

To put this in perspective, the Marcellus would rank eighth in the world in gas production if it was classified as its own country.

This month, the number will be exceeded yet again. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration report released today, production in the Marcellus shale region is projected to exceed 13 billion feet per day this month. This means the Marcellus shale is expected to provide 18 percent of the total U.S. natural gas production this month.

This type of energy production creates American jobs, spurs economic growth, lowers energy prices, brings much-needed tax revenue to local and State governments, and begins us on a path to greater economic competitiveness.

Mr. Speaker, the Nation must continue to pursue policies that lower energy costs for American families and improve our energy security. If we follow the model built by States like Pennsylvania, and keep the Federal Government from over-regulating these industries, we can achieve these goals.

HONORING THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF HUMAN RIGHTS DAY AND THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my newly introduced resolution, which honors today as the 65th anniversary of Human Rights Day and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

My resolution will shed much-needed light on the importance and protection of human rights in our global society so we can prevent acts of suppression against people like Nguyen Tien Trung of Vietnam, who has been unfairly jailed for democratic activism.

The Congress and the world must recognize that those that are denied basic human rights, such as freedom of speech, religion, or political expression are, therefore, denied an opportunity to be treated with respect and with dignity.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of my resolution, and I urge all Americans to observe the 65th anniversary of Human Rights Day.

HONORING THE LIVES OF STEVE BURGESS AND JAMES R. BURGESS, JR.

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mr. Steve Burgess from Urbana, Illinois, who passed away on Friday, November 22 of this year. He was committed to seeing the postal facility at 302 East Green Street in Champaign, Illinois, renamed after his father, James R. Burgess, Jr.

James Burgess was the first African American elected to a countywide office in Champaign County and was appointed the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Illinois.

Most importantly, though, Steve Burgess wanted to honor his father as a leader of the 761st Tank Battalion, the first African American armored unit to enter battle in World War II.

In April, I introduced H.R. 1707 to rename this post office after James Burgess. It is devastating to me that Steve Burgess was not able to fulfill his life's effort. I want to see a post office naming bill through completion, not only in James Burgess' honor, but in Steve Burgess' and his family's.

I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to Steve Burgess and his father for their lifetime of commitment to the Champaign-Urbana community.

RESERVOIRS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, the weather outside is frightful; and if you listen to certain conservative media networks, you hear something not so delightful. You hear that, because it is snowing, there must not be climate change. This is unscientific, it is reductive; but that is what climate deniers say this time of year.

Well, Mr. Speaker, winter happens every year, and the fact that it is snowing simply means that it is snowing.

Instead of looking at December snowflakes, we should be looking at the science. Since 1970, not that long ago, winter temperatures have increased an average of .55 degrees per decade, reducing snowpacks and creating water shortages across the country.

If you want to look at something immediate, look at California, where we

are experiencing the driest year on record, and that is why we need to start getting serious about our response to climate change.

We need to adopt new policies and adapt to the changes that are happening. And one place to start is how we operate our reservoirs. Instead of relying on old-school water manuals that are decades out of date, we should be using modern science and modern weather forecasting.

Our water supply, our food supply and our future will be impacted by climate change, so let's lead.

MEMORIALIZING HILTON ''HANK'' REYNOLDS

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, during the month of December, we oftentimes take time to memorialize what happened on December 7, 1941. Unfortunately, the survivors of Pearl Harbor, we are losing them more and more each year.

Today I would like to memorialize a friend from the Shasta County area of Northern California, Hank Reynolds, who we lost just recently. He was a gentleman who faithfully turned out each year to memorialize Pearl Harbor on the courthouse steps in Redding, California.

He was, at one time, the chairman of the California Pearl Harbor Survivors Association and always was there with a sharp salute. Even though these gentlemen are in their late eighties and early nineties now, they always would turn out and encourage us, encourage the youth that day to memorialize and remember that.

Hank served on the USS *Detroit* and was right in the middle of it there, ships on either side of him being attacked. They were about to go out on leave that Sunday morning, and he returned back to his post and helped fight that battle that day.

So I will miss Hank. I really enjoyed his company and seeing him at those events. I know our country is greater for having had them serve for us at that time, and we memorialize them here today.

□ 1645

GENERAL MOTORS' COMEBACK

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, critics said it couldn't be done. They said the Federal Government ''refinancing'' of the American automobile industry couldn't work. Thankfully, for the economy of our country, they were wrong, wrong to denounce President Obama for his courageous decision to save America's auto sector. Yesterday, Treasury announced it was selling its last stake in General Motors, the same General Motors that critics derisively called ''Government Motors.''

Now the verdict is in: the automotive rescue was a huge success. Led by House Democrats, 237 out of 435 Members of this House voted to save America's auto industry. The President and Democrats made a bet on the auto communities, and it paid off with dividends.

Today, the auto sector supports one in 17 private sector jobs in this country and one in eight jobs in Ohio. The workers at the Toledo Transmission Plant and the Parma Metal Center thank President Obama and the Members of Congress who were willing to take the heat and do the right thing. The U.S. auto industry is back thanks to the President's leadership and those 237 Members of this House.

Onward, USA.

JOBS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BENTIVOLIO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, we come here about every week to talk about jobs in America. This last Friday, we held a jobs fair in my district in Fairfield, California, and it was a remarkable event. I have been around a long time. I have seen many, many things. As remarkable as it was, it was also one of the saddest events I have been to. I have been to a lot of funerals and a lot of tragedies over the years, but this one ranks very high.

I put this picture up here because this is a picture of the second hour after that job fair had begun. The line outside the building, where we had some 40 employers that were offering to hire people, stretched over 200 yards. The temperature was about 37, 38 degrees. It was one of those cold mornings, and these people were determined to get a job. They were willing to stand in that line for up to an hour and a half, some of them perhaps even 2 hours, just to have a shot, just to be able to talk to an employer, to have the opportunity to look face-to-face at an employer and say, ''I want to work.'' The stories were incredible. I spent about an hour, maybe an hour and 20 minutes, talking to the men and women that were in this line.

I remember one gentleman who had served several tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. He said he was with the Army Rangers, said he had four Purple Hearts. He left the military and is now unemployed. In fact, in this line were 141 veterans, unemployed, looking for work. They have skills, know when to get up in the morning, know what it takes to go to work, to put in a full day or more—unemployed.

A young woman, fresh out of school, a child at home, she wanted to go to work. She had an associate's degree in social welfare programs, human relations, anything in that area. She said: I will take any job. I just want to go to work. I want to take care of my child.

Another woman, 50, 55, divorced, had an 18-year-old child. Her alimony is over: I have got to go to work. I have got to support myself.

The stories of life, the stories of America, the stories of 971 people that stood in line just to have a shot at a job.

There are 435 of us in this room on a full day. We have a job. We are employed, and we have a good wage. We have a very good wage, and we have health care. And we are not doing our job. We are not doing the job that America sent us here for. America sent us here to put America back to work. That is our job. We are not living up to that.

Two years ago, the President of the United States put forth in his State of the Union message an American jobs plan, an American jobs plan to put people in this Nation back to work. It was complete: education, retraining, a research component for the next sector of this economy for the future, a transportation infrastructure sector, a way to finance it—2 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, 971 people were standing in the cold in Fairfield, California, just wanting a shot at a job; and here we are, 2 years after the President of the United States put forward a jobs plan for America, and it has not been done. The majority in this House has refused to bring up even one of those programs.

I am going to talk about those things tonight, those things that we can do here in America, that we can do so that when 971 of my constituents are willing to line up to get a job, they will have one. They will have that opportunity. They will have a shot at the future.

It is a disgrace that after 2 years with a complete plan that would put people back to work, the majority has refused to bring forward any part of that legislation. It is a disgrace. It is time for this country to go back to work. It is time for this House to go back to work to put Americans back on the job.

You want to deal with the deficit? Put people to work. They will become taxpayers. You want to deal with food stamps? You want to cut food stamps? Put people to work. Build the infrastructure. Put the teachers back in the classroom. But no, you are going to slash the benefits.

These people, searching for a job, know that unless this Congress—and I see our esteemed leadership and the Republicans leaving this House, this floor. These people want to go to work. They are losing, in the next 2 weeks, their unemployment benefits. What will become of them? What will become of those 971 people, including 141 veterans who have fought, who have been wounded? What is going to become of them?

Joining me today are my colleagues on the Democratic side. I would like to start with my colleague from Illinois, General BILL ENYART, who is now a Member of the House of Representatives.

BILL, please join us.

Mr. ENYART. Thank you, Mr. GARAMENDI.

I am privileged to represent the people of southwestern Illinois, that swath of the great State running along the Mississippi River from just north of St. Louis, from Alton, Illinois, all the way south to Cairo. And those 12 counties of southern Illinois, southwestern Illinois, were once an industrial powerhouse.

It was said four decades ago, five decades ago, if you wanted to work, go to East St. Louis, Illinois, and there will be a job for you there. There were jobs in the steel mills. There were jobs in the packing houses. There were jobs in the stove foundries in Belleville. There were jobs in the coal mines of southern Illinois. Those jobs are, by and large, gone today.

There are a few bright spots. U.S. Steel has a plant in Granite City that is still pouring steel. Alton Steel in Alton, Illinois, has reopened. A local entrepreneur bought it, and they are pouring steel in Alton again.

But, you know, those jobs in the packing houses are gone. The jobs in the aluminum industry, those jobs are gone. And that is why they call it the rust belt, because so many of those factories are closing and rusting away.

Technology has changed a lot of that, and we need to adapt to that technology. And to that end, the assistant minority leader, Mr. STENY HOYER, along with Mr. GARAMENDI and myself, introduced the JOBS Act. The JOBS Act is sitting here. It needs to be acted upon. We can't get the leadership to act upon it. But we introduced this JOBS Act, and we introduced it because there are really four priority areas that are central to achieving manufacturing growth in this country again:

First of all, we need to have a national manufacturing strategy. Other countries have it. We need to have one. We need to have a strategy that pushes our manufacturing;

Secondly, we need to promote the export of U.S.-made goods;

Thirdly, we need to encourage businesses to bring jobs and bring innovation back to the shores of our country; and

Lastly, we need to train and secure a 21st century workforce.

And that is really what the JOBS Act does. That act invests in our future. It invests in our infrastructure, our human infrastructure, the people who drive those machines and the people who drive our economy.

And it was interesting that Mr. GARAMENDI mentioned food stamps. I want to talk about food stamps for just a minute because far too many people in my district survive on food stamps.

Something like over 60 percent of the people on food stamps are children. It is not people who aren't working because they don't want to be working. Sixty percent are children who are in low-income families. And the bulk of the adults who are on food stamps are working adults, and they are working in minimum wage jobs. They are working in fast-food restaurants. They are working in other minimum wage jobs. And you can't raise a family in southern Illinois on a minimum wage job.

We need to have jobs that pay a living wage with good health insurance, with good fringe benefits that provide a living wage for families. When you do that, what happens? You don't have people on food stamps. You don't have people on unemployment. You, instead, have people who are paying taxes. You have people who are spurring the economy. You have people who are buying new pickup trucks and new curtains for the living room and so on and so forth, and that generates an economy that generates good jobs.

Now, to talk about the JOBS Act that Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. HOYER, and I introduced, what does it do? It is designed to support advanced manufacturing. Now, why do we want to support advanced manufacturing? We want to support advanced manufacturing because—there was an article in The Wall Street Journal just the other day. I have it right here, The Wall Street Journal, the journal of American business. Manufacturing jobs pay nearly 40 percent more than other jobs in our Nation's economy. That is why we need advanced manufacturing.

So our bill—Mr. GARAMENDI's bill, my bill, Mr. HOYER's bill—would amend the Workforce Investment Act to provide targeted investment to partnerships with community colleges, local workforce investment boards, and advanced manufacturing firms to design and implement education and training programs for current and prospective workers.

Now, currently, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College program does provide some funding for that type of thing; but, unfortunately, there is no assurance for investments in advanced manufacturing, and that is where we need to go in this Nation. What we need to do is to align the training opportunities for those advanced manufacturing firms, for their needs, for adaptability in the training of workers.

I toured the Anheuser-Busch brewery in St. Louis.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I have one of those in my district, too.

Mr. ENYART. I toured that brewery a couple of weeks ago, and the brewery manager told me that, in 1999, they had 3,500 hourly employees. And those were good jobs. Those are good jobs. Anybody can tell you that if you work union work, a brewery job working for Anheuser-Busch, that was a job you would have for your entire life. That would be a great career for a working man.

□ 1700

That would be a great career for a working man. Today, they are down from 3,500 to 785 jobs. Now that is due largely due to improved technology, and they simply didn't need that many workers anymore. But that displacement of workers has happened throughout our economy, and it has happened in other areas of our economy, in addition to breweries.

So we need to grow the kind of advanced manufacturing jobs, and we need to have the workers who have the skill to move up so they are not working in those minimum-wage jobs and getting food stamps and Medicaid and those other government programs. Instead, we need people who are paying money in, and that is what our jobs bills does.

I know that Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. HOYER, and I want that bill to come to a vote. We believe that bill would pass with a resounding bipartisan vote if simply the leadership would allow it to be brought to the floor for a vote.

Advanced manufacturing is growing in this country. It is increasing, but the problem is it is not growing fast enough.

When we look at our economy over the last 5 years since President Obama won election the first time, we lost 5 million jobs when he was first elected, virtually immediately, and we have been growing those jobs back at 200,000 a month, 200,000 a month, 195,000 a month. We need to grow them back faster, and we can do that with this JOBS Act.

With that, I yield back to my partner and friend here, Mr. GARAMENDI.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you very much, General ENYART.

Joining us also is another Representative from the Midwest who has considerable experience here in the House of Representatives—Ohio, in this case—MARCY KAPTUR.

Welcome. I am delighted you are with us. You talked about making it in America and about American jobs many times, and we have shared this floor on that subject in the past.

Welcome.

Ms. KAPTUR. Congressman GARAMENDI, I would like to commend you for the leadership that you have shown on the jobs front here. Your coming from California, that vast, vast State, I think brings such a perspective to all of us. And Congressman ENYART comes from a rough and tumble region of Illinois. We in northern Ohio identify with your cause and are one with you in your cause.

If there is an ad in our district for a job—or for maybe 10, 20, or 30 jobs—thousands of people apply. It is incredible to see.

And you mentioned in your earlier remarks how many veterans are unemployed. About a week ago, at one of the food banks that I represent, 1,050 veterans showed up to get a bag of food to keep it together for another week.

If you look across this country, there are many whose glass is only half full,

and it is not for lack of effort or service to this country. It is still a lack of jobs.

During the Bush years, we hemorrhaged over 8 million jobs as a result of the recession. We have gained over 7 million of those now, but we still haven't come back to the 8 million, even though we have had 44 months of consecutive job creation, as Congressman ENYART mentioned, at about 200,000 a month. But that is not enough to employ all those who remain unemployed and those who are underemployed, those who literally have to apply for SNAP coupons to help their family afford food because they are not paid enough.

And what I see happening over the last quarter century is that even though those who have capital—big resources—and they invest money and they make a lot of money for their shareholders and themselves, the people that they hire are falling further and further behind. And they expect the government to compensate for low wages.

And so if we have SNAP coupons, there are millions of people who receive them who are working for minimum wage. They don't make a living wage.

If you look at health benefits, it used to be that you got your health insurance through your place of employment. But guess what, that is all turned upside down. Now the companies are saying, Let the government pay for it. We have to do this because they do not make access to health insurance as a part of the employment package that is offered to their employees. Some still do; but my goodness, how much has changed.

The same is true with retirement: defined benefit as opposed to defined contribution plans. People used to get a benefit in their retirement that the corporation provided. They just didn't hog everything to those at the top, but the pyramid has gotten very pointed; and the money flows up, and it isn't flowing down. We have an attrition in the middle class. Every single American knows it.

Now, if you look at the Congress and the very worthy legislation that you have introduced, I say to myself, What has happened here?

I read one magazine that said for the new Members that were elected—and it was quite a sizeable class—the average worth of those new Members was about a million and a half dollars.

Think about that. The pyramid we see in the corporate sector is reflected right in here. Fewer and fewer people are getting elected from the middle class. And I don't come from the middle class. I came from the working class. We looked up to the middle class. So I know what part of America I came from.

So many people here, honest to God, are good people, but they are so privileged. They have myopia. They can't help it. They really can't identify with the struggle of ordinary families, and the other part of it is they look down because they have never walked in the shoes of those who have gotten an unemployment slip or a pink slip.

I remember when our dad came home with those. I used to have to sit by our dining room table and figure out how much would we spend on food, how much would that be worth, how long would he be unemployed. It was a very hard thing for our family. He actually had to sell his little store because he didn't have health insurance, and he went to work in a company on the line in a factory for one reason: to get health insurance for his family. Not for himself, but for his wife and two children.

There are so few here who actually have walked in those shoes.

So we do have a problem here. That same pyramid is operating.

If I could just finally mention the value-added investment in manufacturing. Manufacturing now comprises about 13 percent of our economy—the jobs—but it packs a much larger wallop for what it provides because it really does create something that didn't exist before. It isn't just shifting product around. It is actually creating something.

The decline in manufacturing as a percent of our total economy has declined so much in the last 25 years. We are now trying to pick it up, with the President's help; and we are seeing that in the automotive industry. Just this week, General Motors paid back and is flying on its own now again. All of us who supported that refinancing of General Motors are cheering and cheering and cheering wherever we can—certainly in the communities that we represent.

But I can remember when the other side didn't vote for it; and they would have killed all those jobs in our country, the community, the people that work in them.

So I say to the gentleman, I thank you so very much for standing up for job growth in this country. Thank you for standing up for manufacturing, because for every one of those jobs added, we create new wealth for our country, and we help America to come out of the slump in manufacturing that she has experienced over the last quarter century.

I just hope that in the new trade bills that come before us we will have jobs as our first priority and market opening abroad that keeps our products out.

Again, I want to thank the gentleman. I support your legislation and I support your efforts for investment to create wealth, whether it is infrastructure on the public side or whether it is infrastructure on the private side. Those are the jobs that really create the new wealth and expansion of jobs for America.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Representative KAPTUR, you have been at this for a long time. You come from an area in this Nation that in recent decades has been called the Rust Belt. I think that is not the situation, with your leadership.

We have seen a resurgence in American manufacturing; and 20, 25 years ago, we had just under 20 million Americans working in manufacturing with those middle-income jobs. This is the middle class. They were able to support their family, educate, get a boat, go on vacation, buy a house, provide the food, and take care of their family, just as you described.

And then we have seen in the last 20 years an enormous decline—from 20 million down to just under 11 million manufacturing jobs, and a lot of that decline had to do with American policies.

You mentioned trade programs. Clearly, that had a lot to do with offshoring tax policies that encouraged corporations to send jobs offshore rather than keeping jobs here. And there are other labor policies and the like that made it difficult for the American family to earn that living.

Our challenge is to reinvigorate the working American families' opportunity. And to address that, I will say that I heard a remarkable speech by a freshman. And it is not that I have been here so long. STEVE HORSFORD from Las Vegas gave a speech on the floor here about a week ago, talking about these issues and talking about the challenge that American families face. I asked him to join us. I was impressed by his grasp of the issue and the passion with which he spoke.

Representative HORSFORD, welcome to the one hour of what we call Make It in America, the American Jobs Program.

Mr. HORSFORD. Thank you to the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) for yielding time. I appreciate your leadership, as well as the work that you and our whip, Mr. HOYER; General ENYART; the gentlelady from Ohio; the gentlelady from Maryland; and many of my other colleagues, who have been working for so long to bring the focus to jobs, job creation, and growing the economy in America.

We are here today to talk about the American Dream, and that is having a good job—a family-sustaining job that can provide for yourself and your loved ones. We are talking about expanding economic opportunity not just for a select few at the top, but for those who are in the middle class who are striving to become a part of it. We are talking about the basics of job creation.

And, yes, I am a freshman. I have been here for just under a year. I am amazed and quite humbly frustrated by the fact that in 1 year not one comprehensive jobs bill has been brought to this floor for a vote by the majority on the other side; and yet we have example upon example of good job-creating legislation. The package of bills that is under the umbrella of the Make It in America proposal are good, commonsense proposals that would help every region of our country.

Now, I am from Nevada. At 9.3 percent, my State, though, has the highest unemployment in the country right now. It is nothing that we are proud of. It is stubbornly high, in large part because we experienced the hardest impact during the recession. When people aren't doing well in other regions of the country, they are not making money. That means they can't come to Nevada to spend money.

While our economy is largely dependent upon hospitality and the service industry, my district, which encompasses some 51,000 square miles throughout every corner of Nevada, has mining, agriculture, and four military installations, including many, many private small business contractors who are doing work at our Air Force bases and the Army depot. It has other small businesses who are ancillary to the hospitality industry. And so they have all been impacted by this decline in the economy, and so we have an unemployment rate that is currently at about 9.3 percent.

I am glad that my colleague from California showed those pictures from the job fair that you conducted. I want to commend you for doing that because it puts a face on these numbers. It is not about a percentage point here or there. It is about the faces of the people who are standing in line looking for work.

Right now in this body at this time it is incredibly important for us to focus on the lives of the people who are impacted because of this Congress's inability to get something done as important as jobs legislation for this country.

Now I would like to touch just on two major points, if I could. The first is the fact that, again, in my State, we have had a prolonged recession. So many of the people who have been unemployed have been unemployed for going on a year or longer. Some of them actually are from the construction sector, which was our number two industry in Nevada. But because of the burst in the housing market, the fact that we are not building as much in the commercial sector, the lion's share of the people who are unemployed actually come from the construction sector.

They also come from engineering companies. They also come from architecture companies. I have talked to small business owners who run architecture firms who have had to lay off more than 40 to 50 percent of their staff over the last few years.

□ 1715

These are good-paying jobs as well, jobs that provide good wages for families to provide for themselves.

But the points I want to make include the fact that on December 28, if this Congress doesn't do something in the next few days, some 20,000 individuals in Nevada who currently are receiving emergency unemployment compensation are at risk of losing that safety net, if this Congress fails to act.

Now, I don't see how in good conscience we as Members of Congress who, as you say, get paid a good wage—the best wage I have ever had as a poor person growing up in Nevada who has had to work two jobs virtually since I was 14, 15 years of age, to now be a Member of Congress, is a great honor. But I do not see how in good conscience we could leave here on Friday and fail to extend unemployment benefits for millions of Americans who need this safety net, especially at the holiday season

Now, a lot of people who were standing in that line have children. They have families that are relying on them to put food on the table. There are people in my district who I have talked to who say that they are going to go without having a holiday this December because the only thing they can do is to provide enough money to keep a roof over their head, food on the table, and gas in the car so that they can keep looking for a job.

So I would encourage the leadership here to do everything that they can to allow us to vote to extend the unemployment emergency compensation that is set to expire on December 28; 20,000 Nevadans in my home State are relying on it, and I know millions of other Americans are as well.

Let me just close to my colleague from California by also offering one more suggestion of ways in which we can get America working again. I introduced legislation, Putting Our Veterans Back to Work Act of 2013.

One other interesting fact about Nevada, about a third of our constituents are veterans. These are people who have given their all to protect our country's freedom in a time of combat; and now all they ask for when they come home is an opportunity for a job, an opportunity for decent housing, for quality health care, access to education for themselves and their kids.

So, with my colleagues, I have introduced H.R. 3454, the Putting Our Veterans Back to Work Act. It renews our vow to hire our heroes by reauthorizing the transition, retraining, and employment services that have been created. It expands our vow to veteran small business owners to ensure that they have access to capital that they need for the veteran-owned small businesses that we are encouraging to grow.

It builds on our vow to hire heroes by basically committing additional resources through job training, the Workforce Investment Act system, to ensure that our veterans are given priority for hiring.

Finally, it ensures that our veterans are not being discriminated against in the workplace. So this is an important contribution I think to the Make It in America proposal, and I think it speaks to the other opportunities that we have here today to grow our economy.

I just want to close by saying to Mr. GARAMENDI that it is great that we can have a focus on what we can do in this Congress. Again, I have only been here a year, and it is frustrating to hear what we can't do: the fact that we haven't been able to pass comprehensive immigration reform or employment protections for individuals regardless of who they love, the fact that there are infrastructure bills that have been proposed by the Make It in America proposal that have bipartisan support so we can revitalize our country.

We can do great things if this body, if the Members on the other side who have refused to allow these bills to come to a vote, if they could meet us halfway. We can meet the needs of the American public. We can provide equal pay for equal work and make sure that women are paid the wages that they deserve. We can invest in education and make sure that our schools are adequately funded. We can replace the sequester and make sure that our kids have a head start at a bright future, and we can strengthen our social safety net for seniors and the poor and those who are in the middle class.

Mr. Speaker, there is no shortage of what we can do to increase opportunity, to grow the economy and to create jobs. This Congress just needs to show the willingness to work, to put the American people back to work.

I want to commend, again, my colleague, Mr. GARAMENDI, and the others who have spoken this evening for putting this issue front and center. This is the priority that the American people want us to focus on: jobs, jobs, jobs. Thank you.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you so very much, Mr. HORSFORD. Thank you for your passion, for your knowledge, for your concern about your constituents, and particularly about those men and women that are from the military.

I also have two major Air Force bases in my district with a very large population of veterans, both young and old, from the various wars and conflicts of the past. And they need a shot. Your legislation ought to be the law. It simply should be the law of the land. We should put these people back to work. We showed the picture earlier of the people lined up; 147 of those were veterans. I think about 14 were actually hired that day and given a chance.

I often put this up when we have these opportunities to speak on the floor about jobs and putting men and women back to work, because this is kind of a compass that I like to use when I think about legislation, when I think about what we ought to be doing here.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, FDR, talking about a New Deal, he said this:

> A test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much, it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

We need to think about that often here on the floor. The issues that we have talked about today—putting people back to working, the minimum wage, and unemployment insurance, and food stamps or the SNAP program—all speak to this fundamental

test of America's moral compass. A test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much. It is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

December 28—Representative HORSFORD laid out that date—December 28, millions upon millions of Americans will lose their unemployment insurance, not because they are lazy, not because they don't want to work. These people, 971 of them last Friday in my district at my jobs fair, they want to go to work. Many of them will lose their unemployment insurance on December 28.

Joining us today is a remarkable woman, incredible background in caring about the people of America, working on a national program to make sure that women have a good shot. Incidentally, let me put this up there just before I introduce Representative EDWARDS. Today is a remarkable day for women. The new CEO of General Motors is a woman. She is not going to be on the unemployment line. She has spent 30-some years with General Motors, has visited the very, very top. I understand coming from the factory floor, all the way to the top. That is your story too, DONNA EDWARDS, incredible Representative from the State of Maryland. I think you wanted to talk to us about your citizens, your constituents.

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from California because every week you are here talking about what we can do and what we should be doing to create jobs in this country.

Now, I have heard it said by some that there is nothing that the Congress can or should do to try to create jobs. Well, that is just a bunch of hooey. We know that the Federal Government, Mr. Speaker, has a lot of capacity to help spur private sector job creation, but we haven't done it in this Congress. We have had an opportunity, but we haven't done it in this Congress.

I thought as you put that quote up there by Franklin Roosevelt, when I think of all the memorials there are here in Washington, D.C.—and there are plenty of them, free to the public, paid by the taxpayers. One of my favorite is the FDR memorial, and the reason is because as you are walking through that memorial, you have there, in bronze, replicas of people standing in line: standing in line waiting for assistance, standing in line waiting for a job.

When President Franklin Roosevelt saw what was happening in this country, try to come out of that Great Depression, he didn't say, oh, well, there is nothing we can do. Now, it is true, he did have some Members of Congress who were fighting him every step of the way, who didn't want to do what it would take to wholesale the Federal Government all in, investing in the American public, investing in job training, investing in rebuilding this country. Franklin Roosevelt knew the difference, and he pushed for that so that all of those people standing in that line would have jobs. And that is what I see when I go to the memorial.

Now, if you take the trail along from the FDR memorial, you can walk along the pathway and it brings you to the new Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial—another great man who stood at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial, calling for us to put people to work for equality, right on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Each man, including Lincoln, in their time calling on the Congress: do the right thing. Well, now, Mr. GARAMENDI, it is our time. It is our time to invest in our infrastructure that by all accounts is crumbling. And you know what, we don't even need experts to see that our roads, our bridges, our railways are crumbling. We don't need those experts because we can see that for ourselves. I see it when I drive over some of our bridges in Maryland. I see it across our roads. I see the crumbling bridges.

Now we wait. When a bridge does in fact fall, potentially injuring or even killing people, and certainly killing the economy around it, oh, we are all in. The Congress is right there, injecting the Federal resources that it takes, but why do we have to wait until a bridge falls for the Congress to do the right thing to invest in our infrastructure, knowing that every investment of a billion dollars creates 35,000 new jobs in the economy?

If we were doing what it would take just to keep up, we would be investing about $200 billion. Think of the millions of jobs we could create by making those investments.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Excuse me for interrupting.

Ms. EDWARDS. Go right ahead.

Mr. GARAMENDI. You are talking about some really, really important issues here. Bridges falling down?

Ms. EDWARDS. Bridges falling down.

□ 1730

Mr. GARAMENDI. One of the reasons is this: this is the infrastructure investment from 2002 to 10 years later. That is about an $85 billion reduction in infrastructure investment.

I wanted just to drive home the point that you have made about putting people to work and about what happens when you bring down the infrastructure investment. People are unemployed, construction workers and beyond.

Ms. EDWARDS. I thank the gentleman for pointing that out. Because what we can see is that with that decades-long disinvestment in our infrastructure, not only do we have new needs, but we have the old ones, the old repairs stacking up.

I am glad that you mentioned unemployment, because as the gentleman from Nevada mentioned, unemployment in so many areas is still up there. Now, across the country, I am proud to say that last week unemployment numbers were reported 7 percent—the lowest since November 2008, the lowest since when I first came into this Congress. In some ways, it has been despite us. I think the President, the administration, have done all of the things that they can do, the private sector that they can do.

But think if we had those infrastructure investments. We could tick off 2 more percentage points on unemployment with a robust investment in this Nation's infrastructure. That is about building for the future; that is about building for the 21st-century economy. Yet here we are—and as the gentleman from Nevada pointed out—unemployment benefits end for about 1.3 million people; 1.9 million Americans' unemployment will end December 28.

Now, here we are in Congress—and we have taken a lot of breaks this year without creating any jobs, and we are about to take another one, another really long one—and on December 28 some of our Members will be finishing up their holiday leftovers. Some people will be sitting with their children looking through their toys and the goodies that they have gotten over the holiday season, and then there will be 1.9 million Americans who will lose their unemployment benefits in the first half of 2014, 1.3 million who will lose those benefits on December 28, and we will be opening up gifts. That is an embarrassment; it is an absolute embarrassment.

So while we could be doing things that create jobs and opportunity for the American people, instead we are doing something that is actually going to cost jobs. Not extending unemployment benefits, not only is it bad for all of those people who will lose their benefits; it also is going to cost the economy another 200,000 jobs. So what we are doing in our inaction in Congress is actually counterproductive to putting the American people back to work.

Do you know what? I would like to say that it is the responsibility of all of us as Members of Congress; but the fact is, much to our chagrin, Democrats don't control the gavel in this House; the Republicans control it. And tomorrow, and certainly within the next 72 hours before we leave town for vacation, Republicans could put a bill on the floor that would extend unemployment benefits that would expire on December 28 for the American people so that those unemployed persons can afford to have a Christmas, a holiday, for their families. But I don't see it in the offing. I can tell you this right now: if Democrats controlled that gavel, Mr. Speaker, we would be extending unemployment benefits, but we are not doing that.

I want to close very quickly and have a little bit of a dialogue, because I want to tell you what unemployment means. It means 37 percent of the unemployed workers in this country have been unemployed for more than 6 months. So it is true, our unemployment numbers have ticked down; but

for 37 percent of those unemployed workers, it has been a long time. These are skilled workers. They are laborers who because the construction jobs are not quite up to par they are not working the way that they were. They are people who have scientific and technical skills. Because we are not making the kinds of investments we need in research and development, and I know that has been of particular importance to the gentleman, those workers are unemployed.

The gentleman put up the picture there of the people who were standing in line in his district at a job fair. Well, I held a job fair in my district. Over 2,000 people, 100 employers, job seekers, people who want to work, who are unemployed now but who want to work. What is the harm in providing unemployment benefits for those workers?

Now, I have heard some on the other side of the aisle say things like, well, if you provide unemployment benefits, then it will make people less likely to go out and find a job. Well, clearly that is somebody who has never received unemployment benefits. I had the misfortune of having to apply for unemployment at one point in my life. I didn't want to be unemployed, but I sure needed that benefit to get me to the point where I could then find a job.

That is what our job seekers do—1.3 million of them who will not have unemployment benefits come December 28, who will not be able to provide. Forget providing for a holiday or a Christmas celebration. How about putting food on the table?

And this, Mr. GARAMENDI, at the same time that there are some who are contemplating taking away $40 billion from food stamps. So take away unemployment benefits, take away food stamps, the nutrition program that also supplies our food pantries, and then say, do you know what, unemployed Americans, you are on your own.

Well, that is not the kind of America, Mr. GARAMENDI, that you and I believe in. We believe in the kind of America where as a Congress we make a decision about investing in our infrastructure, supporting research and development so that all of those innovators and creators out there can create more jobs, making sure that we have a manufacturing sector that really works in this country, and putting people back to work.

I will just close by saying I don't really get this. But I tell you what, the Grinch is in full force right now. The Grinch is out there saying, I am taking your unemployment, I am taking away your food stamps, I am not going to create any jobs. Do you know what? That is not good for America. But we are saying, Happy Holidays, and in 72 hours the Congress goes home and people who are on unemployment lose their benefits.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Congresswoman EDWARDS, thank you very much. I have known you for the almost 4 years that I have been here. The passion that you have for the American people is unmatched. Your willingness to stand for them has been seen in many pieces of legislation and votes and also on the floor of the House of Representatives. I thank you for that.

How correct you are. We are going to leave here Friday, probably around noontime. The question Americans ought to ask us is: So what have you done for America? Tell us what you have done, Congress, for America.

I will tell you what we want to do. We want to put people back to work. This ought not be America. This is the inside of the hall where we had the 40 employers that were looking to hire a few people. The outside of the hall, that was 200 yards in 35 degree weather, people standing there well over an hour, some an hour and a half, two hours, wanting to at least get a shot at a job.

Have we forgotten, have we forgotten about Franklin Delano Roosevelt's moral compass, the moral compass that we ought to be employing here? I am going to put up something. Ms. EDWARDS, if you will just stick around just a few moments.

America has gone back to work, at least some Americans have gone back to work. This is the recovery; this is the reduction in the unemployment. The moral compass of America. Are we doing more for those who have much or are we doing for those who have little?

This is the fact of the growth of the American economy, the creation of wealth, the creation of wealth in America. Billions of dollars. New wealth created. Where did it go? Where did that wealth go? Where did all the labor, all the hard work, all the men and women that got up in the morning and went to work, put in their 8 hours or 12 hours, their 40 hours a week or more, where did that labor, where did it go, what was the result of it?

Here it is. Here is the fact. The tale of two Americans: 95 percent of the wealth created in America from 2009 to 2012 went to the top 1 percent of Americans. So all those people out there, all the 99 percenters that worked day in and day out, that struggled for a job, that stood in line to get a job, what did they get? They got 5 percent of the new wealth of the wealth created in this Nation.

This is an indictment of the fundamental policies of this Nation. It wasn't always that way. During the Clinton period, the top 1 percent did very well. They got 45 percent of the wealth. The top 1 percent took 45 percent home. They did leave 55 percent for the 99 percent.

This isn't just happening because the Sun comes up in the morning and sets in the evening. This happens because of public policy, tax policy, employment policy, social welfare policies, food programs, unemployment programs, and the crash of the American economy caused by greed, Wall Street greed principally, and greed of others to be sure.

Keep in mind, America, this is our Nation today. Work hard? No, you may not get ahead. Keep in mind the moral compass of Franklin Delano Roosevelt:

> The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is rather whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

December 28 is coming. Today is the 10th of December. Eighteen days. Just after Christmas, 3 days after Christmas, days after the holidays, 1.7 million Americans are going to lose their unemployment insurance and, since the farm bill hasn't been brought to the floor, the question of what kind of cuts will be made in the farm programs specifically for the food programs.

It is not the loafers that are out there, although there are some. It is the men and women that stood in line waiting for a job in my district last Friday, stood in line at Representative EDWARDS' job fair here in Maryland in the past days, those people, unemployed, depending upon the supplemental food program, the senior citizens who are trying to make it with the meager benefits of Social Security. They are the ones that are receiving the supplemental food program, the food stamps. $40 billion over the next 5 to 10 years taken away, away from farmers' income, yes, and away from the men and women that are hungry.

One more thing. I am going to put this up. I have seen this so many times. You want to take $40 billion away from the children of America? Is that what our Republican leadership wants to do? This is the face of America's children right there. One out of every four children in this Nation wondering where their next meal is coming from. Jobs? Absolutely. Unemployment benefits? Essential, unless you want this to be the American story. Food stamps? That is where he gets his food; that is where these American children are able to get their food during these hard times. They want to cut it. Where is the moral compass in that? Where is the fundamental moral compass when one out of four children in this Nation goes to bed hungry?

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Where is the moral compass that takes 95 percent of the wealth created in this Nation and gives it to the 1 percent who have millions and, indeed, billions? Something is wrong here.

Ms. EDWARDS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GARAMENDI. I yield to the gentlelady.

Ms. EDWARDS. As the gentleman was speaking, I thought to myself: What could the American people do if they learned that on December 28 unemployment benefits will end for 1.3 million of their fellow Americans? Is there something they could do?

Well, I always thought when I wasn't in Congress that the one thing people can do to stop this atrocity so that we can fix it before we leave town in 72 hours, they can call their Members of

Congress. They can use social media and reach out to their Members of Congress. That is what they can do because this should not be allowed to happen. We can create jobs so that, come the spring construction season, workers go back to work. But in the meantime, people can call their Member of Congress and say: Extend unemployment benefits, or don't go home for Christmas.

Mr. GARAMENDI. We will go home for Christmas, and how many hungry will there be? How many unemployed will there be? We have work to do.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. JACKSON LEE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and December 11.

Mr. DOYLE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and December 11 on account of a death in the family.

Mr. RUSH (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of attending to family acute medical care and hospitalization.

Mr. CULBERSON (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today on account of illness.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today and the balance of the week on account of the birth of her daughter.

Mr. CONAWAY (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today on account of inclement weather.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker pro tempore, Mr. DENHAM, on Monday, December 9, 2013.

H.R. 3626. An act to extend the Undetectable Firearms Act of 1988 for 10 years.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 47 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, December 11, 2013, 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:

4038. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Food Additive Regulations; Incorporation by Reference of the Food chemicals Codex, 7th Edition [Docket No.: FDA-2010-F-0320] received December 3, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4039. A letter from the Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the fiscal year 2012 report entitled, ''Operation and Financial Support of Military Museums''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4040. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Priority; Rehabilitation Training: Rehabilitation Long-Term Training Program--Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling [CFDA Number: 84.129B] received November 22, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

4041. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule — Program Integrity Issues [Docket ID: ED-2010-OPE-0004] (RIN: 1840-AD02) received November 22, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

4042. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's ''Major'' final rule — Student Assistance General Provisions, Federal Perkins Loan Program, Federal Family Education Loan Program, and William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program [Docket ID: ED-2013-OPE-0063] (RIN: 1840-AD12) received November 22, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

4043. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Advisory Committee; Veterinary Medicine Advisory Committee; Termination [Docket No.: FDA-2013-N-1380] received December 2, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4044. A letter from the Associate Bureau Chief, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Special Access for Price Cap Local Exchange Carriers; AT&T Corporation Petition for Rulemaking to Reform Regulation of Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier Rates for Interstate Special Access Services WC [Docket No.: 05-25] [RM-10593] received November 26, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4045. A letter from the Acting General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Communication of Operational Information Between Natural Gas Pipelines and Electric Transmission Operators [Docket No.: RM13-17-000; Order No. 787] received November 26, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4046. A letter from the Secretary of the Commission, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Guides for Private Vocational and Distance Education Schools received November 26, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4047. A letter from the Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, Agency for International Development, transmitting a formal response to the GAO report ''Global Food Security: USAID is Improving Coordination but Needs to Require Systematic Assessments of Country-Level Risks''; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4048. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting Transmittal No. 13-66, Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer and Acceptance, pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4049. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter regarding a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Defense and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Canada; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4050. A letter from the Administrator, Agency for International Development, transmitting the semiannual report on the activities of the Office of Inspector General for the period April 1, 2013, through September 30, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) section 5(b); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4051. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4052. A letter from the Senior Deputy Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts, transmitting the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Semiannual Report on Final Action Resulting from Audit Reports, Inspection Reports, and Evaluation Reports for the period April 1, 2013 through September 30, 2013; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4053. A letter from the Chair, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and a separate management report for the period April 1, 2013 through September 30, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act), section 5(b); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4054. A letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's quarterly report from the Office of Privacy and Civil Liberties for the third quarter of fiscal year 2013 April 1, 2013 — June 30, 2013; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4055. A letter from the Administrator, Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Corporation's annual financial audit and management report for the fiscal year 2013, in accordance with OMB Circular A-136; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4056. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Dividend Equivalents from Sources within the United States [TD 9648] (RIN: 1545-BK53] received December 5, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4057. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — User Fees for Processing Installment Agreements and Offers in Compromise [TD 9647] (RIN: 1545-BL37) received December 5, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4058. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Voluntary Witholding on Dividends and Other Distributions by Alaska Native Corporations [Notice 2013-77] received December 5, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4059. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — 2013 Base Period T-Bill Rate (Rev. Rul. 2013-24)received December 5, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4060. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Rulings and Determination Letters (Rev. Proc. 2014-7) received December 5, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4061. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Net Investment Income Tax [TD 9644] (RIN: 1545-BK44) received December 5, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

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. UPTON (for himself, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. TERRY, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, and Mr. BILIRAKIS):

H.R. 3683. A bill to amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to improve United States-Israel energy cooperation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. LUETKEMEYER):

H.R. 3684. A bill to prohibit Federal funding of foreign travel by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency until the Agency conducts public listening sessions on rulemaking targeting carbon dioxide emissions from existing power plants in each of the 15 States with the highest percentage of electricity generated by coal in 2012; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Agriculture, and Science, Space, and Technology, 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. BARLETTA (for himself, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. RUNYAN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. PERRY, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. LANCE, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. JONES, Mr. BACHUS, Mrs. NOEM, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. HANNA, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. COTTON, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. PITTS, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. MARINO, and Mr. BARR):

H.R. 3685. A bill to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not counted as full-time employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois (for himself, Mr. JOYCE, and Mr. GRAVES of Missouri):

H.R. 3686. A bill to require official White House meals and meals served at White House or Department of Agriculture cafeterias to be in compliance with the nutrition requirements for the school breakfast program and the school lunch program; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ISSA (for himself, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. COFFMAN, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. YOHO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. NUNNELEE, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. POSEY, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. BENTIVOLIO, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, and Mr. CONAWAY):

H.R. 3687. A bill to amend the National Historic Preservation Act to provide that if the head of the agency managing Federal property objects to the inclusion of certain property on the National Register or its designation as a National Historic Landmark for reasons of national security, the Federal property shall be neither included nor designated until the objection is withdraw, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. JEFFRIES (for himself and Ms. MENG):

H.R. 3688. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to direct the Bureau of Prisons to provide certain voting information to Federal prisoners upon their release from prison; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JORDAN (for himself and Mr. BARROW of Georgia):

H.R. 3689. A bill to restore Second Amendment rights in the District of Columbia; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. HONDA):

H.R. 3690. A bill to increase the participation of women, girls, and underrepresented minorities in STEM fields, to encourage and support students from all economic backgrounds to pursue STEM career opportunities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. KILDEE:

H.R. 3691. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require additional disclosures when lending to military members and their dependents, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. LOEBSACK:

H.R. 3692. A bill to authorize a competitive grant program to implement and evaluate digital learning in rural locales; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. NOLAN (for himself, Mr. FARR, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. WALZ, Ms. NORTON, Ms. MCCOLLUM, and Mr. LOEBSACK):

H. Con. Res. 70. Concurrent resolution recognizing the critical contributions international volunteers provide to the United States; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. DEUTCH (for himself and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN):

H. Res. 435. A resolution calling on the government of Iran to fulfill their promises of assistance in this case of Robert Levinson, one of the longest held United States civilians in our Nation's history; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. LOWENTHAL (for himself, Ms. BASS, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. CHU, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. COSTA, Mr. CROWLEY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FARR, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. HAHN, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. HONDA, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. KEATING, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LEVIN, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD, Mr. PETERS of California, Mr. RUIZ, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. WAXMAN, and Ms. WILSON of Florida):

H. Res. 436. A resolution recognizing the 65th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the celebration of ''Human Rights Day''; 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. UPTON:

H.R. 3683.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mrs. CAPITO:

H.R. 3684.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 9 Clause 7

No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law

By Mr. BARLETTA:

H.R. 3685.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 3686.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Necessary and Proper Clause

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

The Congress shall have Power *** To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

Spending Authorization/General Welfare Clause

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mr. ISSA:

H.R. 3687.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Because this bill affects the national security of the United States, in that it protects Federally-owned land dedicated to national security from regulatory encroachment, Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution which empowers Congress ''To . . . provide for the common defence [sic] and general Welfare of the United States,'' Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 11 through 16 which give Congress additional authorities to ensure the national security of the United States; and Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18, which empowers Congress ''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other

Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. JEFFRIES:

H.R. 3688.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause I of the United States Constitution related to general welfare of the United States.

By Mr. JORDAN:

H.R. 3689.

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 17 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

H.R. 3690.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 (relating to the power of Congress to provide for the general welfare of the United States) and Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

By Mr. KILDEE:

H.R. 3691.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Const. Art. I, §8.

By Mr. LOEBSACK:

H.R. 3692.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause I of the Constitution which grants Congress the power to provide for the general Welfare of the United States.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 7: Ms. BORDALLO.

H.R. 60: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

H.R. 196: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.

H.R. 494: Mr. PALLONE, Mr. COBLE, Mr. MAFFEI, and Mrs. CAPPS.

H.R. 562: Mr. FOSTER.

H.R. 637: Mr. GRAYSON.

H.R. 685: Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mrs. BEATTY, and Mr. DEUTCH.

H.R. 713: Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. VELA, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mr. CONAWAY.

H.R. 721: Mr. CASSIDY and Mr. KINGSTON.

H.R. 724: Mr. COSTA.

H.R. 792: Mr. STUTZMAN.

H.R. 855: Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 915: Mr. BROOKS of Alabama.

H.R. 1209: Mr. MCCARTHY of California, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. MARINO, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. SIRES, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, and Mr. DINGELL.

H.R. 1250: Mr. PETRI.

H.R. 1255: Mr. STEWART.

H.R. 1317: Mr. PETERS of California.

H.R. 1339: Mr. HANNA.

H.R. 1616: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.

H.R. 1701: Mr. LAMBORN.

H.R. 1714: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 1726: Mr. TIBERI.

H.R. 1787: Mr. SHIMKUS and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

H.R. 1812: Mr. VALADAO.

H.R. 1984: Mrs. ELLMERS.

H.R. 2012: Mr. CICILLINE.

H.R. 2027: Mr. STUTZMAN.

H.R. 2056: Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 2134: Mr. MASSIE.

H.R. 2223: Mr. ROGERS of Michigan.

H.R. 2309: Mr. VELA, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, and Mr. HIMES.

H.R. 2662: Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 2697: Mr. COOK.

H.R. 2727: Mr. GOWDY.

H.R. 2780: Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York and Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 2788: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 2791: Mr. DENHAM.

H.R. 2835: Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas.

H.R. 2841: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 2866: Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. FARR, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, and Mr. TIPTON.

H.R. 2909: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. VISCLOSKY, and Ms. ESTY.

H.R. 2918: Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.

H.R. 2939: Ms. SLAUGHTER and Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 2989: Ms. DEGETTE.

H.R. 2994: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. TITUS, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. SCHOCK, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. BARR, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. SCHNEIDER, and Mr. TAKANO.

H.R. 3077: Mr. BUTTERFIELD.

H.R. 3211: Mr. ROSS and Mr. HECK of Nevada.

H.R. 3279: Mr. SHUSTER and Ms. BORDALLO.

H.R. 3330: Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.

H.R. 3333: Ms. SINEMA.

H.R. 3374: Mr. DEFAZIO.

H.R. 3397: Mr. HONDA, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. HIGGINS.

H.R. 3461: Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. LEE of California, and Mr. ISRAEL.

H.R. 3469: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 3488: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. TONKO, Mr. COHEN, and Ms. JENKINS.

H.R. 3499: Mr. O'ROURKE, Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD, and Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 3505: Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 3527: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 3530: Mr. COSTA, Mr. CÁRDENAS, and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 3531: Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. PERRY, Mr. FARR, Mr. JOYCE, and Mrs. BACHMANN.

H.R. 3539: Mr. NEUGEBAUER.

H.R. 3590: Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, Mr. CRAWFORD, Ms. JENKINS, Mr. WALBERG, and Mr. BISHOP of Utah.

H.R. 3611: Mr. MULVANEY.

H.R. 3646: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN and Mr. MEEKS.

H.R. 3649: Mr. BRALEY of Iowa.

H. Con. Res. 16: Mr. SOUTHERLAND, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. BILIRAKIS.

H. Res. 30: Ms. KELLY of Illinois and Mr. SMITH of Missouri.

H. Res. 36: Mr. DIAZ-BALART.

H. Res. 281: Ms. MCCOLLUM.

H. Res. 284: Mr. TERRY.

H. Res. 302: Mr. ROHRABACHER.

H. Res. 411: Mr. NUGENT.

H. Res. 417: Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. DINGELL, and Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.

H. Res. 418: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY and Mr. KEATING.

H. Res. 423: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H. Res. 424: Ms. DELAURO, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. GARCIA, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. ESTY, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. ENYART, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. ISRAEL, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. ANDREWS, Ms. HAHN, Ms. WATERS, Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD, Mr. NADLER, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. COSTA, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. VARGAS, and Mr. COHEN.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 159 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2013 No. 174

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, our souls thirst for You. Enable us to hear Your songs in the night and be vivified by Your spirit. Lord, forgive us when we forget how Your gracious hand has preserved our Nation, multiplying, enriching, and sustaining it. Use our lawmakers to keep America strong, reminding them that eternal vigilance is the price for freedom. Thank You for drawing us into the multitude of Your mercy, permitting us to experience abundant living, as we make a commitment to not deviate from the path of integrity.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 2013—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 243, S. 1356.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 243, S. 1356, a bill to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to strengthen the United States workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training, and education programs in the United States, and to promote individual and national economic growth, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of Senator MCCONNELL, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Patricia Millett to be U.S. circuit judge for the DC Circuit and immediately vote on confirmation of that nomination.

Senators should expect additional votes this morning with respect to reconsideration of the cloture vote on the nomination of MEL WATT to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency.

MILLETT AND WATT NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, this morning the Senate will consider the nomination of Patricia Millett to serve on the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, considered by many to be the second highest court in the land. We postponed this vote last night out of consideration for a number of Senators whose flights were delayed by bad weather. I thank my colleagues for their patience. And I am pleased that today Ms. Millett will finally get the fair, up-or-down vote she deserves.

Ms. Millett is exceedingly qualified for this position. She graduated at the top of her class from the University of Illinois at Urbana and attended Harvard Law School. Ms. Millett has argued more than 32 cases before the Supreme Court, including one while her husband was deployed overseas with the U.S. Navy. She also served as Assistant Solicitor General under both President Bill Clinton and President George Bush.

She enjoys bipartisan support from a variety of law enforcement officials, legal professionals, and military organizations. And it is my honor to help confirm a woman whom colleagues have called fair-minded, principled, and exceptionally gifted.

I will also move to reconsider the nomination of Congressman MEL WATT to serve as Administrator of the Federal Housing Finance Agency.

Congressman WATT graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Yale Law School. He has represented North Carolina's 12th Congressional District since 1993 and served as chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. And as a senior member of the House Financial Services Committee, Mr. WATT understands the mistakes that led to the housing crisis.

Yet last month Senate Republicans blocked Congressman WATT's nomination—the first time a sitting Member of Congress has been filibustered since 1843, since before the Civil War. They denied Congressman WATT even the courtesy of an up-or-down vote.

Congressman WATT proposed legislation to crack down on the worst abuses in mortgage lending and helped pass the Dodd-Frank bill to prevent predatory lending. By any measure, Congressman WATT is qualified to help struggling homeowners recover from the worst economic downturn in generations.

And at a moment when America still faces difficult economic times—and as the housing market is finally beginning to recover—it is crucial the Senate confirm the most talented and dedicated individuals to serve in the executive branch of government.

It is critical that the Senate confirm Congressman WATT to lead the Federal Housing Finance Agency.

This week the Senate will also consider a number of other highly qualified judicial and executive branch nominees.

The 13 district court nominees on the calendar have been waiting an average of 56 days for a confirmation vote—almost twice as long as the average at this point in President Bush's second term.

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

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One of these district court nominees, Elizabeth Wolford, has been waiting 130 days.

There are also 75 executive branch nominees currently ready to be confirmed by the Senate who have waited an average of 140 days for confirmation.

I want to remind my colleagues that, as always, there is an easy way and a hard way to process these nominations. And the more time the Senate wastes burning the hours and days between votes, the more likely the Senate will hold late-night and weekend votes this work period.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING NELSON MANDELA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, tens of thousands gathered today in Soweto to pay their last respects to a man who symbolized so much for so many, and it is not hard to see why. Politicians come and go, Presidents rise and fall, but Nelson Mandela was more than a politician, more than just a foreign leader. He was a symbol—a symbol of freedom and hope, not only for his own people but for all people. We also remember Nelson Mandela as a symbol of reconciliation, especially when he had every reason not to be. How many of us could spend so many years in confinement—away from people we love, with little to do but mull the circumstances of our incarceration—and emerge so forgiving toward our captors?

To me it was telling to see that one of the many people paying respects to Nelson Mandela this week was an Afrikaner named Christo Brand. The two men struck up an improbable but lasting friendship during Mandela's time on Robben Island. I say ''improbable'' because Brand was his jailer.

The story goes that years after his release from prison, President Mandela was attending a ceremony and greeting Members of Parliament when he spotted Brand out across the room. Mandela lifted his arms and announced to everyone that this man had been his warden but he was also his friend. Then he asked Brand to join him in a group photo. ''You must stand next to me,'' he insisted. ''We belong together.'' I think that says it all.

Nelson Mandela could have followed the example of other leaders in the region; he could have led South Africa down the path of Zimbabwe, but he did not. He urged his country to embrace inclusion and freedom and democracy instead. He asked his countrymen to stand with him because he knew that, as he once said to Christo Brand, his people ''belong together.'' So this morning the Senate joins the world in mourning the loss of Nelson Mandela. May his commitment to freedom and reconciliation continue to inspire.

ADVANCING AN AGENDA

Now, Mr. President, on to the business at hand.

I want to start out by saying that I think it was important for all of us to get back home and hear from our constituents over the past couple weeks. I talked with a lot of Kentuckians, and I can tell you there is a lot of anxiety and a lot of frustration out there. Folks are frustrated and upset by what is happening with their health care under ObamaCare, and they are outraged at the tactics and the outright deception—deception—that led to its passage.

It is now clear that the President knew perfectly well that a lot of folks would not be able to keep the plans they had and liked, despite the endless assurances to the contrary they heard from the President himself. Many are also starting to realize that the talking points they heard about their premiums and keeping their doctors were not worth the paper they were written on either.

The response they have gotten from the White House in the face of all this is just as bad. In the face of all the hardship and disruption this law is causing for literally millions of Americans, the White House is defiant. In the face of all of this, the President is trying to convince people that somehow we are the problem. According to the President, the problem is not the law. The problem is the people who are unhappy with it. The people who are unhappy with it, the President says, are the problem. This is exactly what folks are frustrated with—the idea that Washington knows best.

So we are going to keep fighting this fight. If anybody needed any proof that Big Government liberalism does not work, they have gotten a clinic over the past 2 months. It is clearer now than ever that we need to replace this law with commonsense, patient-centered reforms that will actually drive down costs and increase innovation.

The idea that making our health care system more like the Department of Motor Vehicles will somehow improve the final product has now been thoroughly discredited, and a thousand Presidential speeches are not going to change that.

But here is the larger story: ObamaCare is not an isolated case. It may be the most obvious example of this administration's determination to advance its agenda by any means possible, but it is one example of many.

The latest example was the administration's complicity in the power grab we saw last month in the Senate. News reports suggest that the President, who denounced this tactic when Republicans thought about it back in 2005, was actively lobbying for it ahead of the majority leader's fateful decision to pull the trigger.

So the President and the majority leader were for the protection of minority rights in the Senate until they were no longer in the minority. At that point, minority rights, the rules of the Senate, and the principle of a meaningful check on the Executive became an inconvenience—an inconvenience—that stood in the way of their desire for more power.

As I indicated last month, this was a pure power grab, plain and simple. If the majority party cannot be expected to follow the rules, then there are not any rules.

So this was a grave mistake, and it was a grave betrayal of trust, since some of the main players had previously vowed they would never do it, and then they did—just as the President had vowed that if you like your health care you could keep it. For the President and his enablers in Congress, the ends now clearly justify the means, and that is a very dangerous place for us to be.

So Republicans will continue to speak out against these offenses against our institutions and against the American people, who have a right to expect elected leaders to keep their commitments and respect the rules and our laws. The American people have a right to that.

The American people have given us divided government. The administration needs to accept that fact. They need to work with the government that the people have given them, not the one they wish they had. They need to stop viewing the rules that govern the rest of us as mere suggestions to follow as they wish, while the American people are left to suffer the consequences.

As I have indicated, we see the results of this mindset most powerfully with ObamaCare—a law that this administration was determined to force through—determined to force through—by hook or by crook, regardless of what half-truths it had to repeat to get there, regardless of which Senators it had to coax and cajole.

But the pattern did not end with the law's passage. The administration has repeatedly—repeatedly—invoked executive power to change whatever parts of the law prove inconvenient. Its friends begged for relief from the law, so they carved out special loopholes. Statutory deadlines became an irritation, so they waived them. ''Incorrect promises'' made to sell the law became an embarrassment, so they changed entire sections on the fly.

To many Washington Democrats, this is all fine—not because they necessarily want to circumvent the law, perhaps, but because they feel justified in doing so if that is what it takes to enact their agenda.

We have seen Democrats use this same approach with immigration policy, with welfare reform, with recess appointments. We have seen them use it to justify government-sanctioned harassment of entire groups of people over at the IRS.

Two weeks ago, we saw Washington Democrats take this ends-justifies-the-means approach to a whole new level entirely, by eliminating—eliminating—the right of the minority party to be heard in the Senate—something they themselves had warned against for

years when they were in the minority, something the Vice President called ''a naked power grab'' when he was in the Senate.

Washington Democrats changed our democracy irrevocably—irrevocably. They did something they basically promised they would never do. And to what end? To what end? To pack the courts with judges they expect will rubberstamp the President's partisan agenda, to eliminate one of the last remaining obstacles standing between the President and the enactment of his agenda through executive fiat. In short, because they wanted power that the voters have denied them at the ballot box, they tried to get it another way.

So before we all vote this morning, I just want to make sure everybody understands what this vote is all about. Two weeks ago the President and his Democratic allies defied two centuries of tradition, their own prior statements, and—in the case of some Democratic leaders—their own public commitments about following the rules of the Senate.

They did this for one reason: to advance an agenda the American people do not want. It is an agenda that runs straight through the DC Circuit. So now they are putting their people in place, to quote one member of their leadership, ''one way or another.''

This vote is not about any one nominee. It is not about Patricia Millett. It is about an attitude on the left that says the ends justify the means—whatever it takes. They will do whatever it takes to get what they want. That is why we are here today, and that is why I will be opposing this nomination.

Washington Democrats, unfortunately, are focusing their energy on saying and doing anything—anything it takes—to circumvent the representatives of the people. But, ultimately—ultimately—they will be accountable to the American people, and the American people will have their say again very soon—sooner than many of our colleagues might hope.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF PATRICIA ANN MILLETT TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Patricia Ann Millett, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today, the Senate will finally have the opportunity to vote on the confirmation of Patricia Millett to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit. Over the course of her 25-year legal career, Ms. Millett has risen through the ranks of government and private practice to earn a place among the best appellate practitioners in the country. She has argued 32 cases before the Supreme Court. She worked in the Justice Department under both Republican and Democratic administrations. She is unquestionably qualified and deserves to be confirmed without further delay so she can get to work for the American people.

Patricia Millett's career mirrors that of the last DC Circuit judge to occupy the very seat to which she is nominated—that of John Roberts, Jr. I voted for his confirmation to both the DC Circuit and later to the Supreme Court. I knew at the time of those votes that I would not agree with every decision he would make on the bench, but I voted for him because of his temperament and his excellent reputation as a lawyer. John Roberts was confirmed unanimously to the DC Circuit on the day the Judiciary Committee completed consideration of his nomination and reported it to the Senate—at a time when the caseload of the DC Circuit by any measure was lower than it is today. If only Senate Republicans had been willing to apply the same standard for Ms. Millett. Instead, they decided to filibuster her nomination even though they had promised to only filibuster nominations under ''extraordinary circumstances''. If those Senators had been true to their word, I do not believe we would have reached the tipping point on the use of the filibuster.

By refusing to allow a vote for any existing vacancy on the DC Circuit, Republicans took their determined obstruction to an unprecedented level. As the senior most Senator serving today, I approach changes to the tradition and history of the Senate with great reluctance. I have always believed in the Senate's unique protection of the minority party. I have held to my belief that the best traditions of the Senate would win out; that the 100 of us who stand in the shoes of more than 310 million Americans would do the right thing.

Now that the Senate has changed its precedents to overcome the escalating obstruction of some, I hope reasonable Republicans will join us in restoring the Senate's ability to fulfill its constitutional duties. I hope this will include a vote to confirm Patricia Millett to the DC Circuit.

Ms. Millett is a nominee with unquestionable integrity and character. She has engaged in significant community service and committed herself to pro bono work. She helps the neediest among us, volunteering through her church to prepare meals for the homeless and serving regularly as an overnight monitor at a local shelter.

Through her legal work, Ms. Millett has earned broad bipartisan support. This includes the support of Peter Keisler, Carter Phillips, Kenneth Starr, Theodore Olson, and Paul Clement, and a bipartisan group of 110 appellate practitioners, as well as 37 Deputy Solicitors General and Assistants to the Solicitor General from both Republican and Democratic administrations. She is supported by the national president of the National Fraternal Order of Police, Chuck Canterbury, and many others.

Patricia Millett's service to our Nation is not limited to her legal career or her humanitarianism. She is part of our Nation's storied military family, a family that we have called on repeatedly in the past decade. Her husband is a retired Navy reservist, and as a military spouse, Ms. Millett is part of our Nation's military fabric. She understands personally what we ask of our servicemembers and their families. At the height of Patricia Millett's legal career, her husband received orders to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. For nearly a year, she balanced Supreme Court arguments and the demands of being a single parent all while reassuring her children that their father would return home safe.

But not only is Ms. Millett committed to her own military family, she has helped to secure employment protections for members of our National Guard and Reserve through her pro bono legal work. In a case decided by the Supreme Court in 2011, Ms. Millett represented an Army Reservist who was fired, in part, because some of his co-workers did not like his military absences. The successful arguments that Ms. Millett helped craft have made it easier for all members of our Reserve and National Guard to protect their rights under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

Patricia Millett embodies what we ask our military families to do on behalf of their country. Military spouses juggle all the challenges that every American family faces—but often with the added pressure of deployments and extended separations. I want to thank all the military spouses who are in the Senate gallery today and those watching on C–SPAN who have worked tirelessly to support the nomination of ''one of their own''. We should recognize, honor and support our military families not just through words, but through meaningful action. A vote to confirm Patricia Millett is that meaningful action.

Today the Senate finally has the opportunity to vote for the confirmation of Patricia Millett. I urge my fellow Senators to join me in supporting this outstanding nominee.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, over the past few months, here on the Senate floor, in the Judiciary Committee, and in op-eds in national publications, I have explained why the pending nominees to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit should not be confirmed. Neither those facts nor the conclusion they compel have changed and

so I will vote against confirming the nominee before us.

The majority changed more than 200 years of Senate practice, taking away one of the few tools the minority has to participate in either the confirmation or legislative process. On nothing more than a party line vote, the majority deployed a premeditated parliamentary maneuver to prohibit the very filibusters that majority Senators once used.

Getting these three individuals on this particular court at this particular time is apparently so important that the majority is willing to change the very nature of this institution to do it. I believe the reason is the majority's belief that, as DC Circuit judges, these nominees will reliably support actions by the executive branch agencies that are driving much of President Obama's political agenda.

Democrats enthusiastically embraced the filibuster when they used it to block Republican nominees to positions in both the executive and judicial branches. They used the filibuster to defeat nominees to be Assistant Secretary of Defense, Undersecretary of Agriculture, and U.N. Ambassador. They used the filibuster to defeat nominees to the Fifth Circuit, the Sixth Circuit, and the Ninth Circuit. They filibustered Miguel Estrada's nomination a record seven times to keep him off the DC Circuit. Three-quarters of all votes for judicial nominee filibusters in American history have been cast by Democrats. The majority leader alone voted to filibuster Republican judicial nominees no less than 26 times.

That was then, this is now. Simply turning on a political dime and opposing today what Democrats used so aggressively just a few years ago would be bad enough. But this radical institutional change is being justified by patently false claims. The majority leader claims as proof of ''unprecedented obstruction'' that there have been 168 nominee filibusters in American history, half of them during the Obama administration.

It turns out, Mr. President, that the majority leader is not even counting filibusters at all. He is counting cloture motions, which are nothing but requests to end debate on a matter pending before the Senate. A filibuster occurs only when that request to end debate is denied, when an attempt to end debate fails. Only 52 cloture votes on executive or judicial nominations have ever failed in American history, and only 19 nominees on whom cloture was filed were not confirmed. Looking at the Obama administration, only 14 cloture votes on nominations have failed and only six nominees have so far not been confirmed.

During the Obama administration, a much lower percentage of cloture motions on nominations have resulted in cloture votes, a much higher percentage of those cloture votes have passed, and a much higher percentage of nominees on whom cloture was filed have been confirmed. By what I have called filibuster fraud, the majority ends up claiming that confirmed nominees were obstructed and that ending debate is a filibuster. The truth is the opposite of what the majority claimed as the justification for ending nominee filibusters.

I regret that the President and the majority here in the Senate deliberately set up this political confrontation. I have explained in detail before how the DC Circuit's current level of eight active and six senior judges is sufficient to handle its caseload, which has been declining for years, while other circuits need more judges. I likely could support the nominee before us today had she been nominated to a seat that needed to be filled on a court that needed more judges.

Using false claims to justify radically changing the confirmation process in order to stack a court with judges who will rubberstamp the President's political agenda is wrong in so many ways. I hope there is time to undo the damage.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Patricia Ann Millett, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) would have voted ''nay.''

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

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 247 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Baldwin	Feinstein	Manchin
Baucus	Franken	Markey
Begich	Gillibrand	McCaskill
Bennet	Hagan	Menendez
Blumenthal	Harkin	Merkley
Booker	Heinrich	Mikulski
Boxer	Heitkamp	Murkowski
Brown	Hirono	Murphy
Cantwell	Johnson (SD)	Murray
Cardin	Kaine	Nelson
Carper	King	Pryor
Casey	Klobuchar	Reed
Collins	Landrieu	Reid
Donnelly	Leahy	Rockefeller
Durbin	Levin	Sanders
Schatz	Tester	Warren
Schumer	Udall (CO)	Whitehouse
Shaheen	Udall (NM)	Wyden
Stabenow	Warner	

NAYS—38

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Burr	Heller	Rubio
Chambliss	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Coburn	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johanns	Thune
Cornyn	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	McCain	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—6

Cochran	Cruz	Kirk
Coons	Johnson (WI)	Vitter

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

NOMINATION OF MELVIN L. WATT TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on the Watt nomination.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) would have voted ''nay.''

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

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 248 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Baucus	Heinrich	Nelson
Begich	Heitkamp	Pryor
Bennet	Hirono	Reed
Blumenthal	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Booker	Kaine	Rockefeller
Boxer	King	Sanders
Brown	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cantwell	Landrieu	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Levin	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Donnelly	Markey	Udall (CO)
Durbin	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Feinstein	Menendez	Warner
Franken	Merkley	Warren
Gillibrand	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Hagan	Murphy	Wyden

NAYS—42

Alexander	Barrasso	Boozman
Ayotte	Blunt	Burr

Chambliss	Grassley	Paul
Coats	Hatch	Portman
Coburn	Heller	Risch
Cochran	Hoeven	Roberts
Collins	Inhofe	Rubio
Corker	Isakson	Scott
Cornyn	Johanns	Sessions
Crapo	Lee	Shelby
Enzi	McCain	Thune
Fischer	McConnell	Toomey
Flake	Moran	Vitter
Graham	Murkowski	Wicker

NOT VOTING—4

Coons	Johnson (WI)
Cruz	Kirk

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. I move to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on the Watt nomination.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necesarrily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) would have voted ''nay.''

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

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 249 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Baucus	Heinrich	Nelson
Begich	Heitkamp	Pryor
Bennet	Hirono	Reed
Blumenthal	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Booker	Kaine	Rockefeller
Boxer	King	Sanders
Brown	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cantwell	Landrieu	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Levin	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Donnelly	Markey	Udall (CO)
Durbin	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Feinstein	Menendez	Warner
Franken	Merkley	Warren
Gillibrand	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Hagan	Murphy	Wyden

NAYS—42

Alexander	Enzi	Moran
Ayotte	Fischer	Murkowski
Barrasso	Flake	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Chambliss	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoeven	Scott
Coburn	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Collins	Johanns	Thune
Corker	Lee	Toomey
Cornyn	McCain	Vitter
Crapo	McConnell	Wicker

NOT VOTING—4

Coons	Johnson (WI)
Cruz	Kirk

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, what is the question now before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question will be on the cloture vote upon reconsideration.

The Senate will be in order.

The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I make a point of order that nominations are fully debatable under the rules of the Senate unless three-fifths of Senators chosen and sworn have voted to bring debate to a close.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the precedent set by the Senate on November 21, 2013, cloture on nominations other than those to the Supreme Court of the United States is invoked by a majority vote.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I appeal the ruling of the Chair and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the Senate?

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) would have voted ''nay.''

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 250 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Baldwin	Hagan	Murray
Baucus	Harkin	Nelson
Begich	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reid
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rockefeller
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Sanders
Boxer	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Landrieu	Stabenow
Carper	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall (CO)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murphy	Wyden

NAYS—45

Alexander	Corker	Inhofe
Ayotte	Cornyn	Isakson
Barrasso	Crapo	Johanns
Blunt	Enzi	Lee
Boozman	Fischer	Levin
Burr	Flake	Manchin
Chambliss	Graham	McCain
Coats	Grassley	McConnell
Coburn	Hatch	Moran
Cochran	Heller	Murkowski
Collins	Hoeven	Paul
Portman	Rubio	Thune
Pryor	Scott	Toomey
Risch	Sessions	Vitter
Roberts	Shelby	Wicker

NOT VOTING—4

Coons	Johnson (WI)
Cruz	Kirk

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate sustains the decision of the Chair.

CLOTURE MOTION

Under the previous order, pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Melvin L. Watt, of North Carolina, to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency.

Harry Reid, Tim Johnson, Mark Begich, Patrick J. Leahy, Christopher A. Coons, Martin Heinrich, Patty Murray, Bernard Sanders, Jeanne Shaheen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Al Franken, Sherrod Brown, Tom Harkin, Jack Reed, Thomas R. Carper, Sheldon Whitehouse, Bill Nelson, Charles E. Schumer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Melvin L. Watt, of North Carolina, to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency for a term of 5 years, shall be brought to a close, upon reconsideration?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) would have voted ''nay.''

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 57, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 251 Ex.]

YEAS—57

Baldwin	Hagan	Murray
Baucus	Harkin	Nelson
Begich	Heinrich	Portman
Bennet	Heitkamp	Pryor
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Rockefeller
Brown	King	Sanders
Burr	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cantwell	Landrieu	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Levin	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall (CO)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murphy	Wyden

NAYS—40

Alexander	Chambliss	Corker
Ayotte	Coats	Cornyn
Barrasso	Coburn	Crapo
Blunt	Cochran	Enzi
Boozman	Collins	Fischer

Flake	Lee	Scott
Graham	McCain	Sessions
Grassley	McConnell	Shelby
Hatch	Moran	Thune
Heller	Murkowski	Toomey
Hoeven	Paul	Vitter
Inhofe	Risch	Wicker
Isakson	Roberts	
Johanns	Rubio	

NOT VOTING—3

Cruz	Johnson (WI)	Kirk

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). Upon reconsideration, the motion is agreed to.

NOMINATION OF MELVIN L. WATT TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of MELVIN L. WATT, of North Carolina, to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency for a term of 5 years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 15 of the 113th Congress, there will now be up to 8 hours of postcloture consideration of the nomination, equally divided and controlled in the usual form.

The Senator from Connecticut.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m., and that the time during the recess count postcloture on the Watt nomination with the time equally divided in the usual form.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, I rise today to discuss the nomination of Representative WATT to lead the Federal Housing Finance Agency, or FHFA. Unfortunately, I cannot support this nomination, and I must urge my colleagues not to support it either.

I did not come to this decision lightly, and I regret we are placed in a situation where we cannot support a well-liked Member of Congress. However, by making a political appointment, the President has ignored the importance that the head of the FHFA be independent and viewed as nonpolitical. This is not a cabinet position, where the nominee is supposed to be an advocate for the President. Instead, this is an independent agency with a highly complex task impacting our entire economy, and it is for this reason many Senators noted the need to avoid politics and to emphasize the technical expertise needed to fill this position.

Regrettably, this did not occur, and we stand here today with the majority party apparently willing to confirm a political figure to this highly technical position. Worse yet, they appear to be ready to do it in a highly political manner that ignores decades of Senate rules and precedents.

Representative WATT has led a long and distinguished career in the House of Representatives and in legal practice. He is well liked by his colleagues, regardless of whether they see eye to eye with him on the issues, and he has a tremendously compelling personal story. My opposition to this nomination has nothing to do with Representative WATT from a personal perspective. To the contrary, there are many positions in government to which Representative WATT could have been easily confirmed.

In demonstration of that point, it is worth noting that most of the President's nominees that have come through the Banking Committee have been confirmed with strong bipartisan votes, often with unanimous consent. In fact, four nominees who appeared at a nomination hearing with Representative WATT were all approved by voice vote.

However, this position is distinctly unique within our government. Thus, our evaluation of any nominee requires additional scrutiny. The Director of the FHFA is conservator of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which have operated under Federal control since they were taken over in 2008 because they didn't have enough capital to support expected losses.

Since that conservatorship began, we have seen the bill to the American taxpayers rise to nearly $200 billion. The Housing and Economic Recovery Act, or HERA, established the FHFA and the rules of the conservatorship. It specifically grants the FHFA the power to operate Fannie and Freddie ''with all the powers of the shareholders, the directors, and the officers,'' so long as they remain in conservatorship.

FHFA's conservatorship of Fannie and Freddie triggered those broad powers and the Director of the FHFA now stands alone as the regulator, the top executive, and the shareholder of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and their combined $5 trillion of portfolio. Because of this immense power vested in the Director of the FHFA, it is a position that requires an in-depth knowledge of and experience with numerous aspects of the housing markets and mortgage industries.

The statute explicitly requires that, at a minimum, any nominee:

> . . . have a demonstrated understanding of financial management or oversight, and have a demonstrated understanding of capital markets, including the mortgage securities markets and housing finance.

Additionally, to be successful, it is logical that any nominee should also have knowledge of and experience with investment portfolios, the operations of both public and private insurance and guarantees, and the management skills necessary to oversee the nearly 12,000 employees employed by both entities.

Since this position has virtually unchecked power to control two multitrillion dollar companies, and because the companies control so much of our mortgage-backed securities market, the decisions of the FHFA Director will have tremendous impact on our housing market and, collaterally, on the global market.

If we are to give anyone this much power, we must know for certain that he has the experience to know how to make the right choices and, frankly, the political independence to make those choices, even if they are unpopular.

One reason this is so important is the impact on the taxpayer. Even a few basis points of losses could mean billions in the context of multitrillion dollar companies. That would be on top of the nearly $200 billion the taxpayers have already shouldered.

With those unique risks in mind, the FHFA has taken great strides during the conservatorship to shore up the business practices of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Underwriting standards have been tightened, portfolio holdings have been reduced, guarantee fees have been increased, and risk is being gradually transferred from the taxpayer to the private sector.

With these changes, the revenues of Fannie and Freddie have increased, their risks have decreased, and, for now, they have regained a certain amount of profitability. This current profitability creates its own set of challenges and questions. But one thing is certain: Any return to policies of the past, whether with social goals in mind or merely by mistake due to lack of technical experience, could expose the taxpayer to immense risk.

In addition to the risks associated with their current operations, the Director will also have a substantial impact on the prospects of the success of these reforms. While Congress and the White House will determine how to reform and strengthen our housing finance system, we need to be able to rely on the director of the FHFA for advice and guidance as we proceed. For this to work effectively, the FHFA Director will need to be seen as a technical expert who is not viewed as a political advocate for the President.

The Director of the FHFA must have the market experience to understand how any proposed changes would or would not work, how they would impact access to mortgages while protecting taxpayers from losses, and how they would affect our housing market and economy as a whole.

One example: There is a lot of interest in developing markets in a manner to ensure there is adequate private capital taking the first loss to protect the taxpayer, if there is to be some sort of government guarantee in the future. Some proposals call for the development of various private-sector risk-sharing mechanisms, including senior subordinated deal structures, credit-linked structures, and regulated bond guarantors.

Many are looking at what the FHFA has already begun working toward as a test for the viability of capital markets' risk-sharing transactions. These risk transfer deals—known within

Freddie as the STACR deal, and within Fannie as the NMI and C-Deals—are important examples of how private capital can partake in this market at a higher level. They are also critical examples of why the FHFA Director must have a deep and sound understanding of the demands of capital market investors.

In constructing and monitoring these deals, we need to know that decisions in how to balance the necessity of encouraging private markets with the protection of the taxpayers are being made based upon effective market analysis, absent the political preferences of one individual.

Another important aspect of the transition will be development of the common securitization platform. FHFA has noted that the GSEs' infrastructures are ineffective when it comes to adapting to market changes, issuing securities that attract private capital, aggregating data or lowering barriers to market entry. As such, there must be an updating and continued maintenance of the enterprises' securitization infrastructure.

This is an incredibly complex undertaking that will take years to develop, but it is an essential component of most reform proposals. Because of this, it is incredibly important the Director, on day one, has the technical expertise and the commitment to establish this potential utility similar to ones used in securities markets.

All of us are currently witnessing the consequences of political people leading technical platform development as we watch the continued failures of the rollout for ObamaCare. We cannot afford the same mistakes in the context of our $5 trillion mortgage market.

The management of the current assets of Fannie and Freddie is another essential component of the Director's task, for many reasons, both currently and in the future. When Congress passed HERA authorizing the FHFA Director to appoint the agency conservator of the GSEs, it authorized FHFA to put the GSEs in a ''sound and solvent condition,'' and to ''preserve and conserve the assets of the properties'' of the GSEs.

Congress very specifically intended that the assets of Fannie and Freddie be managed in such a way to maximize payments to the Treasury in exchange for bailing out the GSEs in 2008 and to maximize their value in whatever system is designed for the future. Acting Director DeMarco has done a commendable job fulfilling this task.

However, some believe that other statutory provisions trump this mandate and advocate using the GSEs in manners they believe would achieve other policy goals. Representative WATT noted at his confirmation that, if confirmed, he would decide whether there is sufficient capital to fund various social programs.

In order to ensure the taxpayers are made whole and to best position the secondary market for reform, we cannot afford the FHFA Director to make any decisions that do not first prioritize the preservation and conservation of taxpayer assets. So long as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are in conservatorship, profits accumulated by the GSEs should not be used to fund social programs.

Additionally, we cannot return to any of the policies that contributed to the housing crisis, such as further pressing the GSEs' affordable housing goals. Decisions affecting social housing policy should be made through congressional action on housing financing reform.

One final yet incredibly important element of the unique qualifications is regulatory interaction. In a new housing finance system, the already complex web of regulatory interaction between various Federal banking regulators and Federal and State regulators becomes further muddled. State insurance regulators and State banking supervisors must communicate effectively with Federal counterparts.

As this system is being built, the FHFA must coordinate effectively with prudential banking regulators and the CFPB to make sure we are not bogging down our economy with duplicative regulation. To accomplish this the Director needs not only to have an understanding that is built of highly technical expertise, but this person must be seen by other regulators as acting without political intent.

For all of these reasons, and many more, the conservator must be an apolitical financial regulator with the technical expertise who will resist political pressure from all sides of the political spectrum.

Joseph Smith, the last nominee for this position, failed to win confirmation by the Senate because of concerns over whether he was independent enough. At the time of Representative WATT's nomination, the White House was fully aware that these concerns have only been heightened since then.

In the wake of repeated attempts by outside political groups and individuals to influence the decisions of the conservator and in view of the countless complex decisions—of which I have only mentioned a few—numerous Senators repeatedly called for a technocrat rather than a political figure. However, rather than acknowledging the unique aspects of this job, the White House chose to ignore calls to emphasize technical expertise and political independence in their search. As a result, their nominee failed to be confirmed by this body just a few weeks ago. Yet again the White House failed to accept the advice of the Senate.

Today, because of a historical rewrite of Senate rules, we are now facing another vote. Instead, this time the White House and the Democrats in the Senate chose to break the rules of this body so that they could push through Representative WATT and other nominees in partisan votes. I am disappointed with the White House and those in the Senate who supported this rewrite of our rules, and at some time we will all likely be disappointed that these are the rules of this body moving forward. However, I continue to be opposed to this nomination and urge my colleagues to vote no today when the vote comes before us.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:31 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF MELVIN L. WATT TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY—Continued

Mr. REID. On the matter now before the Senate, how much of the time that remains is controlled by the Democrats?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 147 minutes.

Mr. REID. That is a little over 2 hours. How much time for the Republicans? The same?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 130 minutes for the Republicans.

Mr. REID. Oh, I see. Why don't we yield back 130 minutes of our time. That would leave us 14 minutes or something like that?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Seventeen minutes.

Mr. REID. That is far too much time. I yield back another 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader's time is now set to 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, 4 years ago Members of both parties came to this Senate floor virtually every day to discuss the problems with America's health care system and offered suggestions for how we could remedy that.

I distinctly remember being here on Christmas Eve, 2009, at 7 in the morning and witnessing a party-line vote on ObamaCare. All of our Democratic friends voted for it, and all Republicans voted against it. I guess the most charitable thing I can say is that our Democratic friends actually thought it would work while Republicans were skeptics about this big government takeover of one-sixth of our national economy.

Well, 4 years later the cost of ObamaCare has become abundantly clear. I don't think it is an exaggeration to say that ObamaCare is the biggest case of consumer fraud ever perpetrated in this country. A law that

was supposed to expand coverage to those without it has instead caused millions of people with coverage to lose their coverage. A law that was supposed to improve patient access has instead resulted in smaller provider networks where people are restricted in terms of the doctors and hospitals they can see, making it much more likely that people will not be able to keep their doctors, should they want them. A law that was supposed to bend the cost curve down has instead caused individual and family premiums to skyrocket.

We have heard story after story that even if the premiums are lower, people, due to copays and deductibles, are finding themselves with thousands and thousands of dollars of deductibles they didn't previously have, meaning it is more money out of their pocket before the insurance actually kicks in.

We were told this was supposed to make Medicaid the safety net program for the most economically disadvantaged among us.

We were told that Medicare for seniors was supposed to make them stronger. Instead it has made them weaker.

A law that was supposed to help our economy has instead hurt our economy by discouraging full-time job creation, because if you have a full-time job your employer has to pay for the full ObamaCare pricetag. Due to ObamaCare businesses have been moving people from full-time work to part-time work.

A number of labor organization leaders went to the White House a few months ago and called the implementation of ObamaCare a nightmare. They said it made full-time work part-time work. It is worse than that.

ObamaCare has hampered medical innovation by taxing the very people who build medical devices here in America and is causing them to move those businesses offshore or simply cut down their hiring. It has placed costly new burdens on small businesses, the entities which produce as much as 70 percent of the new jobs in America. It is not the Fortune 500 companies that create the vast majority of jobs in America, it is the small mom-and-pop operations, the entrepreneurs who create those jobs, and that is who ObamaCare hits the hardest.

It is no wonder our economy continues to struggle. It is no wonder the labor participation rate—the number of people who are actually in the workforce—is at a 35-year low. People have given up looking for work, and that is an American tragedy.

As I stand here today, the broken promises of ObamaCare are causing enormous distress and financial hardship for people all across my State of Texas and all across America. It is undeniable that millions of Americans have lost their insurance because of ObamaCare despite President Obama's almost daily recitation that if you like what you have, you can keep it. He was making that promise as late as 2012, and we knew it wasn't true. We knew it was not true—and he knew it wasn't true—as early as 2010 when we debated some restrictive grandfather regulations from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Senator ENZI, who was the ranking member of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, tried to get it fixed, and again we saw a party-line vote. All of our Democratic friends said, no, let's not provide flexibility for the grandfather provisions. Let's maintain the rigid grandfather provisions which have now resulted in more than 5 million people getting notices telling them that even though they like the policies they have, they can no longer keep them. That is why I have said this is one of the biggest cases of consumer fraud ever perpetrated in the United States by virtue of its scope and the audacity with which these promises were made time and time again, which are demonstrably not true. They are false.

We know ObamaCare is leading to a dramatic spike in insurance premiums for many people who buy their insurance in the individual market. My colleagues will recall that during and after the 2008 Presidential election, President Obama repeatedly told Americans his health care plan would reduce their health care premiums for a family of four by about $2,500. I don't know where he came up with that number, but it turned out to be just another broken promise.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, annual premiums for employer-based family health insurance increased by nearly $3,000 between 2009 and 2013. In other words, the President was $5,500 wrong. Rather than going down $2,500, they went up $3,000. For that matter, a recent study by the Manhattan Institute estimated that ObamaCare will drive up individual premiums by an average of 41 percent.

I don't know many hardworking American families who can afford a 41-percent increase in their health care costs as a result of a law promising that health care would be more affordable. The single biggest increase, according to this study, will be in the majority leader's home State of Nevada where individual premiums are projected to rise by an astounding 179 percent. The increases in New Mexico, Arkansas, and North Carolina are 142 percent—that would be New Mexico; 138 percent, that would be Arkansas; and 136 percent in North Carolina. What do each of these States have in common? They are represented by Senators who voted for this bill, perhaps believing what the President said would be true, but their constituents are having to pay the price.

Such premium increases are particularly burdensome for senior citizens and other folks on a fixed income. For example, recently in Copper Canyon, TX, one of my constituents wrote to me and said that because of ObamaCare, her monthly premiums were increasing by $200, which is only $27 less than her monthly Social Security income. In other words, it takes up almost the entire amount of her Social Security check for her to purchase this insurance. That is wrong.

In addition to premium hikes, many Americans entering the ObamaCare exchanges are facing higher deductibles. I mentioned that a moment ago. In a front-page story just yesterday in the Wall Street Journal, it was reported that many ObamaCare deductibles are so high that people with modest incomes may not be able to afford the portion of medical expenses that insurance doesn't cover. What is that all about? In fact, according to one study, the average deductible for the cheapest individual coverage on the Federal ObamaCare exchange is 42 percent higher than the average deductible for individual health insurance earlier this year, before most of ObamaCare kicked in—a 42-percent higher deductible. As we know, many of these deductibles we are hearing are in the $4,000 and $5,000 range for individuals and they are up to $10,000 or more for married couples. I don't know many households in Texas or across America that can absorb $10,000 in a deductible for their health insurance policy. Certainly that doesn't strike me as a success if the purpose is to cover health care costs and to prevent people from suffering economic hardship as a result. That strikes me as an epic failure. In other words, ObamaCare is making it significantly harder for many Americans to pay their bills, to buy groceries, and take care of their families.

Again, as I have said many times before, it didn't have to be this way. It didn't have to be this way. In 2009, polls demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of Americans who had health insurance liked what they had, and they were broadly satisfied with it. I assume that is why the President said: If you like what you have, you can keep it, because about 90 percent of the respondents said: We like what we have. So if you are the President trying to sell this so-called Affordable Care Act, you wouldn't want to scare that 90 percent of people into thinking they can't keep what they have even though they like it. So you misrepresent what you are selling. You tell people you can keep what you have and your premiums are going to go down and it is all going to be all right.

If we had focused on those people who either did not have coverage or who had inadequate coverage—obviously a smaller subset of Americans than the whole country—if we focused on them and dealt with their challenges in purchasing health insurance, we could have done much better. There were millions more who had low-quality Medicaid coverage that many doctors refused to accept because, in my State, Medicaid pays a doctor about 50 cents on the dollar compared to private insurance. Many doctors said: Look. I

want to see more Medicaid patients, but I simply can't afford to do it. I have to opt for higher paying private insurance patients. We know Medicare was facing a fast approaching bankruptcy date. What Congress could have done—what we should have done—is to enact sensible, narrowly drawn, targeted reforms, No. 1, aimed at improving the coverage options for each of these groups and strengthening and preserving Medicare and Medicaid. We needed to bring down the costs, not jack up the costs.

If we ask most people the biggest problem they have with their health insurance, they say it costs too much, and we have made it worse. It is worse, not better. To bring down the costs, we could have allowed people to buy health insurance across State lines. I know that doesn't sound like a panacea, but most States have captive insurance markets and many State legislatures, including the Texas legislature, have mandated coverage that many people simply don't want, but it adds to the cost of their health insurance. So I could have the choice to buy insurance across State lines if we enacted this reform. If I liked the insurance coverage of Wisconsin or Louisiana or somewhere else, and if that suited my needs, I could buy it there and we would have a true competitive market and people would compete based on quality and price, but we don't have that now.

What else could we have done? We could have expanded the use of tax-free health savings accounts paired with high deductible plans, such as the kind I talked to a number of my constituents in Austin, TX, about who are employed at Whole Foods. They cover roughly 80 percent of the out-of-pocket costs for health insurance through health savings accounts and high deductible insurance, and the employees—I think it is still the case; it was then—still vote on an annual basis for what kind of coverage they want. They vote for this type of coverage because they are satisfied with it and it gives them a sense of ownership, which is actually true, because the money put in a health savings account they get to keep and if they don't use it on their health care, then they get to save it, the same as with an IRA or something such as that. But it also changes the calculation. It makes people much smarter shoppers and it moves us further along to a system where people can shop for their health insurance and their health services as they do with everything else and it will bring down costs and it will improve quality of service as a result of competition for that business.

We could have cracked down on frivolous medical malpractice lawsuits which cause defensive medicine. Just think about it. If a doctor is worried about losing everything they have worked a lifetime to achieve in terms of assets and their medical practice, the last thing they want to do is be subjected to a lottery-type lawsuit. So the easiest thing for those doctors to do—I know they don't do it on purpose—is make the decision to provide a test or a treatment based not so much on a patient's clinical situation but based on their desire to not be sued and to not be second-guessed 2 years later when somebody comes in and says you should have done this or that. So the temptation is to do everything and to run up the cost of health care coverage.

These are just a few examples. But by lowering costs across the board, these reforms—which I talked about and which the President and his political party rejected—could have helped people who already had coverage and we could have helped those who previously could not have afforded coverage. Some people—if I have heard it one time, I have heard it a thousand times—said we need ObamaCare because people with preexisting conditions couldn't get coverage. That is a serious concern. But we already have in place high-risk pools in the States, and if we needed to help those States provide coverage to people with those high-risk health conditions, we could have done it a whole lot cheaper and a whole lot more efficiently than creating this huge monstrosity, this huge bureaucracy, this huge expense known as ObamaCare.

We could have increased funding to the high-risk pools that were already operating in about three dozen States. The irony is that the people in the high-risk pool in Texas got a letter that said their coverage has been canceled effective December 31—the very people ObamaCare was supposed to help—your coverage is canceled because ObamaCare kicks in January 1. But because people were worried about their ability to get on the exchanges due to the Web site problems, the Texas legislature and the Texas Department of Insurance decided to extend the coverage of the high-risk health insurance pools in Texas so people wouldn't fall through the cracks because of this train wreck of a rollout of ObamaCare.

How about Medicaid. We hear a lot of discussion about Medicaid. I have already mentioned that Medicaid only reimburses doctors about half what a private insurance policy would, so a lot of doctors simply can't afford to see a new Medicaid patient. In Texas, only one doctor out of three will see a new Medicaid patient for that reason. It is not because they don't want to; it is simply because they can't afford to do so. We could have made it a lot easier for States to bolster their Medicaid Program and deliver targeted policies that would allow them to manage Medicaid populations, for example; create a medical home, for example. But because of the redtape Washington refused to cut, Medicaid ends up in many instances being an appearance of coverage, but people can't find a doctor who will see them. What good is that? That is, to me, a sleight of hand and part of the reason I call this one of the biggest cases of consumer fraud in American history.

To help Medicare patients—who are, of course, our seniors—we could have increased private competition and patient choice by embracing the premium support model that was endorsed by 10 members of President Clinton's Medicare Commission back in 1999. That is not a partisan solution; it is one President Clinton's Medicare Commission embraced back in 1999.

The reforms I have just outlined would have given us a genuine national marketplace for individual health insurance. Unfortunately, our friends across the aisle and our President decided to take a different path with the Affordable Care Act or ObamaCare. Unfortunately, the folks who designed ObamaCare consciously chose to destroy the individual market and force millions of people to pay for Washington-mandated coverage they didn't need and they didn't want and at a price they can't afford. Rather than adopt measures to bring down the costs and coverage issues for a subset of the population, the roughly 10 percent who weren't among those 90 percent who said they like what they had, the President and his allies chose to wreck the existing health care system—to wreck it, to make it worse, not better.

As a result, they have made the cost problem worse. They have jeopardized physician access for millions of Americans who like their current health plans and wish to keep them. And, of course, now the administration is boasting that the Web site is mostly fixed. Indeed, by most objective reports, people are not experiencing the same sort of epic failure they did when they first tried to get into the Obama exchanges. But at this point the President and his allies have lost all credibility with regard to other aspects of ObamaCare, which I have mentioned. Fixing the Web site will not fix the underlying deficiencies of ObamaCare. These are not glitches. These were baked in the cake. These were designed. This is the way ObamaCare was created and was supposed to work, notwithstanding the fact that the American people had been sold a bill of goods to the contrary.

Indeed, the only way to solve America's biggest health care challenges is a do-over, to replace ObamaCare with the sort of patient-centered reforms I mentioned a few moments ago. ObamaCare may be a complete disaster, but it is not too late for us to work together to fix what is broken and to start over.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, with less than 2 weeks remaining before the deadline for people who need to sign up for health insurance that

starts for them to be insured on January 1, there is a significant amount of anger as well as anxiety across the country. The Web site where people are supposed to go to buy that insurance has been plagued with problems that everyone in the country seems to know about, and that has caused huge amounts of anxiety. I heard about it last week in Wyoming, I hear about it on Capitol Hill with staff members, and I hear it pretty much anywhere I go.

What people have been learning is that the problems with the Web site are actually just the tip of the iceberg. The Obama administration has been saying that it has been fixed, that the problems with this health care law are fine, that everything is good, that a majority of people are having good experiences. I remember listening to the President not long ago, sitting with Bill Clinton, saying: Easier to use than Amazon.

Well, that is not what the American people found. He also said: Cheaper than your cell phone bill. He said: You will be able to keep your doctor if you like them.

But the law continues to leave so many Americans struggling—struggling with higher costs, with greater confusion—and really with a lot less confidence in the administration. People all around the country are worrying about whether the administration even knows what it is doing.

So when I talk about the Web site being just the tip of the iceberg, people around the country are running into higher premiums, canceled coverage, finding out they cannot keep their doctor. They are running into fraud and identity theft issues and issues in terms of higher copays and out-of-pocket costs and deductibles.

People at home in Wyoming—and I went not just around communities in the State, traveling to a number of different communities, but I also went to my own medical office where I practiced as an orthopedic surgeon at Casper Orthopedics for 24 years—were telling me how worried they were about the higher costs they are seeing regarding paying for insurance for next year.

I got a letter from one man in Cody, WY. He talked about how the rates he has been quoted are going to go up from about $860 a month that he pays now for a family of four to $2,400 a month—$860 to $2,400 a month. He said: ''I'm not sure what planet they think I live on, but there is no way I can spend more than half of my monthly income on insurance.'' Well, I hear the same thing from people all around Wyoming. People are having this same sticker shock all over the country.

We know that more than 4.7 million Americans in 32 States are being told they cannot keep the insurance they had. When we take a look at the map, we know we do not have the numbers yet on certain States, including the State of Wisconsin. We do not have Illinois. We do not have Ohio. We do not have Texas. We do not have Virginia. So we really do not know how many people have lost their coverage. But we know that at least 4.7 million Americans were told they cannot keep the insurance they had in spite of what the President may have promised them. Now what they have to do is buy new Washington-approved health coverage that really may not be the right coverage for them and may likely cost more than they were paying before. Millions of Americans are going to be forced to use money that in the past was used to pay rent or put their children through school or to invest in their communities or in a business or to help make repairs to their homes—now that money is going to go to pay for higher premiums as well as the incredibly high deductibles people are seeing related to the health care law.

It is interesting, looking through the papers—this was yesterday's Wall Street Journal, Monday, December 9. Above the fold on the front page: ''Deductibles Fuel New Worries of Health-Law Sticker Shock.'' The article says:

> The average individual deductible for what is called a bronze plan on the exchange—the lowest-priced coverage—is $5,081 a year, according to a new report on insurance offerings in 34 of the 36 states that rely on the federally run online marketplace.

The Wall Street Journal reports:

> That is 42% higher than the average deductible of $3,589 for an individually purchased plan in 2013 before much of the federal law took effect.

So what people are seeing—and the Wall Street Journal reports above-the-fold on the first page—are higher deductibles by a lot.

It is not just the Wall Street Journal. In the New York Times yesterday, Robert Pear had an article: ''On Health Exchanges, Premiums May Be Low, But Other Costs Can Be High.'' It says:

> . . . as consumers dig into the details—

Dig into the details—something this body never did. Members of that part of the body who voted for this health care law never did dig into the details.

It says:

> . . . as consumers dig into the details, they are finding that the deductibles and other out-of-pocket costs are often much higher than what is typical in employer-sponsored health plans—the plans many of these people have had in the past.

So what we are seeing are not just the higher costs, not just the higher deductibles, the higher copays; there is also a lot of confusion about the health care Web site itself, and I think that is only going to get worse. Ten weeks after the Web site launched, there is still an awful lot that is broken, including the parts that actually get people the insurance they think they signed up for.

A number of my staff have applied, and they believe they have signed up for health insurance. They are not sure. They have not yet gotten confirmation. And I know Members on Capitol Hill who have staff signing up are experiencing the same thing.

Last month one of the officials from the Department of Health and Human Services testified in the House of Representatives that as much as 40 percent of this Web site's system still has not even been built yet. The Web site still has trouble transmitting information to the insurance companies once someone has chosen a plan.

The Web site was down again earlier today. It still has not figured out how to automatically pay the portion of premiums covered by any government subsidy.

There are still many, many security holes that can be exploited by con artists, by hackers. Certain branches of the government have been warning citizens to be cautious when going on the Web site because of the concerns about exploitation, people who are trying to use this in a fraudulent way.

And then you hear that the administration is bragging. It is really sad that almost 9 weeks after the Web site opened the administration is now bragging that it only has an error rate of 10 percent on one important step of the Web site. Madam President, 1 in 10 is their error rate. This is a President who said the Web site was going to be running like amazon.com. He said that 3 or 4 days before the Web site opened. Now, 9 weeks later, he is delighted that the error rate is still 1 out of 10. Does the President actually believe Amazon would accept a 10-percent error rate in their customers not being able to finish their purchases?

I believe all of these flaws and failures have led to a dramatic loss of confidence by the American people in their government. According to a new Gallup poll, 52 percent of Americans are in favor of scaling back the health care law or repealing it entirely. People continue to turn against the law for a number of reasons, and it is not just the Web site, it is the higher premiums, it is the canceled coverage, it is that they cannot keep their doctor, and it is fraud and identity theft, higher copays, higher deductibles, and confusion about what is going to go wrong next because so many things the President and his administration have said—have looked into the camera and told the American people would be one way—turned out to be something very different. There have been so many changing stories coming out of the White House.

The President said: If you like your health insurance, you can keep your health insurance, and then he actually said ''period,'' with a punctuation mark, that that was it; no ifs, ands, or buts—just the period. People now know all across the country—those who voted for him, those who did not—what they all know is that what the President said was not true.

The President said: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. Well, on Sunday one of the architects of ObamaCare went on FOX News and admitted also that was not true. This is Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel—the brother of

Rahm Emanuel, the former Chief of Staff of the White House—who is a medicine professor. What he said was, if you like your doctor and you want to keep your doctor, you can pay more for insurance that includes your doctor. There are a lot of places where you cannot even buy insurance that will cover that doctor. This is not at all what the President promised.

It is interesting, even in the Financial Times yesterday, ''Healthcare insurers cut costs by excluding top hospitals.'' So you cannot even go to the hospitals. There is a picture here of the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. ''Plan will not cover treatment at Houston cancer center.'' So we have somebody who has lost their insurance who has been going to that cancer center where their doctors are—they are losing their insurance on January 1, knowing they cannot keep their doctor, they cannot keep their hospital. We see children's hospitals around the country, people who are not going to be included in these exchanges. So children with leukemia, come January 1, are going to lose their doctor, lose their hospital. But that is what the President and that is what the Democrats in this body who voted for this health care law have given to the American people.

Just before Thanksgiving, the Obama administration announced it would have to delay a health insurance exchange that was supposed to let small businesses shop for insurance. I remember hearing speeches on this floor about small businesses being able to find affordable insurance. Well, it turns out, once again, the administration knew at least 6 weeks before that they were going to have to delay the program. Did they admit it to the American people? Did they tell the truth? No. They waited.

One broken promise after another, one statement after another that the administration knows is not true. So is it a surprise, then, that the President of the United States is viewed as untruthful by a majority of the people of this country? It is a terrible situation for anyone to put their country in.

Back when we first started talking about the health care law, Republicans offered ideas on how to give people what they really wanted, which was reform that lowered costs and improved access to care. That is what people were concerned about. So many of the complaints we have heard around the country have had to do with the cost of care.

So President Obama and Democrats in Congress refused to listen, ignored all of the warning signs, and used raw majority power to force this bad law on all of the American people. I remember the vote in this body, Christmas Eve morning, voting on a health care law. We watched it crammed through on party-line votes.

Now Democrats in the Senate have decided to make another power play and have broken the rules of the Senate just a couple of weeks ago to change the rules of the Senate. They took a drastic and unwarranted step so that they could have the power once again to force more bad ideas like the Obama health care law onto the American people.

They say we do not need the 60 votes now; all we need is a simple majority. Let's change the way the Senate has run for well over 100 years, because, once again, the Democrats say: We know better than the American people. We know better than you.

That is what the President said with his health care law. Now the American people are realizing what they knew all along. This is not what they wanted with health care reform. Regrettably it is what they are living with now, and they are seeing the higher premiums, the canceled coverage, losing their doctor, the fraud and identity theft, higher copays, and higher deductibles.

It is interesting; even today in the Washington Post, the front page above the fold said: ''Under health law, insurers limiting drug coverage.'' Costs may soar. It talks about many different ailments, including for those with HIV. That is a result of the health care law. If this health care law would not have passed, forced down the throats of the American people with the President telling one falsehood after another, deliberately designed to mislead the American people, you would never have seen a headline like this today.

If President Obama really wants to help the American people, he is going to sit down with the Republicans and talk about the real issues to reduce costs, to get rid of all of this confusion that he and the Democrats have caused and to restore people's confidence in America, as well as in him.

There is a better way. Republicans agree we need to reform America's health care system. We think that those reforms could have been done without the kind of harm caused by the President's health care law.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, once again I come to the floor to discuss the negative impacts ObamaCare is having on my constituents in South Dakota and to countless Americans across the Nation. Since this health care law was enacted in 2010, I have come to the floor on numerous occasions to discuss the number of promises the President made to the American people, promises that have been broken. My colleagues and I have highlighted the fact that the President's promise, ''if you like your health care plan, you can keep your health care plan—period,'' simply isn't true.

Reports indicate that more than 5 million Americans already have received cancellation notices from their insurance companies and much of the ObamaCare policy has not even been implemented yet. What is worse, the administration knew they would never live up to this promise. Instead of finding a permanent solution to the problem, they proposed a political solution.

Today I would like to highlight yet another broken promise made by the President that is resulting in sticker shock as many Americans purchase health insurance.

While campaigning for the Presidency, and in speeches leading up to the passage of ObamaCare, President Obama promised the American people that their premiums would decrease by up to $2,500 per family. Instead, many families are facing sticker shock. Since enactment of ObamaCare, health care premiums have actually increased by more than $2,500 per family—that according to the Kaiser Family Foundation annual survey. As a result, many American families are sitting around their kitchen table trying to figure out how they are going to shift their finances around to afford health care when they were promised their premiums were going to go down by $2,500 per family.

As the President has said, this law is more than just a Web site. We agree with that; this law is more than just a Web site. This law is a series of broken promises that are resulting in higher premiums, higher deductibles, and higher out-of-pocket costs for middle-class families, money the families could be using to help pay off student loans, save for a house, or start a business. Those are now going to be used to pay for government-approved health care.

Recent reports out this week by the New York Times and Wall Street Journal highlight the fact that deductibles and other costs under ObamaCare have surged. The Wall Street Journal reports that the average individual deductible for a bronze level plan on the exchanges is over $5,000 a year. This means a policyholder would need to pay over $5,000 in order for their insurer to start making payments.

One of my constituents recently informed me that her family's health insurance plan was cancelled and the new policy she was offered would double their deductible to $5,000 per individual. She and her husband have three children. In addition to a higher deductible, this family faces higher premiums, higher copayments, and a higher out-of-pocket maximum. She goes on to say, ''Please explain how this new coverage is considered 'affordable' under the Affordable Care Act?''

Another couple in my State of South Dakota informed me, in the form of an email, that their premiums were going up by $400 a month and the deductibles were going up by $1,400 on their policy.

Their question was, What is the Federal Government doing? The gentleman says I feel like the Federal Government just stole $5000 from me.

That is the frustration people across the country are feeling as a result of ObamaCare. The middle class is faced with higher costs, while their take-home pay and hours are being reduced.

As more and more Americans begin to formulate their family budget for 2014, they are going to learn that yet another promise by the President has been broken. Not only are they losing the plan they were promised they could keep, they are facing sticker shock over the increased cost of health care coverage. This flawed law will continue hitting middle-class Americans in their pocketbooks as the Nation's economy continues to struggle to regain its footing.

The flawed rollout of ObamaCare is no secret. We have all seen what were described as the countless glitches associated with the rollout. But to make matters worse, recent reports indicate that in October, one in four ObamaCare enrollees faced a glitch not many were aware of. This glitch, called an 834 error, has prevented insurers from receiving the proper information regarding people who believed they had successfully enrolled in a health care plan. In essence, 25 percent of the initial enrollees in ObamaCare, after persevering through the errors on a Web site that was not ready for prime time, may not have proper coverage come January 1 of 2014.

What is even more troubling is that the administration estimates that 10 percent of new enrollees will continue to face this problem. Here we are, 23 days before January 1, and those who worked through the headaches of healthcare.gov may or may not have coverage. Unfortunately, this administration continues to refuse to seriously address these problems.

Even though they have unilaterally delayed several portions of this law from taking effect and have previously failed to meet half of the requirements mandated by the law, the administration will not provide the same relief for the individual Americans as it has for big businesses.

This law is fundamentally broken and we need to start over. Rather than expand the government's role in providing health care, we need to enact policies that make the private insurance market more competitive to ensure that individuals and families have choices when it comes to their health care. Yet the unfortunate reality for middle-class families is that their premiums, their deductibles, their out-of-pocket costs under ObamaCare are not glitches, they are a harmful reality that is resulting in sticker shock for literally millions of Americans.

We can do better; we should do better. This is more than just a Web site. It is the substance of this law that was built upon a faulty foundation that is leading to canceled policies, higher premiums, higher deductibles, higher taxes, fewer jobs, and lower take-home pay for the American people. This is a direct shot at the heart of the American middle class.

The President last week got up and made a speech where he talked about income inequality. What he should have focused on is the best way to get rid of income inequality is to repeal this health care law because what is going to happen to middle-class families and middle-class Americans under this health care law is much higher costs, much lower take-home pay, many fewer jobs for them and for their children, and a lower standard of living and lower quality of life than they have enjoyed in the past. This will be the impact upon middle-class Americans as a result of this law.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana

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

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

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I come to the floor to discuss what I call the Washington exemption from ObamaCare. One of the few real victories the American people had in the ObamaCare debate was we actually got an amendment included in the Senate consideration of the bill that said much of Washington—all Members and all of our congressional staff—have to go to the ObamaCare exchanges for our health care, just like millions of other Americans. We had to get it there.

Unfortunately, I guess this was an example of what NANCY PELOSI said when she said we need to pass the bill in order to understand what is in it.

After the ObamaCare statute passed with that very clear and very specific provision in it, a lot of folks around here read it and said: Oh, you know what. How are we going to deal with this? A furious behind-the-scenes lobbying effort then began. It went on for months. It was to essentially get around that provision and the pain it would cause—the pain being subjecting Members of Congress and all of our staff to the same circumstance and experience as other Americans.

That ended with President Obama getting personally involved and the Obama administration issuing a special rule, and that rule is just an end run around the specific statutory provision. I think it is completely illegal for that reason, because it is in conflict with that statutory provision.

One of the key issues of that rule says—well, the statute says all official staff will go to the exchange, but we really don't mean that so we are going to leave it up to each individual Member to decide what staff are official and what staff will go to the exchange.

As a result, there is a huge loophole some Members are using to exempt much—in some cases even all—of their staff from going to the exchange.

As mandated clearly by the ObamaCare statute, we have to walk the walk of other Americans, and we have to share in that experience.

Sadly, according to press reports, the distinguished majority leader Mr. REID is one of those Members actively taking advantage of that loophole and exempting much of his staff. Because of that, I have written the majority leader today and asked him to answer some very important and straightforward questions about that situation.

In order to make my point, I will simply read the letter into the RECORD. It was sent to the distinguished majority leader in the last several hours.

Dear Majority Leader Reid.

It has been reported that you were the only Member of top Congressional leadership—House and Senate, Democrat and Republican—who has exempted some of your staff from having to procure their health insurance through the Obamacare Exchange as clearly required by the Obamacare statute.

Millions of Americans are losing the health care plans and doctors they wanted to keep and are facing dramatic premium increases, all as Washington enjoys a special exemption. Given this, I ask you to publicly and in writing answer the four important questions below regarding your office's exemptions. I will also be on the Senate floor to discuss this at approximately 4:15 pm today and invite you to join me there.

First, how did you designate each member of your staff, including your leadership staff, regarding their status as ''official'' (going to the Exchange) or ''not official'' (exempted from Exchange)? Did you delegate that designation to the Senate Disbursing Office, which would have the effect of exempting all of your leadership staff from going to the Exchange?

Second, if any of your staff is designated as ''not official'' (exempted from Exchange), are any of those staff members receiving official taxpayer-funded salaries, benefits, office space, office equipment, or any other taxpayer support?

Third, if any of your staff is designated as ''not official'' (exempted from Exchange), did any of these staff members assist you in drafting or passing Obamacare into law? If so, which staff members exactly?

Fourth, how are the above designations of yours consistent with the clear, unequivocal statement you made on September 12: ''Let's stop these really juvenile political games—the ones dealing with health care for Senators and House members and our staff. We are going to be part of exchanges, that's what the law says and we'll be part of that.''

I look forward to your clear, written responses to these important questions. I also look forward to having fair up-or-down votes on the Senate floor on my ''Show Your Exemptions'' and ''No Washington Exemptions'' proposals in the new year.

Sincerely, David Vitter.

This letter lays it out clearly. I think this is an important debate the American people care about. As I said in the letter, millions of Americans face real dislocation and pain under ObamaCare. They are losing—in millions upon millions of cases—the health care plan they wanted to keep and they were promised they could keep. They are

losing their ability to see the doctor they love and were promised they could continue to see. That number in Louisiana alone is 93,000 families.

They face skyrocketing premiums in many cases. Yet, as all of that goes on, Washington enjoys this Washington exemption from ObamaCare. Some Members of Congress, in particular—apparently, according to press reports, that includes the majority leader Mr. REID—are using this end run around the clear language of the ObamaCare law and exempting much of their staff.

I think it is incumbent upon the distinguished majority leader to come clean and answer these four very legitimate, very straightforward questions in an open, transparent, written, and straightforward way.

I am sorry he could not join me on the floor right now to discuss this matter. I welcome that conversation at any point in the near future, and I certainly look forward to his written responses to these questions. I think the American people deserve that, at a very minimum.

I also think they deserve—at a very minimum—what I have been fighting for months: Fair up-or-down votes on my Show Your Exemptions proposal and No Washington Exemptions from ObamaCare proposal. The first is real simple. It simply mandates that every Member disclose how they are handling their office. It is the same sort of question and goes to the same sort of information I am asking directly of Senator REID.

The No Washington Exemptions from ObamaCare ends the end run around—ends that special status, that special treatment for Congress and our official staff. It would also put them in the same category of having to go to the exchanges with no special treatment or subsidy. It would include the President, Vice President, White House staff, and political appointees.

Unfortunately, again, the majority leader has blocked all of my attempts to simply get a vote on these matters. I am not asking everyone to agree with me; it is a free country, but I think I deserve a vote. I think the American people deserve a debate and a vote, and so I will continue fighting for fair up-or-down votes on the Senate floor on both my disclosure proposal, Show Your Exemptions, and the ultimate fix, No Washington Exemptions from ObamaCare.

I will continue that work, and I look forward to the majority leader's response to this letter.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Senate has considered several well-qualified nominees this week. One of those is Congressman MEL WATT, the President's nominee to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency. Congressman WATT has the institutional knowledge, legislative experience, and vision to transform our housing market and ensure that the mortgage crisis doesn't happen again.

Congressman WATT has vast experience working with the housing market. He practiced law for 22 years prior to his congressional career, executing countless real estate transactions. Since being elected to serve in North Carolina's 12th District in 1993, Congressman WATT has fought tirelessly to restore integrity to our financial system.

He serves on the House Financial Services Committee, where he sponsored legislation that would eventually become part of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to ensure that mortgage applicants can, in fact, meet their mortgage obligations. What is more, he recognized that lenders were engaging in predatory practices when underwriting mortgage loans well before the foreclosure crisis.

Since 2004, he has advocated for legislation to combat predatory mortgage practices. He has also been working for 10 years toward reform of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. I share his goal, and I want the right person at the helm when Congress begins that process.

Before responsible reform can happen, we need to come to some consensus about what we want the secondary mortgage market to look like. Families should have access to traditional 30-year mortgages. And we don't want to cut off access to capital for multifamily housing, which provides affordable housing for millions of families. Congressman WATT's experience delving into these issues will be invaluable in his role as the new Director of FHFA.

The mortgage crisis that took our Nation's economy to the brink in 2008 is still hurting American homeowners and our economy. About 15 percent of all borrowers—more than 7 million Americans—are still under water on their mortgages and high rates of foreclosure continue to plague communities across the country. The housing market still has a long way to go.

There is more that FHFA can do to help the housing market recover—from working with State and local governments to maintain vacant foreclosed properties held by Fannie and Freddie, to targeted principal reduction to help families stay in their homes. I look forward to working with Congressman MEL WATT to address the challenges still facing the housing market.

Time and again, some of my colleagues threaten to block confirmation of nominees to further sometimes unrelated agendas. Sometimes it is simply because President Obama nominated these individuals. I hope that my colleagues will carefully consider the struggling homeowners in their respective States as they do this.

FHFA has gone without a Director for more than 4 years. This important agency needs a Director that will stand up for homeowners and work with Congress to reform Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

FHFA deserves to be fully staffed so it can serve the best interests of taxpayers and homeowners. I urge my colleagues to support Congressman WATT's confirmation and look forward to working with him as he becomes the new Director of the FHFA.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DONNELLY). The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of MELVIN L. WATT, of North Carolina, to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency for a term of 5 years?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second. There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

The result was announced—yeas 57, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 252 Ex.]

YEAS—57

Baldwin	Hagan	Murray
Baucus	Harkin	Nelson
Begich	Heinrich	Portman
Bennet	Heitkamp	Pryor
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Rockefeller
Brown	King	Sanders
Burr	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cantwell	Landrieu	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Levin	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall (CO)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murphy	Wyden

NAYS—41

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Murkowski
Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Chambliss	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoeven	Scott
Coburn	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Collins	Johanns	Thune
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Cornyn	Lee	Vitter
Crapo	McCain	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—2

Cruz	Kirk

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, that last vote took 30 minutes. We are not going to wait around for Senators to come. We are going to start cutting off votes—Democrats, Republicans, Independents, everybody. We cannot do this. We have a lot of work to do, so it is unfair to everyone who gets here on time. We are going to start cutting off the votes in 20 minutes. I advise the floor staff that in fact is the case. We are not to be waiting for people. It is wrong. It is unfair.

NOMINATION OF CORNELIA T. L. PILLARD TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on the Pillard nomination.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 253 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Hagan	Murray
Baucus	Harkin	Nelson
Begich	Heinrich	Pryor
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Rockefeller
Boxer	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Landrieu	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall (CO)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murphy	Wyden

NAYS—44

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Murkowski
Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heller	Roberts
Chambliss	Hoeven	Rubio
Coats	Inhofe	Scott
Coburn	Isakson	Sessions
Cochran	Johanns	Shelby
Collins	Johnson (WI)	Thune
Corker	Lee	Toomey
Cornyn	Manchin	Vitter
Crapo	McCain	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—2

Cruz	Kirk

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on the Pillard nomination.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

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

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 254 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Hagan	Murray
Baucus	Harkin	Nelson
Begich	Heinrich	Pryor
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Rockefeller
Boxer	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Landrieu	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall (CO)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murphy	Wyden

NAYS—44

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Murkowski
Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heller	Roberts
Chambliss	Hoeven	Rubio
Coats	Inhofe	Scott
Coburn	Isakson	Sessions
Cochran	Johanns	Shelby
Collins	Johnson (WI)	Thune
Corker	Lee	Toomey
Cornyn	Manchin	Vitter
Crapo	McCain	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—2

Cruz	Kirk

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today, for the second time in a month, we are debating whether to allow a confirmation vote on the nomination of Nina Pillard to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit. Yesterday, we were finally able to vote on the nomination of Patricia Millett after many months of being filibustered by Senate Republicans. I am glad we are making more progress today on another exceptional nominee.

The DC Circuit is often considered to be the second most important court in the Nation and should be operating at full strength. Today we will take a step towards making this court operate at full strength for the American people.

In late November, a bipartisan majority of Senators voted in favor of moving to an up-or-down vote on Nina Pillard's nomination, but we fell short by three votes. The same efforts to remove the Republican blockade of this President's nominees to fill vacancies on the DC Circuit that allowed the Senate to confirm Patricia Millett earlier this week will similarly allow the Senate to move forward on Nina Pillard's nomination so she can be confirmed and get to work for the American people.

Nina Pillard is an accomplished litigator whose work includes nine Supreme Court oral arguments, and briefs in more than 25 Supreme Court cases. She drafted the Federal Government's brief in United States v. Virginia, which after a 7–1 decision by the Supreme Court made history by opening the Virginia Military Institute's doors to female students and expanded educational opportunity for women across the country. Since then, hundreds of women have had the opportunity to attend VMI and go on to serve our country.

Ms. Pillard has not only stood for equal opportunities for women but for men as well. In Nevada v. Hibbs, Ms. Pillard successfully represented a male employee of the State of Nevada who was fired when he tried to take unpaid leave under the Family Medical Leave Act to care for his sick wife. In a 6–3 opinion authored by then-Chief Justice William Rehnquist, the Supreme Court ruled for her client, recognizing that the law protects both men and women in their caregiving roles within the family.

She has also worked at the Department of Justice as the Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Office of Legal Counsel, an office that advises on the most complex constitutional issues facing the executive branch. And prior to that, Ms. Pillard litigated numerous civil rights cases as an assistant counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund. At Georgetown Law, Ms. Pillard teaches advanced courses on constitutional law and civil procedure, and co-directs the law school's Supreme Court Institute.

She has earned the American Bar Association's highest possible ranking—Unanimously Well Qualified—to serve as a Federal appellate judge on the DC Circuit. She also has significant bipartisan support. Viet Dinh, the former Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Policy under President George W. Bush, has written that ''Based on our long and varied professional experience together, I know that Professor Pillard is exceptionally bright, a patient and unbiased listener, and a lawyer of great judgment and unquestioned integrity . . . Nina has always been fair, reasonable, and sensible in her judgments . . . She is a fair-minded thinker with enormous respect for the law and for the limited, and essential, role of the federal appellate judge—qualities that make her well prepared to take on the work of a DC Federal Judge.''

Former FBI Director and Chief Judge of the Western District of Texas William Sessions has written that her ''rare combination of experience, both defending and advising government officials, and representing individuals seeking to vindicate their rights, would be especially valuable in informing her responsibilities as a judge.''

Nina Pillard has also received letters of support from 30 former members of the U.S. Armed Forces, including 8 retired generals; 25 former Federal prosecutors and other law enforcement officials; 40 Supreme Court practitioners, including Laurence Tribe and Carter Phillips, among many others.

Despite having filled nearly half of law school classrooms for the last 20 years, women are grossly underrepresented on our Federal courts. We

need women on the Federal bench. A vote to end this filibuster is a vote to break yet another barrier and move in the historic direction of having our Federal appellate courts more accurately reflect the gender balance of the country.

I commend President Obama on his nominations of highly qualified women such as Nina Pillard, Patricia Millett, Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor. In each of these women, the Senate has had the opportunity to vote to confirm women practicing at the pinnacle of the legal profession. Once the Senate confirmed Justice Kagan, the highest court in the land had more women than ever before serving on its bench. With the confirmation and appointment of Nina Pillard, the same will be true for what many consider to be the second highest court in the land, the DC Circuit, because she will be the fifth active female judge on the court. Never before have five women jurists actively served on that court at one time. I look forward to that moment and to further increasing the diversity of our federal bench.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of ending the filibuster on this outstanding nominee. This Nation would be better off for Nina Pillard serving as a judge on the DC Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to invoke cloture on the Pillard nomination, upon reconsideration.

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Cornelia T. L. Pillard, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Richard J. Durbin, John D. Rockefeller IV, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jon Tester, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mark R. Warner, Patty Murray, Mazie K. Hirono, Angus S. King, Jr., Barbara Boxer, Jeanne Shaheen, Robert Menendez, Bill Nelson, Debbie Stabenow, Richard Blumenthal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Cornelia T. L. Pillard, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit, shall be brought to a close, upon reconsideration?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 255 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Baldwin	Hagan	Murray
Baucus	Harkin	Nelson
Begich	Heinrich	Pryor
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Rockefeller
Boxer	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Landrieu	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Collins	Markey	Udall (CO)
Coons	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Franken	Murkowski	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murphy	

NAYS—42

Alexander	Fischer	McConnell
Ayotte	Flake	Moran
Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heller	Roberts
Chambliss	Hoeven	Rubio
Coats	Inhofe	Scott
Coburn	Isakson	Sessions
Cochran	Johanns	Shelby
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Thune
Cornyn	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	Manchin	Vitter
Enzi	McCain	Wicker

NOT VOTING—2

Cruz	Kirk

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Cornelia T. L. Pillard, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1797

Mr. REED. Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 1797, which was submitted earlier today; that the bill be read three times and passed; and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I want to reserve the right to object. I am certainly willing to let the good Senator make comments. But at this point I want to reserve the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HOEVEN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, first of all, I think it is appropriate to make some comments. I appreciate the Senator from North Dakota being here and making his point. But we are at a juncture that within 2 weeks 1.3 million Americans will lose their Federal unemployment compensation insurance.

It will be a shock to them economically and particularly since it will be just a few days after the Christmas holiday. My legislation is very simple. I am seeking to extend for an additional year the unemployment compensation program that has been in place for several years. That will allow 1.3 million Americans to have some support as they face a very difficult economy.

We have asked, as Democrats, that this UI proposal be part of the budget negotiation. Our colleagues in the House of Representatives have made the same request. It appears that will not be the case. So we have to seek a stand-alone legislative vehicle. That is why I proposed the legislation as I have done today.

What we were trying to do, with the request that was just objected to, and what we have to do within 2 weeks is pass this legislation—so the upcoming expiration does not allow us the time for the procedural process of committee deliberation and markup, et cetera. What we have to do is try to avoid a huge economic shock to 1.3 million Americans immediately. There will be more after that. But as of December 28, if you are on unemployment insurance, Federal unemployment insurance, you lose it.

In my State, that is 4,900 people celebrating New Year's Day by losing their Federal unemployment insurance benefits; for families who are struggling just to keep their heads above water in a very difficult economy—who have seen their jobs disappear, who after years of dedicated work find themselves now looking at very difficult circumstances for employment, in my home State particularly, but not my home State alone—this is a very difficult burden to bear.

So we have to act. That is why we are here this evening, to ask for immediate consideration of my legislation to extend unemployment insurance, not further review, but immediate consideration.

I think it is important to point out that the average weekly benefit is about $300 per week. This is not a program that people are using to enrich themselves by any means. This is basically keeping the heat on, keeping some food on the table, maybe keeping the rent paid. Also, this is a program that people only qualify for after working and establishing a work history.

So for all of these reasons, we are not talking about some lavish benefit that is a windfall to Americans. This is something that can keep families together. That is why I think we have to be willing, beginning this evening, to get this program extended through next year at least.

There is another aspect to this too. Unemployment insurance is one of the best countercyclical economic programs we have when it comes to Federal fiscal policy. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that

with the expiration of UI, if we do not act, it will cost our economy next year 200,000 jobs. It will cost us jobs if we do not act. It will slow economic growth by about .2 percent is their estimate.

So not only is this sensible, in fact the decent thing to do for millions of families, it is the smart thing to do for our economy. Because if we do not do it, we are literally seeing, under very rational estimates, 200,000 jobs disappear. What is the one thing everybody claims we need to do in this country right now? Put more people back to work.

This extension has been scored at about $26 billion for the year. Traditionally, we have treated unemployment insurance as an emergency expenditure. We have not offset it. That tradition has been abandoned recently and we have had to come up with offsets. But there are offsets. There are tax loopholes that should be closed. There are provisions that encourage companies to move jobs overseas that we can close and pay for this.

There are other provisions that would stop subsidizing significant multimillion dollar corporate benefits so American families can have a chance. These loopholes we have talked about—and many of my colleagues talked about—they should be closed anyway. But if it helps pay for unemployment insurance, that is not only good, that is something that would be a very positive step forward.

We need to extend these benefits not only for the individual families but for the overall economy. We have to start immediately. We are running out of time. We have just 2 weeks. Nothing is more important than getting people back to work. As I said, if we do not do this, we are going to see 200,000 jobs that are going to be forgone in the next year. So this is about jobs, as well as it is about keeping families together and keeping them able to provide for their basic needs.

It is progrowth. It is smart. I hope we can come together and do it. I hope again—I appreciate certainly the objection of the Senator from North Dakota. But I hope we can find a way to not object but to move forward together. The benefits cut across party lines. If you look at the States that are suffering the most—as we all know, the unemployment compensation program is a tiered program. It depends upon the level of unemployment in our States. But if you look at the States that are suffering the most, and unfortunately I am going to have to say Rhode Island is one of them. Nevada has the highest unemployment rate, 9.3. We are right behind them, 9.2 percent.

It has been 5 long years of unacceptable and elevated unemployment. It has come down from above 10 percent, but it is still much too high. But this is not a regional phenomenon. Illinois, 8.9 percent unemployment; Mississippi, 8.5 percent unemployment; Kentucky, 8.4 percent unemployment; North Carolina, 8 percent unemployment; Georgia, 8.1 percent unemployment; Arizona, 8.2 percent unemployment. These are tough numbers. It is not concentrated in one place; it is across this entire country. This is not a red issue or a blue issue. This is an American issue for workers who have worked and now cannot find jobs and need support. There is something else that is important to mention; that is, we have seen some progress on the jobs front. The last report showed we actually grew last month, 203,000 jobs. That is the good news. The bad news is despite this improvement, long-term unemployment remains high.

More than 4 million workers, 37 percent of those unemployed, were jobless for 27 weeks or longer in November. So what we are seeing is some short-term movement, but the longer term unemployment, the ones who qualify for the Federal benefits, they are still finding it virtually—very difficult, if not impossible, to find work.

That is exactly what this Federal program is designed to fix. Those long-term unemployed who are in an environment, in a State where the economy is not working as well as some other States. There are some States that are doing exceptionally well. I am glad for them. But there are more, as I said before, who are experiencing unacceptably high unemployment rates.

This program started to take shape in its most recent incarnation in June 2008, when President George W. Bush signed the program into law. When he did it, the unemployment rate was 5.6 percent and the average duration of unemployment was 17.1 weeks. So we are looking now at a situation that nationally and in many States is much higher than when we initiated this program back in 2008.

Now is not the time to stop, and in order to get this done, we have to move expeditiously. There is not time for elaborate hearings. There is not time for conferences with the House. The House is proposing to leave this Friday. We have to move immediately.

Today, our national unemployment rate is 7 percent. The duration of unemployment is 37.2 weeks. That is 7 percent compared to 5.6 and 37.2 weeks compared to 17.1 weeks. We still need this program to help the families of this Nation. We can't end it now. We have to move forward, particularly during this holiday season.

The reality—and finally to make this point—is that people will be looking at a new year coming with the knowledge that what little benefit they are getting as they search for work—an average of $300 a week—is gone. That is a tough reality, to look at your family on New Year's Day and understand that you don't have those resources.

So we have to act, and I hope we can.

With that, I yield the floor for my colleague and his comments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I objected earlier, and I want to express my appreciation to the good Senator from Rhode Island. I understand his concerns, but I want to take a minute just to explain the objection that we have.

I don't think there is anyone in this Chamber who is indifferent to the plight of the long-term unemployed. However, this legislation falls under the jurisdiction of the Senate Finance Committee and, as of yet, the committee has not had the opportunity to consider it.

There are a number of concerns that Members on our side of the aisle have with the legislation, most notably the price tag. According to the CBO, a full 1-year extension of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Program would cost $25 billion for a single year. That is the cost of this bill, and the bill contains no offsets to cover that cost.

So the Senate Finance Committee needs to have an opportunity to consider this legislation to find a way to pay for it. In addition, the committee needs to have an opportunity to consider alternatives. Rather than simply providing additional benefits to the unemployed, hopefully we can come up with something that really helps them get back to work. Republicans are willing to consider such ideas and need to have an opportunity to do so through the committee process.

It is on that basis that I object to my colleague's unanimous consent request.

I thank the Chair for the time and the courtesy of my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I certainly respect my colleague from North Dakota for stating his principled position. I think we can both agree on one thing: We have to start moving very quickly because this reality is moving very rapidly on 1.3 million Americans. I hope we can move forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I too hope we can resolve the issue my colleagues were just discussing. It is an important one for the country. We are very blessed in Louisiana to have a relatively low unemployment rate because our economy is doing so well, in large measure because of extraordinary new technologies, which I think the Chair understands as well in Indiana, where they used to discover oil and gas, and particularly natural gas in places and in ways we never thought possible. That is creating a real resurgence of manufacturing in our State, and that is benefiting not only us and our neighbors along the gulf coast, but it is benefiting States all over America.

The economic numbers, despite the great challenges we have here in the Congress on our budget, on paying down our debt, on reducing our annual deficit, on procedural measures and how to run the Senate and work more effectively on behalf of the people of all of our States, are really quite good in

North Dakota, in South Dakota, in Texas, Louisiana, and other States. They are experiencing really very low numbers of unemployment because the jobs are plentiful. Our challenge is, just to comment briefly, on training the workforce we are going to need to fill all the jobs we have. These are very good-paying jobs, some starting at $40,000 or $60,000 a year—construction, welders—going up to $125,000. Some are temporary, but many of them will be permanent.

So I hope we can resolve this unemployment issue, because, unfortunately, in Senator REED's State—the State of Rhode Island—and in 20 other States there is very high unemployment. In some States it might still be over 9 percent. They are chronically unemployed because of the competition of globalization and other factors. So I think we have to try to find a way to work together as a Nation. As I said, Louisiana is blessed to have relatively low unemployment, but we have a big job skills training gap we are working on in our State.

VETERANS AFFAIRS MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASE AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2013

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I want to actually talk a few minutes this evening about a very important bill the House just passed by an extraordinary vote of 346 to 1. My colleague, Congressman BOUSTANY in the House, was the lead sponsor, and I want to really congratulate him for his extraordinary work on this particular bill. It is something he and I have worked together on across party lines. He is a Republican and I am a Democrat, but we worked very closely together to get this entire bill passed not only for the benefit of Louisiana—which is shaded here on this chart as one of the States that would benefit—but we can see here how many other States between 2013 and 2017 will be affected positively by the passage of this bill.

The bill is the Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Lease Authorization Act. That is a mouthful, but it takes important action. It basically uses the guidance of the Office of Management and Budget—we received a letter from them at my request—and formulates a piece of legislation that will allow the Veterans Administration to build clinics the way they have been building clinics for our veterans—who really need the highest and best quality care—using a lease arrangement.

The reason we had to pass this bill—and I will be working with Senator VITTER and many others to ask unanimous consent at the proper time for this bill to pass through the Senate—is because about 6 years ago there was an administrative ruling that basically stopped the ability of the Veterans Affairs Department to be able to build these very needed veterans clinics by using a lease.

Internally, the administration just decided to score it differently. That threw lots of sand into the gears, and those gears have been stuck for 6 years. In our State, veterans in Lafayette and in Lake Charles have been waiting and waiting and waiting. We had some added complications, which the Veterans Administration has taken the blame for, in that the bid process that was used initially for one of our clinics was defective and they had to throw it out.

But the end of this sad story is that a great bill passed the House of Representatives, literally just a few hours ago, and I wanted to come to the floor to say how proud I am of Congressman BOUSTANY and his dogged pursuit of justice. The district of Congressman BOUSTANY is in the part of the State where these two clinics will be built, in Lafayette and Lake Charles, so I worked closely with him, as has Senator VITTER, to make sure we brought some clarity and focus to this issue in order to move forward. As the bill moved through to help us with our problem, it turns out it is also going to help many other States that are scheduled for veterans clinics.

I also want to thank Congressman MILLER of Florida, who is the chair of the VA committee. He worked very closely with Congressman BOUSTANY. Also I want to thank BERNIE SANDERS, our Senator from Vermont who chairs our committee here. Senator SANDERS—whose desk is right here, next to mine—has been very supportive of this effort. While I am not going to ask unanimous consent at this moment, he and I have had a discussion earlier today about how strongly he supports this effort and how much he wants to help us get this done.

There are 27 clinics in 22 States. This process—or nightmare, I should say—began in Louisiana about 6 years ago. Four years ago the ruling was made, but our legislation that was passed in the House will override that and basically set us on a course that is both fiscally responsible and so important to our veterans. We must honor the promises we made to them that we would provide clinics close enough so they could access them and so they are not driving hundreds of miles for regular care. We can be very smart in the way we design these leases so it will be a benefit to the taxpayer, a benefit to the veterans and it will really meet our obligation to them.

So again, the bill just passed the House, and tomorrow I will be asking unanimous consent, along with Senator VITTER, to move this bill, to get it to the President's desk and get it signed so that veterans who have been waiting—particularly in our State—for so long will have something extra special to celebrate this Christmas holiday.

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

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

COMMENDING SENATOR MURRAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, a couple years ago I surprised everyone—but I didn't surprise myself—when I selected PATTY MURRAY as chair of the supercommittee. At the time Patty was chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, she was a member of the Budget Committee, and I thought she would do a remarkably good job because I had such faith in her integrity, her temperament, her wisdom, and her ability to get things done.

The country should be so pleased with the work she was able to do on a bipartisan basis with PAUL RYAN. It is really a kind of unconventional pair working together to come up with a budget that we can work on for 2 years. We have numbers now. I am very pleased that budget negotiators MURRAY and RYAN have come up with an agreement today that will roll back the painful arbitrary cuts of sequester and prevent another costly government shutdown. I again commend Budget Committee chairman PATTY MURRAY for making this possible. But it is also fair—and I hope this doesn't get him in trouble in the House—to say that Chairman RYAN also worked hard. It was a compromise. We didn't get what we wanted, they didn't get what they wanted, but that is what legislation is all about—working together. ''Compromise'' is not a bad word.

We believed all along that Congress should set sound fiscal policy through the regular order of the budget process and not through hostage-taking or crisis-making. We will have a lot more to say about this in the days to come, but this is a good day for our country.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed now 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.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of International Human Rights Day. Sixty-five years ago, on December 10, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which serves as a foundation for human rights initiatives internationally, and is an enduring guide for human rights advocates around the globe.

On this annual celebration of International Human Rights Day we all

mourn with heavy hearts the loss of Nelson Mandela, a man who devoted his life to promoting human rights, freedom, and harmony.

Humanity has lost one of its greatest leaders with the passing of Madiba, or ''father,'' as he was lovingly called. My prayers go out to his family and all the people of South Africa. He was a personal hero of mine, and of those who work to uphold human rights around the world. He led his nation not only in overcoming the divisions of racism, but in reconciling and healing. Throughout his life Nelson Mandela never stopped fighting for the oppressed, speaking out for the voiceless, and given hope to the hopeless. One of the greatest leaders may have left this world but the lessons he taught us about human dignity, sacrifice, perseverance, and perhaps the most powerful lesson of all—forgiveness—will live on forever.

In 1964, Nelson Mandela was convicted of treason and sentenced to life in prison for his part in the fight for racial equality in apartheid South Africa. At his trial Mandela said:

> I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

Thankfully Mandela did not die during his years of imprisonment, and instead after enduring the unthinkable with grace and dignity, he emerged to lead a country to self determination, reconciliation, and forgiveness.

In 1990, when Nelson Mandela was finally released after 10,000 days of imprisonment, his spirit was stronger than ever. Ten thousand days in prison were not enough to break his spirit and his devotion to the freedom of all people. In his autobiography, Mandela wrote ''. . . to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.''

And that he did. His democratic ideals were unwavering. He led by example, living a relatively modest life, refusing to reside in the presidential mansion, and serving only one term as South Africa's first black President.

Mandela's influence on the continent, and indeed around the world, does not end with his passing. His story and moral courage has changed countless lives forever. As he once said, ''the true test of our devotion to freedom is just beginning.'' State and Federal lawmakers across the United States looked to Mandela as an inspiration when crafting laws that mandated divestment from South Africa's cruel Apartheid regime. I had the privilege of serving as speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates when we passed such legislation. Years later, our Nation is still striving to follow in Mandela's footsteps and fully realize his dream of peace and equality for all of mankind.

As President Obama said, Mandela ''took history in his hands, and bent the arc of the moral universe toward justice.'' And so on this International Human Rights Day, we pay tribute to the great Madiba, the father of a free and peaceful South Africa, a legendary African, and a shining example for future generations of change-makers who have inherited a better world because of his great deeds.

TRIBUTE TO MARY ELLEN MCCARTHY

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, when people think of government, some of the first words that may come to mind are politics and bureaucracy, two things that tend to stifle progress. Today, however, I have the great pleasure of honoring someone who has spent her many years on the Hill overcoming these barriers. She has implemented changes and fixed problems to improve the lives of veterans and their families in a very real way. Now, as she moves into retirement, she leaves behind an example to which we should all aspire.

Mary Ellen McCarthy has spent the last 7 years of her distinguished career serving as the lead investigator for the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the decade before that as staff director for two subcommittees of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. In that time, she has visited nearly every Department of Veterans Affairs regional office and reviewed thousands of benefits claims. She has not only identified gaps in services to veterans and their families, but also problems within VA. Most importantly, Mary Ellen never rested with the identification of a problem. Instead, she found solutions to meet the needs of veterans and their families and worked relentlessly to ensure they were put into place as quickly as possible.

Among her many achievements, Mary Ellen will be forever recognized for her extraordinary work in ensuring Vietnam era veterans and their families receive the benefits to which they are entitled. She has worked tirelessly to identify the many veterans whose exposure to dangerous toxins was previously overlooked. Her efforts have helped veterans with service on the inland waterways of Vietnam, along the DMZ in Korea, and on the perimeters of Air Force Bases in Thailand. Her work has led to vindication and assistance to those suffering from health problems related to Agent Orange exposure. Her efforts did not stop with the veterans themselves, however. She also brought attention to the children who are born with spina bifida, as a result of their parents' exposure to Agent Orange.

So much of Mary Ellen's work has focused on those most in need—elderly and low-income veterans and surviving family members. For example, one of Mary Ellen's investigations revealed the surviving spouses of veterans who had been receiving VA disability benefits were not receiving the payments to which they were entitled during the month of their spouse's passing. These payments not only help with funeral costs, but provide some time to make other financial arrangements. Her discovery of this oversight and subsequent actions resulted in approximately 200,000 surviving spouses receiving more than $124 million in benefits, allowing them to focus on moving forward after the death of a loved one.

Mary Ellen has also been heavily involved in working toward elimination of the claims backlog, a challenge that has plagued the Department for decades and caused far too many veterans unnecessary hardship. Before she came to Capitol Hill, she spent two decades working as a nurse and then a lawyer, helping low-income and elderly individuals obtain government benefits. This experience gave her a unique insight into the challenges of claims processing and she has been able to offer a number of solutions that may otherwise have been overlooked.

These are just a few examples of the very real contributions Mary Ellen has made to the veterans community throughout her career. To those who have had the pleasure of working with her, Mary Ellen has been an inspiration—working tirelessly to provide assistance to those who have served this great Nation—a true veterans' advocate.

As she enters into her much deserved retirement, she can rest easy knowing her efforts will continue benefiting veterans and their families for generations to come, which is, as she is known to say, not bad for an old lady.

Mary Ellen, thank you for your years of advocacy on behalf of our Nation's veterans. I wish you only the best in retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO SIMEON BOOKER

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Simeon Booker as he receives an honorary doctor of letters from Youngstown State University on December 15, 2013. Mr. Booker has devoted his life's work to chronicling the history of the civil rights movement in America.

As an African-American college student in the 1940s and 1950s, Mr. Booker experienced discrimination firsthand at what was then Youngstown College. Refusing to accept the indignities he found there, he transferred to Virginia Union University where he continued to champion the rights of Black students.

Early in his career, he was hired by his hometown newspaper, the Youngstown Vindicator, where he would write local columns focused on the city's African-American population and summaries for the local Black baseball leagues. He went on to work for the Cleveland Call and Post and was offered the esteemed Nieman Fellowship at Harvard University in the 1950s.

Mr. Booker became the first Black reporter for the Washington Post in

1952, and also wrote for Jet and Ebony magazines. Mr. Booker was witness to the rise of the great civil rights leaders of that time—Martin Luther King, Jr., the Kennedy brothers, Whitney Young, and many others. He wrote about Martin Luther King's nonviolent movement for civil rights, and covered the 1963 March on Washington.

Mr. Booker has received recognition from his peers, having been awarded both the Newspaper Guild Award and the Wilkie Award. As a journalist, he became the first African-American to win the National Press Club's Fourth Estate Award in 1982. He most recently authored ''Shocking the Conscience: A Reporter's account of the Civil Rights Movement,'' an account of a half-century of American history. Earlier this year, he was inducted into the National Association of Black Journalists Hall of Fame.

I would like to honor Simeon Booker for his lifetime contributions to our country in the fields of journalism and civil rights and congratulate him on his recognition at Youngstown State University.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING JOEL DEFEBAUGH

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Joel Defebaugh for his hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC Office. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Joel is a native of Casper, WY and a graduate of Natrona County High School. He is also a recent graduate of the University of Wyoming, where he earned a degree in political science. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Joel for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It was a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his next journey.•

RECOGNIZING ABBIE GOLDEN

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Abbie Golden for her hard work as an intern in the Senate Republican Policy Committee office. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office.

Abbie is a native of Little Rock, AR and a graduate of Episcopal High School. She is also a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where she earned a degree in political science. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Abbie for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It was a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her next journey.•

RECOGNIZING AMANDA JONES

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Amanda Jones for her hard work as an intern in my Riverton, WY office. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Amanda is a graduate of Lander Valley High School. She is from Riverton, WY and currently attends the University of Wyoming, where she is majoring in criminal justice. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Amanda for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It was a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her next journey.•

RECOGNIZING NATASHA JOHN

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Natasha John for her hard work as an intern in the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Natasha is a native of Oklahoma and a graduate of Concordia College. She is also a candidate for a masters of arts in global studies and international relations from the University of Central Oklahoma. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Natasha for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It was a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her next journey.•

RECOGNIZING AMY LEE

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Amy Lee for her hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC office. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Amy is a native of Cheyenne, WY. She is a recent graduate of Marquette University where she earned a bachelor of arts in political science. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Amy for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It was a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her next journey.•

RECOGNIZING RYAN LOJO

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Ryan Lojo for his hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC office. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Ryan is a native of Casper, WY and a graduate of Kelly Walsh High School. He is also a recent graduate of Gonzaga University, where he earned a degree in business administration-economics. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Ryan for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It was a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his next journey.•

RECOGNIZING MATTHEW SPENNY

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Matthew Spenny for his hard work as an intern in my Cheyenne, WY office. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Matthew lives in Laramie, WY and is a graduate of the University of Wyoming, where he earned a degree in communication and journalism. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Matthew for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It was a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his next journey.•

RECOGNIZING JENNIFER TRABING

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Jennifer Trabing for her hard work as an intern in my Cheyenne, WY office. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Jennifer is a native of Buffalo, WY where she graduated from Buffalo High School. She is also a graduate of the University of Wyoming where she earned a bachelor of arts in international studies. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Jennifer for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It was a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her next journey.●

AETNA HOSE HOOK & LADDER COMPANY

● Mr. COONS. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator TOM CARPER, Congressman JOHN CARNEY and myself, I rise today to recognize the Aetna Hose Hook & Ladder Company and its many volunteers and leadership who, on December 17, 2013, will celebrate the 125th anniversary of the company's founding in 1888.

For more than a century, Aetna has provided exemplary firefighting and lifesaving services for residents of Newark, DE. From its humble beginnings at the turn of the century, when the company consisted of a simple, hand-drawn hose cart, the Aetna Hose Hook & Ladder Company has grown to incorporate 5 stations, 17 trucks, and hundreds of members dedicated to ''service for others.''

Prior to 1888, residents were forced to combat fires on their own, until a fire in a woolen mill resulted in the loss of 800 jobs. The disaster prompted the town council to call for the creation of a town fire company. Founded on December 17, 1888 at a meeting of 30 town citizens, Aetna Hose Hook & Ladder Company's first leadership group included John A. Mullin as chairman, Isaac J. Moore as secretary, William H. Simpers as president, and Joseph T. Willis as foreman—the 19th century term for fire chief. Dues for active members began at $1, while contributing members paid $2 per year. The company was incorporated on December 13, 1889, with 57 charter members.

During its humble first years, Aetna's fire alarm system consisted of ringing Catholic Church, academy and college bells. In 1893, the company purchased its first hose carriage and in 1901, it received its first $250 appropriation from the town of Newark, prompting a celebratory parade.

The fire company soon became an integral part of the Newark community, hosting banquets, carnivals, and bingo nights to raise money for equipment and firefighting gear. Formed in 1949, the Aetna Ladies Auxiliary has provided unwavering support for the company's members, from fundraising to providing hot meals for firefighters and their guests.

Today, Aetna is proud to be home to more than 20 highly decorated firefighters, EMS, and EMT members. Recent citations include Heroic EMT of the Year to Jeff Evans, Eric Barsky, Paul Testa, Steve Walls, and Garland Church, and Lt. John P. Murphy; EMT of the Year to Rob ''Dusty'' Sweetman, Joshua Rainey, Michael Shao, Kevin Eichinger, Theodorica Cenizal, Ann Gillespie, Arman Fardanesh, Laurel Petchel, and Melanie Patnaude; and Lifetime Achievement in EMS Awards to Diane Silverman, E. David Bailey, and Gene Niland. Aetna is also the home to 12 EMS Top Responders, including 4-time winner Eric B. Barsky.

The Delaware congressional delegation is proud to recognize the Aetna Hose Hook & Ladder Company and its team of first responders for 125 years of honorable service to the community of Newark, DE.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:06 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3627. An act to require the Attorney General to report on State law penalties for certain child abusers, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 1238(b)(3) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2001 (22 U.S.C. 7002), amended by the division P of the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003 (22 U.S.C. 6901), the Minority Leader re-appoints the following members to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission: Ms. Carolyn Bartholomew of Washington, DC and Mr. Jeffery L. Fiedler of Great Falls, Virginia.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 3627. An act to require the Attorney General to report on State law penalties for certain child abusers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 1797. A bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

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–3742. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fenpropathrin; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9902–44) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 19, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3743. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Tebuconazole; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9392–1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 19, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3744. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Etofenprox; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9902–39) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3745. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Quinclorac; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9902–15) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3746. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Metaldehyde; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9399–8) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3747. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Importation of Fresh Beans, Shelled or in Pods, From Jordan Into the Continental United States'' ((RIN0579–AD69) (Docket No. APHIS–2012–0042)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 19, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3748. A communication from the Secretary of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Derivatives Clearing Organizations and International Standards'' (RIN3038–AE06) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 20, 2013; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3749. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, the quarterly exception Selected Acquisition Reports (SARs) as of September 30, 2013 (DCN OSS 2013–1801); to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3750. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Robert P. Lennox, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3751. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Darrell D. Jones, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3752. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Global Strategic Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Government of Panama requesting the U.S. Government to destroy eight U.S.-origin munitions remaining from testing by the United States on San Jose Island off the coast of Panama; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3753. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department of Defense commencing disaster relief operations in the Philippines; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3754. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Global Strategic Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report on Proposed Obligations for Cooperative Threat Reduction''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3755. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Fiscal Year 2012 Report on Department of Defense (DoD) Operation and Financial Support for Military Museums; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3756. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Burma that was declared in Executive Order 13047 of May 20, 1997; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3757. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the stabilization of Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3758. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Office of the Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands'' (RIN2501–AD51) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 21, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3759. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Suspension of Community Eligibility'' ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2013–0002)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 21, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3760. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Suspension of Community Eligibility'' ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2013–0002)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 21, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3761. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Housing Assistance Due to Structural Damage'' ((RIN1660–AA68) (Docket No. FEMA–2010–0035)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 19, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3762. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Information Sharing Among Federal Home Loan Banks'' (RIN2590–AA35) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3763. A communication from the Director of Legislative Affairs, Legal Office, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Deposit Insurance Regulations; Definition of Insured Deposit'' (RIN3064–AE00) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 20, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3764. A communication from the Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendments to the 2013 Mortgage Rules Under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (Regulation X) and the Truth in Lending Act (Regulation Z)'' ((RIN3170–AA37) (Docket No. CFPB–2013–0031)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 3, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3765. A communication from the Secretary of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Premerger Notification; Reporting and Waiting Period Requirements'' (RIN3084–AA91) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 25, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3766. A communication from the Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Homeownership Counseling Organizations Lists Interpretive View'' (RIN3170–AA37) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3767. A communication from the Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Ability-to-Repay and Qualified Mortgage Standards Under the Truth in Lending Act (Regulation Z)'' ((RIN3170–AA37) (Docket No. CFPB–2013–0002)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3768. A communication from the Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Truth in Lending Act (Regulation Z)'' (Docket No. CFPB–2013–0035) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3769. A communication from the Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Truth in Lending Act (Regulation M)'' (Docket No. CFPB–2013–0034) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

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. ALEXANDER:

S. 1785. A bill to modify the boundary of the Shiloh National Military Park located in the States of Tennessee and Mississippi, to establish Parker's Crossroads Battlefield as an affiliated area of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. KAINE):

S. 1786. A bill to encourage the placement of children in foster care with siblings; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ROCKEFELLER:

S. 1787. A bill to require a medical loss ratio of 85 percent for Medicaid managed care plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1788. A bill to make it a negotiating principle of the United States in negotiations for bilateral, plurilateral, or multilateral agreements to seek the inclusion of provisions that promote Internet-enabled commerce and digital trade; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 1789. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to establish signal quality and content requirements for the carriage of public, educational, and governmental channels, to preserve support of such channels, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. COONS:

S. 1790. A bill to modernize laws, and eliminate discrimination, with respect to people living with HIV/AIDS, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ROCKEFELLER:

S. 1791. A bill to provide for the treatment of certain hospitals under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 1792. A bill to close out expired, empty grant accounts; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 1793. A bill to encourage States to require the installation of residential carbon monoxide detectors in homes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. UDALL of Colorado:

S. 1794. A bill to designate certain Federal land in Chaffee County, Colorado, as a national monument and as wilderness; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. STABENOW:

S. 1795. A bill to establish a Federal tax credit approximation matching program for State new jobs training tax credits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 1796. A bill to increase the participation of women, girls, and underrepresented minorities in STEM fields, to encourage and support students from all economic backgrounds to pursue STEM career opportunities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. REED:

S. 1797. A bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes; read the first time.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. KING, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. BEGICH):

S. 1798. A bill to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not counted as full-time employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient

Protection and Affordable Care Act; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. Res. 314. A resolution commemorating and supporting the goals of World AIDS Day; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL):

S. Res. 315. A resolution to authorize the production of records by the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. Res. 316. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of American Diabetes Month; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 135

At the request of Mr. THUNE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 135, a bill to amend title X of the Public Health Service Act to prohibit family planning grants from being awarded to any entity that performs abortions, and for other purposes.

S. 226

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 226, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to provide leave because of the death of a son or daughter.

S. 236

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 236, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a Medicare payment option for patients and physicians or practitioners to freely contract, without penalty, for Medicare fee-for-service items and services, while allowing Medicare beneficiaries to use their Medicare benefits.

S. 367

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 367, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy caps.

S. 411

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) 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. 415

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 415, a bill to clarify the collateral requirement for certain loans under section 7(d) of the Small Business Act, to address assistance to out-of-State small business concerns, and for other purposes.

S. 577

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 577, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the distribution of additional residency positions, and for other purposes.

S. 917

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 917, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a reduced rate of excise tax on beer produced domestically by certain qualifying producers.

S. 948

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 948, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage and payment for complex rehabilitation technology items under the Medicare program.

S. 958

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 958, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce the tax on beer to its pre-1991 level, and for other purposes.

S. 973

At the request of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 973, a bill to improve the integrity and safety of interstate horseracing, and for other purposes.

S. 994

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 994, a bill to expand the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 to increase accountability and transparency in Federal spending, and for other purposes.

S. 1096

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1096, a bill to establish an Office of Rural Education Policy in the Department of Education.

S. 1123

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1123, a bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to curb waste, fraud, and abuse in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

S. 1158

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1158, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins commemorating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service, and for other purposes.

S. 1405

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1405, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for an extension of certain ambulance add-on payments under the Medicare program.

S. 1431

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1431, a bill to permanently extend the Internet Tax Freedom Act.

S. 1454

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1454, a bill to authorize the Small Business Administrator to establish a grant program to empower encore entrepreneurs.

S. 1487

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1487, a bill to limit the availability of tax credits and reductions in cost-sharing under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to individuals who receive health insurance coverage pursuant to the provisions of a Taft-Hartley plan.

S. 1507

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1507, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the treatment of general welfare benefits provided by Indian tribes.

S. 1666

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1666, a bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to improve the patient navigator program.

S. 1697

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1697, a bill to support early learning.

S. 1719

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1719, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the poison center national toll-free number, national media campaign, and grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 1779

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1779, a bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to exempt fire hydrants from the prohibition on the use of lead

pipes, fittings, fixtures, solder, and flux.

S. RES. 289

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 289, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that ambush marketing adversely affects the United States Olympic and Paralympic teams and should be discouraged.

S. RES. 299

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 299, a resolution congratulating the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee on the celebration of its 100th anniversary and commending its significant contribution to empower and revitalize developing communities around the world.

AMENDMENT NO. 2031

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2031 intended to be proposed to S. 1197, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2014 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2309

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2309 intended to be proposed to S. 1197, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2014 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2400

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2400 intended to be proposed to S. 1197, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2014 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

S. 1792. A bill to close out expired, empty grant accounts; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Grants Oversight and New Efficiency Act or the GONE Act. This legislation would require federal agencies to close out expired grant accounts with an empty balance.

''U.S. government spends $890,000 on nothing''—it sounds like a bad joke, but it is no laughing matter. The Washington Post recently reported, ''This year, the government will spend at least $890,000 on service fees for bank accounts that are empty. At last count, Uncle Sam has 13,712 such accounts with a balance of zero.''

According to an official government report, the Government Accountability Office, GA0, reported last year that the Payment Management System, the largest civilian payment system for grants managed by the Department of Health and Services, was charged $173,000 to maintain the Department of Health and Human Services' 28,000 expired grant accounts with a zero balance. Furthermore, the GAO estimates that if federal agencies were billed for the entire year, maintaining expired grant accounts with a zero balance for the entire year would cost $2 million in fees.

To tackle this problem, I am introducing the GONE Act, a bill with a commonsense goal: to increase accountability. My legislation would require the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency to submit a report to Congress and the agency head including a list of each expired, empty grant account held by the Federal Government, recommend which grant accounts should be immediately closed, and for those grant accounts that have been expired for more than 90 days, to explain why it has not been closed out. It would also require the agency head to close out the expired, empty grant accounts and to update the Council on whether the grant accounts were closed. Additionally, the bill would require the Council to submit a follow-up report to Congress and the committees of jurisdiction on the status of grant accounts identified for closure.

While the fees currently spent on expired grant accounts may seem like a drop in the bucket, it nonetheless proves there is plenty of fat to trim. At a time when our country faces serious fiscal challenges and a soaring $17 trillion national debt, these fiscal blunders are more than foolish—they are dangerously irresponsible. This example of government waste underscores the critical importance of proper congressional oversight of federal agencies and their funding.

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in supporting this simple, commonsense legislation to cut wasteful spending and help bring greater accountability to Washington.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 314—COMMEMORATING AND SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF WORLD AIDS DAY

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 314

Whereas an estimated 35,000,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS in 2013;

Whereas Target 6a of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals is to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015;

Whereas the 2001 United Nations Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS Global mobilized global attention and commitment to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and set out a series of national targets and global actions to reverse the epidemic;

Whereas the 2011 United Nations Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS provided an updated framework for intensified efforts to eliminate HIV and AIDS, including redoubling efforts to achieve by 2015 universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support, and to eliminate gender inequalities and gender-based abuse and violence and increase the capacity of women and adolescent girls to protect themselves from the risk of HIV infection;

Whereas the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was launched in 2002 and, as of November 2013, supported programs in more than 140 countries that provided antiretroviral therapy to 6,100,000 people living with HIV/AIDS and antiretrovirals to 2,100,000 pregnant women to prevent transmission of HIV/AIDS to their babies;

Whereas the United States is the largest donor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria;

Whereas, for every dollar contributed to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria by the United States, an additional $2 is leveraged from other donors;

Whereas the United States hosted the Global Fund's Fourth Voluntary Replenishment Conference on December 2-3, 2013;

Whereas the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), introduced by President George W. Bush in 2003, remains the largest commitment in history by any nation to combat a single disease;

Whereas, as of the end of September 2012, PEPFAR supported treatment for 5,100,000 people, up from 1,700,000 in 2008, and in 2012, PEPFAR supported provision of antiretroviral drugs to 750,000 pregnant women living with HIV to prevent the transmission of HIV from mother to baby during birth;

Whereas PEPFAR directly supported HIV testing and counseling for more than 46,500,000 people in fiscal year 2012;

Whereas considerable progress has been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS, with total new HIV infections estimated at 2,300,000 in 2012, a 33 percent reduction since 2001; new HIV infections among children reduced to 260,000 in 2012, a reduction of 52 percent since 2001; and AIDS-related deaths reduced to 1,600,000 in 2012, a 30 percent reduction since 2005;

Whereas increased access to anti-retroviral drugs is the major contributor to the reduction in deaths from HIV/AIDS, and HIV treatment reinforces prevention because it reduces, by up to 96 percent, the chance the virus can be spread;

Whereas the World Health Organization (WHO) has revised its guidelines for determining whether HIV positive individuals are eligible for treatment, thereby increasing the number of individuals eligible for treatment from about 15,000,000 to 28,000,000;

Whereas 9,700,000 people in low- and middle-income countries had access to antiretroviral therapy by the end of 2012, an increase of nearly 20 percent in a year;

Whereas an estimated 50 percent of those living with HIV do not know their status, according to a 2012 UNAIDS report;

Whereas sub-Saharan Africa remains the epicenter of the epidemic, accounting for 1,200,000 of the 1,600,000 deaths from HIV/AIDS;

Whereas stigma, gender inequality, and lack of respect for the rights of HIV positive individuals remain significant barriers to access to services for those most at risk of HIV infection;

Whereas President Barack Obama voiced commitment to realizing the promise of an AIDS-free generation and his belief that the goal was within reach in his February 2013 State of the Union address;

Whereas the international community is united in pursuit of achieving the goal of an AIDS-free generation by 2015;

Whereas international donor funding has held steady since 2008 and countries affected by the epidemic are increasingly taking responsibility for funding and sustaining programs in their countries, currently accounting for approximately 53 percent of global HIV/AIDS resources;

Whereas December 1 of each year is internationally recognized as World AIDS Day; and

Whereas, in 2013, World AIDS Day commemorations focused on: ''[g]etting to zero: zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination, zero AIDS-related deaths'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of World AIDS Day, including getting to zero through zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths;

(2) applauds the goals and approaches for achieving an AIDS-free generation set forth in the PEPFAR Blueprint: Creating an AIDS-free Generation, as well as the targets set by United Nations member states in the 2011 United Nations Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS;

(3) commends the dramatic progress in global AIDS programs supported through the efforts of PEPFAR, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and UNAIDS;

(4) urges, in order to ensure that an AIDS-free generation is within reach, rapid action towards—

(A) full implementation of the Global Plan Towards the Elimination of New HIV Infections Among Children by 2015 and Keeping Their Mothers Alive to build on progress made to date; and

(B) further expansion and scale-up of antiretroviral treatment programs, including efforts to reduce disparities and improve access for children to life-saving medications;

(5) calls for scaling up treatment to reach all individuals eligible for treatment under WHO guidelines;

(6) calls for greater focus on HIV/AIDS vulnerabilities of women and girls, including more directed efforts to ensure that they are connected to the information, care, and treatment they require;

(7) supports efforts to ensure inclusive access to programs and human rights protections for all those most at risk of HIV/AIDS and hardest to reach;

(8) encourages additional private-public partnerships to research and develop better and more affordable tools for the diagnosis, treatment, vaccination, and cure of HIV;

(9) supports continued leadership by the United States in bilateral, multilateral, and private sector efforts to fight HIV;

(10) encourages and supports greater degrees of ownership and shared responsibility by developing countries in order to ensure sustainability of their domestic responses; and

(11) encourages other members of the international community to sustain and scale up their support for and financial contributions to efforts around the world to combat HIV/AIDS.

SENATE RESOLUTION 315—TO AUTHORIZE THE PRODUCTION OF RECORDS BY THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. REID of Nevada (for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 315

Whereas, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs conducted a review of disability claims adjudications made in the Social Security Administration's Huntington, West Virginia Office of Disability Adjudication and Review;

Whereas, the Committee has received a request from a federal agency for access to records of the Committee's review;

Whereas, by the privileges of the Senate of the United States and Rule XI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate can, by administrative or judicial process, be taken from such control or possession but by permission of the Senate;

Whereas, when it appears that evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate is needed for the promotion of justice, the Senate will take such action as will promote the ends of justice consistent with the privileges of the Senate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, acting jointly, are authorized to provide to law enforcement officials, regulatory agencies, and other entities or individuals duly authorized by federal or state governments, records of the Committee's review of the disability claims adjudications made in the Social Security Administration's Huntington, West Virginia Office of Disability Adjudication and Review.

SENATE RESOLUTION 316—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 316

Whereas according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (referred to in this preamble as the ''CDC''), nearly 26,000,000 individuals in the United States have diabetes and an estimated 79,000,000 individuals aged 20 years or older in the United States have prediabetes;

Whereas diabetes is a serious chronic condition that affects individuals of every age, race, ethnicity, and income level;

Whereas the CDC reports that Hispanic, African, Asian, and Native Americans are disproportionately affected by diabetes and suffer from the disease at rates that are much higher than the general population of the United States;

Whereas according to the CDC, an individual aged 20 years or older is diagnosed with diabetes every 17 seconds;

Whereas approximately 5,205 individuals aged 20 years and older in the United States are diagnosed with diabetes each day;

Whereas the CDC estimates that approximately 1,900,000 individuals in the United States aged 20 years and older were newly diagnosed with diabetes in 2010;

Whereas a joint National Institutes of Health and CDC study found that each year between 2002 and 2005, approximately 15,600 youth were diagnosed with type 1 diabetes and approximately 3,600 youth were diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in the United States;

Whereas according to the CDC, the prevalence of diabetes in the United States increased by more than 300 percent between 1980 and 2010;

Whereas the CDC reports that more than 27 percent of individuals with diabetes in the United States have not been diagnosed with the disease;

Whereas more than 11 percent of adults and 26.9 percent of individuals age 65 and older in the United States have diabetes;

Whereas as many as 1 in 3 adults in the United States will have diabetes in 2050 if the present trend continues;

Whereas after accounting for the difference of the average age of each population, data surveying individuals age 20 years and older in the United States between 2007 and 2009 indicate that 7.1 percent of non-Hispanic whites, 12.6 percent of non-Hispanic blacks, 11.8 percent of Hispanics, and 8.4 percent of Asian Americans suffered from diagnosed diabetes;

Whereas after accounting for the difference of the average age of each population, data surveying Hispanic individuals age 20 years and older in the United States between 2007 and 2009 indicate that 7.6 percent of individuals of Cuban, Central American, and South American descent, 13.3 percent of individuals of Mexican descent, and 13.8 percent of individuals of Puerto Rican descent suffered from diagnosed diabetes;

Whereas according to the American Diabetes Association, the United States spent an estimated $245,000,000,000 on cases of diagnosed diabetes in 2012;

Whereas the American Diabetes Association reports that 20 percent of the money that the United States spent on health care in 2012 went towards caring for individuals with diabetes;

Whereas a Mathematica Policy Research study found that total expenditures for individuals with diabetes receiving benefits under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) in fiscal year 2005 comprised 32.7 percent of the budget for such program in such fiscal year;

Whereas according to the CDC, in 2007, diabetes was the seventh leading cause of death in the United States, contributing to the death of more than 230,000 individuals in the United States that year;

Whereas a cure for diabetes does not exist as of November 2013;

Whereas there are successful means to reduce the incidence of and delay the onset of type 2 diabetes;

Whereas with proper management and treatment, individuals with diabetes live healthy, productive lives; and

Whereas individuals in the United States celebrate American Diabetes Month in November: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of American Diabetes Month, including—

(A) encouraging individuals in the United States to fight diabetes through public awareness of prevention and treatment options; and

(B) enhancing diabetes education;

(2) recognizes the importance of early detection, awareness of the symptoms, and understanding the risk factors of diabetes, including—

(A) being over the age of 45;

(B) having a specific racial and ethnic background;

(C) being overweight;

(D) having a low level of physical activity;

(E) having high blood pressure; and

(F) having a family history of diabetes or a history of diabetes during pregnancy; and

(3) supports decreasing the prevalence of type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes in the United States through increased research, treatment, and prevention.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 10, 2013, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Housing Finance Reform: Fundamentals of Transferring Credit Risk in a Future Housing Finance System.''

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 10, 2013, at 2:30 p.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The Committee will conduct a hearing entitled ''Crafting a Successful Incentive Auction: Stakeholders' Perspectives.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 10, 2013, at 2:30 p.m., to hold a hearing entitled ''The Transition in Afghanistan.''

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 10, 2013, at 2:30 p.m.

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

EXTENDING THE AUTHORITY OF THE SUPREME COURT POLICE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to H.R. 2922.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2922) to extend the authority of the Supreme Court Police to protect court officials away from the Supreme Court grounds.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times and passed and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (H.R. 2922) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

MISSISSIPPI REALIGNMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2871, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2871) to amend title 28, United States Code, to modify the composition of the southern judicial district of Mississippi to improve judicial efficiency, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to the measure.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed; that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 2871) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, tonight the Senate passed by unanimous consent a clean extension of the authority the Supreme Court Police use to protect Supreme Court Justices, their employees, and guests when they leave the Supreme Court grounds. I have worked with my counterparts in the House for months to move this extension without amendments because that authority is set to expire at the end of this month. Last month, the House voted by an overwhelming majority of 399 to 3 to pass this bipartisan bill, which extends the Supreme Court Police's authority to protect Supreme Court Justices, their staff, and official guests off Supreme Court grounds through 2019. Congress has provided this authority since the 1980s, to ensure the continued safety of our Supreme Court Justices and their employees.

Threats to the safety of Supreme Court Justices are a threat to our democracy. In light of recent attacks of Justices off the grounds of the Supreme Court, it was all the more imperative that we pass this extension without delay. I look forward to President Obama signing this bill into law and thank the chairman and ranking member of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Courts, Representatives COBLE and WATT, as well as Representatives CONYERS, MARINO, and HOLDING for working with me to ensure enactment of this extension.

The Senate also passed by unanimous consent a bipartisan bill to reorganize Mississippi's Southern District from five divisions to four divisions, which was recommended by Chief Judge Louis Guirola of the Southern District of Mississippi. This realignment will allow the Southern District to absorb the counties formerly served by a now-closed courthouse in Meridian, and the District will be able to better serve the needs of litigants, jurors, the bar, and the general public.

This commonsense piece of legislation promotes efficiency and saves money in the Southern District of Mississippi. I thank Representatives COBLE and WATT for sponsoring this important improvement and look forward to its swift enaction.

I yield the floor.

AUTHORIZING DOCUMENT PRODUCTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to S. Res. 315.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 315) to authorize production of records by the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs has received a request from a Federal agency seeking access to records that the Committee obtained during its review of disability claims adjudications made in the Social Security Administration's Huntington, WV Office of Disability Adjudication and Review.

This resolution would authorize the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, acting jointly, to provide records, obtained by the Committee in the course of its review, in response to this request and requests from other government entities and officials with a legitimate need for the records.

I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid on the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 315) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 1797

Mr. REID. Mr. President, S. 1797, introduced earlier by Senator REED, I am told, is at the desk and due for a first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1797) to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. I now ask for a second reading but object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will receive its second reading on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2013

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 2 p.m. tomorrow, Wednesday, December 11; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of Calendar No. 233, the nomination of Cornelia T.L. Pillard to be U.S. circuit judge for the District of Columbia, postcloture; further, that time during adjournment count postcloture.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Upon the use or yielding back of postcloture time, the Senate will proceed to vote on the confirmation of the Pillard nomination. If all time is used, the vote will occur around 1 a.m. on Thursday morning, December 12. Senators will be notified when the vote is scheduled.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 2 P.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:20 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, December 11, 2013, at 2 p.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 10, 2013:

FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY

MELVIN L. WATT, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS.

THE JUDICIARY

PATRICIA ANN MILLETT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

KILAH DAVENPORT CHILD PROTECTION ACT OF 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 9, 2013

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a bill we are debating today, H.R. 3627, The Kilah Davenport Child Protection Act of 2013.

This commonsense bill will create an important study to examine the penalties that apply to child abusers across the country so that we can ensure we are doing everything possible to keep our children safe.

The motivation behind this significant legislation comes from one of my own constituents, Kilah Davenport. Kilah was abused when she was just three years old and suffers from severe mental and physical damage. I have had the pleasure of meeting young Kilah several times, and each time I'm moved by her strength and conviction. Not even old enough for kindergarten, Kilah is faced with an uphill battle of physical therapy and rehab. I will continue to pray that this innocent young girl makes a full recovery.

Mr. Speaker, child abuse and the safety of our children are not partisan issues. We must equip our states with the necessary tools to punish abusers to the fullest extent of the law. I am committed to ensuring that the federal government empowers the states to strengthen child abuse laws and ensure the safety of the most innocent in our society.

This bill guarantees that our states can address the serious problem of child abuse and makes certain that those who choose to harm a child are dealt with in a swift and severe manner. I support this bill, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

RECOGNIZING WORK ONE SOUTHEAST

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Work One Southeast to the success of the 6th District job fair.

On October 21, 2013, over 150 job seekers from across the district met with 36 businesses looking to hire new employees. In a time when jobs are still hard to come by these job fairs are an important tool in linking job seekers with perspective employers. I am proud we were able to bring community leaders together and provide this service to the people of the 6th District.

The job fair would not have been the success it was without the help of Work One Southeast. I want to recognize the work of both Jamie Geyer and Angela Black. Their efforts in planning and organizing the job fair show a deep commitment to their community and the economic health of Southeastern Indiana. We could not have done the job fair without them.

I ask the entire 6th Congressional District to join me in recognizing Work One Southeast. I look forward to working with them in the future as we strive to serve the people Southeastern Indiana.

HONORING BRAD ROBERTS

HON. CHRISTOPHER P. GIBSON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Brad Roberts, who recently passed away. Mr. Roberts' impressive career will surely be remembered by all. As the sponsor of H.R. 1465, the STORAGE Act, I am a strong proponent of energy storage and have had the opportunity to get to know this industry and the individuals who comprise it.

Brad Roberts was a leader in this industry, serving for decades as the volunteer Executive Director of the Electricity Storage Association, which advocates for technologies that make our electric grid more resilient, cleaner, more efficient, and less expensive. Mr. Roberts worked full-time as the Power Quality Systems Director for the Power Quality group of S&C Electric Company.

Growing up, Mr. Roberts was a graduate of Pensacola High School and a member of the Pensacola Fighting Tiger Band. During this time he had the opportunity to march in the Inaugural Parade for President John F. Kennedy. He then earned a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Florida and was registered as a professional engineer.

Mr. Roberts began his engineering work as a systems reliability engineer in the Apollo Lunar Module Program at Cape Kennedy, and amassed over 35 years of experience in the design and operation of critical power systems. These systems ranged from single phase UPS systems to medium-voltage applications. His career grew to include senior management positions and the publishing of several technical papers and journal articles. Throughout his life he held many leadership positions in various organizations. In addition to his roles at ESA and S&C, Mr. Roberts served as the Chairman of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Power Engineering Society's Emerging Technologies Committee. He was also a member of the US Department of Energy's Electricity Advisory Committee, and the University of Florida's College of Engineering Advisory Committee.

During his remarkable career, Mr. Roberts was honored with the 2004 John Mungenast International Power Quality Award, the 2009 Phil Symons Electricity Storage Award, and was also recognized as a Senior Life Member of IEEE.

In closing, I know Brad Roberts will surely be missed by those who knew him or knew of him. His passing is a loss to the industry. I send condolences to his family and loved-ones on behalf of my own family as well as the people of New York's 19th Congressional District.

KILAH DAVENPORT CHILD PROTECTION ACT OF 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 9, 2013

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, we all agree that child abuse is a horrific problem, and the abuse of Kilah Davenport is a tragedy. We must take appropriate steps to try to prevent such future tragedies.

Child abuse is a widespread problem. In 2011, approximately 681,000 children were victims of maltreatment, and approximately 3.3 million children received preventative services from Child Protective Services agencies in the United States. Furthermore, nearly five children die every day in America from abuse and neglect, and more than 78 percent of reported child fatalities as a result of abuse and neglect were caused by one or more of the child victim's parents.

In addition to harming children directly, child abuse contributes to future crime.

Children who experience child abuse and neglect are about 9 times more likely to become involved in criminal activity. We should therefore get serious about reducing child abuse by enacting the type of meaningful legislation proven to actually reduce child abuse—and save money in the process—like nurse family partnerships.

Nurse family partnerships are an evidence-based community health program that provide home visits from registered nurses to low-income, first-time moms from pregnancy until the child turns two years old. In medical and scientific journals, nurse family partnerships are most often cited as the most effective intervention to prevent child abuse and neglect.

The approach of H.R. 3627 is to allow sentences of up to 10 years for those convicted for the third time for domestic abuse which, with this bill, will include child abuse. But it only applies to those offenses committed in national parks, military bases, Indian country, and on other federal land.

So of all of the cases of child abuse committed nationally, this bill unfortunately reaches only a negligible portion of the cases—those committed on federal land by people with two prior offenses.

Moreover, I am concerned that by increasing the penalties for third offenses, this bill implies that federal judges don't know what to do

with a defendant convicted for a third time of these heinous offenses.

As I have described, child abuse is a serious problem, and in order to determine the appropriateness of expanding federal laws, we should have had a hearing on this issue, which we did not. We have received no evidence suggesting that federal judges impose such sentences on these third-time offenders that they keep getting out of prison and committing child abuse again.

The reason the bill before us today can only apply to federal lands is because we do not have jurisdiction over local crimes. The issue of child abuse is traditionally a matter for the states, and therefore this issue might have been best, first considered by the over-criminalization task force.

If our goal is to actually reduce the ravages of child abuse, we should not limit our efforts to the negligible number of prosecutable cases involving third offenses on federal lands.

I say prosecutable because most child abuse is not reported at all, and many chases that are reported are difficult to prosecute because family members may be unwilling to testify against one another. In fact, we have received no evidence that this bill would have even applied to the Kilah Davenport case, which does not appear to have occurred on federal land or have been committed by a third-time offender.

We need to focus federal efforts on supporting programs which will prevent these crimes from happening in the first place.

H.R. 3627 does, however, include a worthwhile provision that requires the Attorney General to issue a report outlining the child abuse laws in the 50 states. The states can then review their statutes to see how they compare to other states and decide if their state laws need to be amended.

I agree with the desire to do more to protect our children from such tragic victimization, and we should work together to reduce child abuse. However, I think there are better ways to do it.

HONORING TIM CARPENTER

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Mr. ELLISON of Minnesota and Mr. GRIJALVA of Arizona, the co-chairs of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, as well as Ms. LEE of California, Mr. MCGOVERN of Massachusetts and Mr. GRAYSON of Florida, I rise to acknowledge the many contributions of Mr. Tim Carpenter, and to send him wishes for healing as he fights against cancer. As the co-founder and director of the Progressive Democrats of America, Tim has helped to create a grassroots movement to bring the voice of the people to Washington.

For the past thirty years, Tim has been indefatigable in pressing forward progressive ideals to help strengthen our American democracy. He has been in the forefront of progressive causes, from promoting nuclear disarmament to fighting to abolish the death penalty to establishing health care as a human right, as well as securing voting rights and jobs for all.

Tim was a key organizer for the presidential campaigns of Rev. Jesse Jackson (1988), and Gov. Jerry Brown (1992), and he served as Deputy National Campaign Manager in the Kucinich for President campaign (2004). Tim was a national DNC delegate, and addressed the 1992 Democratic National Convention. Tim worked closely with Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr. during the 2004 Presidential election, in order to bring national attention to very serious problems with voting procedures in Ohio and other states. He helped strengthen and improve our democracy, by challenging elected officials in Congress and throughout the nation to protect the cherished right of our citizens to vote. Tim has received several awards including ''Democrat of the Year'' in Northampton, MA, Progressive Activist of the Year by the Nation magazine, as well as the Marilyn Clement award for his work on behalf of H.R. 676, the ''Expanded Improved Medicare for All.''

Tim's zeal to improve our system of government stems from his days as a student when he earned History and Political Science degrees from California State University Fullerton, as well as a Master's Degree in History. Early in his career, Tim took efforts to shape and guide our young men and women as a high school and community college U.S. History and Government teacher. For many years, Tim worked with California state senator Tom Hayden as a senior staff member. He was also an influential field organizer in the Orange County California Democratic Party.

Despite his ailments, Tim is still engaging, still pushing forward and still trying to raise awareness of the great challenges this country is facing.

In this trying time we lend our support to our friend, Tim, his wife Barbara Considine, and their daughters, Sheila and Julia. We ask that you all will join us in wishing Tim a full and quick recovery so that he can continue to do important work on behalf of our country.

RECOGNIZING SERGEANT MARY HERRERA, U.S. MARINE CORPS (RET.)

HON. ANN KIRKPATRICK

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Sergeant Mary Herrera, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.), a brave young woman and member of the Arizona National Guard from my congressional district whose personal story of valor on the battlefield is truly inspirational. Her courage under enemy attack on November 8, 2003 on a routine mission in Iraq as part of the 855th Military Police Academy won her a Purple Heart.

I am proud of Sgt. Herrera, who represents the best and brightest in not only my district and state of Arizona, which is home to over a half million veterans, but also in our nation.

Thanks to her story and example, the state of Arizona passed a bill that authorized tuition waiver scholarships to National Guardsmen and women who received a Purple Heart or were medically discharged due to injuries while serving in the military after 9/11. The bill is known as the Mary Herrera bill. Now, Sgt. Herrera is a Field Representative of the West for the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes.

The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-partisan organization, established in 2004 to provide severely wounded veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and their families with emergency financial assistance and other support services to help them recover from their injuries and rebuild their lives. All funds needed to develop and manage programs that advance its mission come from contributions to CSAH by individual citizens, corporate donors and foundations.

According to Major General David Rataczak of the Arizona National Guard, Herrera is ''the bravest person he has ever met.'' He refers to Sgt. Herrera as a true example of a modern citizen-soldier who, despite being small in stature, is motivated, loyal, physically and mentally capable, disciplined and proficient, courageous and always a professional.

Sgt. Herrera, who represents the changing demographic within U.S. armed forces, is dedicated to improving the lives of young veterans who are returning home from war. Last month, she represented our state in a high-level event hosted by CSAH in Washington, D.C., for members of Congress, staff and concerned citizens. The event focused on the serious challenge of homelessness facing young veterans, which is becoming a burgeoning crisis among female combat veterans.

Under the leadership of President and CEO David Walker, the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes helps severely wounded veterans and families of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom in the state of Arizona and across the country to recover from their injuries and illnesses by providing emergency financial aid and other support services, in hopes that these veterans can transition successfully into civilian life. In addition, the Coalition's emergency aid services respond to trends associated with suicide among veterans (24 per day), a skyrocketing divorce rate (60 percent among actives), and growing domestic abuse.

Recently, in my home state of Arizona, the Coalition awarded a $10,000 grant toward the construction of a multipurpose recreational facility designed to benefit long-term patients undergoing rehabilitation and other medical care at Prescott VA Hospital. In addition, it donated $5,000 to fund the design and construction of a bronze sculpture called ''Heroic Challenges'' (in the outdoor recreational facility at the hospital), which will depict a runner crossing the finish line with a look of determination on his face. The winner of this race, however, is distinguished by a prosthetic leg, a tracheotomy scar on his neck, several shrapnel wounds, and burn scars on one arm. Also, the Coalition donated a grant of nearly $5,000 to the Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness to support the group's initiatives to provide housing for homeless veterans. The grant furnished approximately 60 housing units that will be occupied by veterans.

We have not seen the total surge yet from Iraq and Afghanistan—and the women coming out of those conflicts are combat veterans who have the same issues the men have. The Coalition is working hard to address these challenges. In 2013 alone, the Coalition will have donated nearly $1 million in direct aid to veterans in addition to managing the many other CSAH programs that are available to wounded veterans (conferences, holiday gift checks, education and training, etc.).

On December 9–13, 2013, The Road to Recovery (R2R) Conference and Tribute is a four-day educational and motivational event for wounded veterans and their families designed to prepare them for the challenges in their lives that lie ahead.

On behalf of the state of Arizona, and in particular, the First District of Arizona, I would like to offer my deepest admiration, respect and appreciation to Sgt. Herrera and the Coalition for their efforts to improve the lives of those who have fought and served our country with distinction. We owe Mary a debt of gratitude. She is an example to us all.

CONGRATULATING JOHN ROBINSON ROYERO ON ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize, honor and congratulate an outstanding constituent of my district, John Robinson Royero of Scout Troop 100 in Oviedo, Florida, for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

The rank of Eagle Scout is the highest achievement in scouting. To attain this rank, he has demonstrated the qualities of leadership, self-discipline and perseverance while serving his family, friends and community. Only about five percent of Boy Scouts earn the rank of Eagle Scout. The awarding of the Rank of Eagle Scout is a performance-based achievement with high standards that have been well maintained over the past century.

John Royero has met every test and challenge to pass through the ranks of the Boy Scouts. Those aspiring to be Eagle Scouts must fulfill requirements in the areas of leadership, service and outdoor skills. To demonstrate proficiency as a scout, each Boy Scout must achieve merit badges in the areas of First Aid, Citizenship, Environment, Fitness, Family Life and much more.

The work ethic John has shown in his Eagle Scout projects, and every other project leading up to his Eagle Scout rank, speaks volumes about his commitment to assisting his community and serving a cause greater than himself. It is my honor to commend John Royero for his achievement of the rank of Eagle Scout. John will join the ranks of fellow Eagle Scouts like President Gerald R. Ford, Neil Armstrong and Florida Governor Rick Scott.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this young man and his supportive family demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication and perseverance. John's devotion to the Boy Scouts over the past decade is laudable, and I congratulate him on his achievement. I thank him for his dedication to service and know we can expect great things from him in the future. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating John Robinson Royero on obtaining the rank of Eagle Scout, and I wish him continued success in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE 9TH ANNUAL NORTHWEST INDIANA INNOVATION INDUCTION CEREMONY

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sincerity and admiration that I offer congratulations to Ivy Tech Community College Northwest and its regional partners, who recently celebrated their 9th Annual Northwest Indiana Innovation Induction Ceremony. At the ceremony that reflects the "Spirit of Innovation" in Indiana, thirty-one individuals and teams were inducted as members of the 2013–2014 Class of the Society of Innovators of Northwest Indiana. Of these individuals, several members were inducted as Society Fellows for their exceptional efforts in innovation, including Julie Bombacino, Mike Falk, Nina Fonstein, Ph.D., Lisa Hopp, Ph.D., RN, and Don Keller. Additionally, Stewart McMillan was honored as the Gerald I. Lamkin Fellow for Innovation and Service, a special recognition named for the President Emeritus of Ivy Tech College of Indiana. Also honored were the Chanute Prize team recipients, the Kemin/Lambert Spearmint team, North Judson and the Tuskegee Airmen EAA Young Eagles Program team at the Gary/Chicago International Airport. For their truly remarkable contributions to the community of Northwest Indiana and their continuous efforts to cultivate a culture of innovation, these honorees were inducted during a prestigious event that took place at Horseshoe Casino in Hammond, Indiana, on October 17, 2013.

The Society of Innovators of Northwest Indiana was created by Ivy Tech Northwest with the goal of highlighting and encouraging innovative individuals and groups within the not-for-profit, public, and private sectors, as well as building a "culture of innovation" in Northwest Indiana. The importance of innovation in Northwest Indiana, as well as globally, is crucial in today's ever-changing economy.

Our 9th Annual Innovators Awards Ceremony inducted some of the most innovative thinkers, doers and innovators across Northwest Indiana, said Thomas Coley, Ph.D., Chancellor, Ivy Tech Community College Northwest and North Central. The five Fellows selected by the Society of Innovators were chosen for their extraordinary innovative leadership and the impact of their accomplishments throughout the community of Northwest Indiana and the world. Julie Bombacino, president of Just Blend Foods, Chesterton, developed a line of "blended real food meals" for adults and children who need to use feeding tubes. This is the first product that delivers real food meal options for tube-fed individuals who have, in the past, have had to rely on a formula that is typically made of 50% corn syrup. Mike Falk, chief executive officer and president of Falk-PLI Engineering and Surveying, Portage, is the first to introduce highly developed surveying instruments called laser trackers and laser scanners in the steel industry in Northwest Indiana and beyond. Nina Fonstein, Ph.D., retired scientist and present day consultant, is a world- renowned specialist in the development of stronger, lighter and environmentally friendly "new steels" for the ArcelorMittal Global Research and Development Center in East Chicago. Lisa Hopp, PhD., RN, is the founding director of the Indiana Center for Evidence-Based Nursing Practice (ICEBNP). The center, located at Purdue University Calumet's College of Nursing, is the first of its kind in the Midwest and is part of a global effort to "expand the understanding and use of research-based evidence to produce the best patient outcomes." Don Keller is the president and chief executive officer of Tri-State Industries in Hammond. Don launched an integrated system of industrial robotic technology that allows factories to keep their costs down while increasing productivity. Tri-State is a leader in this industry and the first of its kind in Northwest Indiana and the Chicagoland area.

I am also honored to acknowledge Stewart McMillan, who was recognized as the Gerald I. Lamkin Fellow for Innovation and Service. Stewart is the president and chief executive officer of Task Force Tips in Valparaiso. Task Force Tips is a world-wide leader in the manufacturing and distribution of firefighting nozzles and equipment with the goal of making firefighting safer and more effective. Stewart is a true innovative leader who focuses on the importance of the entire organization rather than relying upon a small group of people within the organization for ideas. Under Stewart's direction, Task Force Tips is an innovative leader in its industry in the global economy.

Finally, the recipients of the Chanute Prize for Team Innovation should be commended for their contributions. The Kemin/Lambert Spearmint team, North Judson, have patented growing and post-harvest processes for spearmint plants, which produces an all-natural extract that contains antioxidant properties and is effective in delaying lipid oxidation, color loss, and deterioration in human food, animal food, and other products for global markets. The Tuskegee Airmen EEA Young Eagles Program team at the Gary/Chicago International Airport provides the first and only monthly Young Eagles Aviation Program in the United States. Over 14,000 youth have participated in the program since its launch in 1994. The program is in affiliation with the Experimental Aviation Association and includes free flights in honor of the Tuskegee Airmen.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my distinguished colleagues to join me in commending these outstanding innovators. The contributions they have made to society here in Northwest Indiana and worldwide are immeasurable and lifelong. For their truly brilliant innovative ideas, projects, and leadership, each recipient is worthy of the highest commendation.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. ANTHONY GRISILLO BEING NAMED PENNSYLVANIA'S 2014 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Anthony Grisillo, who was honored by Governor Tom Corbett as Pennsylvania's 2014 Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Grisillo has been teaching in the Rose Tree Media School District for 15 years and works with academically gifted students in kindergarten through 5th Grade. A winner of numerous other teaching honors, Mr. Grisillo has

brought innovative teaching methods to bear to help our students excel, including movie-making, robotics lessons and simulated NASA space missions. His students noted that Mr. Grisillo is a great teacher because he believes in his students and serves as a mentor to them. When asked to describe Mr. Grisillo in one word, students said he was ''inspirational,'' ''extraordinary'' and ''fun''—just what our teachers ought to be.

Mr. Grisillo is a graduate of West Chester University and holds a Master's Degree from Widener University.

Mr. Grisillo was one of four finalists from schools in Pennsylvania's 7th Congressional District. Tracey Fritch of Rose Tree Media School District, Lori Gallagher of Hatboro-Horsham School District and Nicole Miletto of Hatboro-Horsham School District were also finalists for Pennsylvania's 2014 Teacher of the Year award.

Mr. Speaker, I honor Mr. Grisillo, Ms. Fritch, Ms. Gallagher, Ms. Miletto and all our educators for their dedication to our children and their tireless work to prepare them for the future.

RECOGNIZING 91.3 FM KXCI: A TUCSON AREA RADIO STATION AND COMMUNITY LEADER

HON. RON BARBER

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor 91.3 FM KXCI, a community radio station serving Tucson, Arizona and the surrounding areas, on the occasion of its 30th anniversary. The anniversary, which occurs on December 6th, 2013, will be marked by a special concert event at the El Con Club and Grill in Tucson, featuring an eclectic mix of local bands.

KXCI makes invaluable contributions to the communities of southern Arizona. Its unique blend of music expands the cultural horizons of its listeners and its relationships with local arts and public service organizations bring local citizens together. By providing over $200,000 worth of free airtime for public service announcements each year, KXCI helps Tucson area non-profits to raise awareness of their causes and foster community engagement.

KXCI's staff, supporters and listeners understand that radio can be a powerful force for social good. Together, they have built a radio station that facilitates a healthy exchange of ideas and expressions, strengthens local communities, promotes the arts and provides stimulating entertainment.

Over 30 years, tuning into KXCI has been synonymous with placing a finger on the pulse of the city of Tucson. The station has long been one of the region's most trusted and respected sources of news, music and current events. Those who live within its reaches find comfort in its unique programming in the car, at home and at work.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to congratulate KXCI on reaching this great milestone. Its long history of enriching the communities in and around Tucson deserves our highest admiration and respect. Happy birthday, KXCI—and many more!

IN RECOGNITION OF WILLIAM ''RANDY'' BATES, JR., JD

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an accomplished business, legal and educational leader in my district. William ''Randy'' Bates, Jr., has been a successful businessman and attorney in Southeast Texas and has served as a member of the Lone Star College System for more than 20 years.

Randy was the first African American appointed, and then elected, to the Lone Star College System board. He served as Vice Chair of the board and was twice elected board Chair.

As a board member and as Chair during his tenure with the Lone Star College System, he has been instrumental in the system's growth, from fewer than 20,000 students and three colleges in 1991 to six colleges and a total enrollment of 90,000 students.

Prior to his service in the field of higher education, Randy earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from The Ohio State University and his Juris Doctor from the Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University, where he later served as an Adjunct Professor.

As a student at Texas Southern, Randy was elected Class President at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law and was the first African American to be selected Law Student Director for the Texas Young Lawyers Association, representing all law students in the State of Texas.

Randy later founded the law firm of Bates & Coleman, PC, which specializes in Public Finance Law.

His many accomplishments include being named Outstanding Texan in the field of Education by the Legislative Black Caucus, the Mayor's Distinguished Award from the City of El Paso and the Excellence in Achievement Award from Texas Southern University for years of outstanding service to education and the community.

Randy is a lifelong member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity and is married to the former Glenda Underwood. They are the proud parents of three sons, Lamont, William and Jonathan.

In recognition for his years of service to the Lone Star College System, the central building on the Lone Star College—Victory Center Campus will be named in his honor.

Randy—I congratulate you on your distinguished service to the Lone Star College System and I offer my sincere appreciation for your many contributions to our community.

RECOGNIZING SUQUAMISH TRIBE CHAIRMAN, MR. LEONARD FORSMAN, FOR HIS NOMINATION TO THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

HON. DEREK KILMER

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a long-time leader in Kitsap County and the Suquamish Tribe, Chairman Leonard Forsman. His service to the Suquamish Tribe and Greater Puget Sound Region of Washington State has positively impacted the environment and community.

Mr. Forsman has been nominated by the President to serve as a member of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, an independent agency that advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy.

Mr. Forsman has served on the Suquamish Tribal Council for over 20 years and has served as Tribal Chairman since 2005, where he has been an advocate for tribal education, cultural preservation, gaming policy, and habitat protection.

As Chairman, Mr. Forsman has supported preserving the cultural identity of the Suquamish Tribe. He remains committed to educating both his tribe and the larger community on their history, including usage of Suquamish names throughout the Puget Sound. He also travels as a puller on the Tribe's traditional canoe on the annual Tribal Canoe Journey, legging hundreds of miles on the Salish Sea. The Tribal Canoe Journey brings together many tribes from the Pacific Northwest to celebrate native art, culture, and history. Mr. Forsman's work has ensured that the history of the Suquamish Tribe will continue to be part of our region's shared heritage.

Whether it's his degrees in both Anthropology and Historical Preservation, his career as a research archaeologist, or his service as a member of the Washington State Historical Society Board since 2007, it's clear that Mr. Forsman's educational and professional background will bring a high degree of expertise to the Advisory Council.

As I close, I can say with confidence that Leonard Forsman's dedication to his tribe's history and cultural identity has enriched the Greater Puget Sound area. I am pleased to recognize that dedication today in the United States Congress.

HONORING PHILIP NELSON

HON. ADAM KINZINGER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Philip Nelson of the Illinois Farm Bureau (ILFB) and to recognize his years of service to the state and national agriculture community.

Mr. Nelson began his career in agriculture in his youth and was awarded the prestigious Illinois FFA Star Farmer of the Year award in

1977 as well as the American Farm Bureau Federation's National Outstanding Young Farmer Award in 1984. He has continued to operate his family's fourth generation farm near Seneca, Illinois where he and his wife grow corn, soybean, alfalfa, and have a cow-calf operation.

Philip has served five consecutive two-year terms as president of the ILFB which is the maximum he can serve under ILFB rules. Under his leadership, the ILFB has become an even more important voice in informing local, state, and national elected officials about the issues confronting the agriculture industry. His first-hand knowledge of farming has been instrumental to the organization in identifying and advocating on major challenges. In addition to his tenure as President of the ILFB, Mr. Nelson has served as President of the Illinois Soybean Association, President of the LaSalle County Farm Bureau, Vice President of the American Soybean Association, and Chairman of the American Farm Bureau Federation's Swine Advisory Committee.

While he is leaving his post at the ILFB, I am confident his expertise and leadership on agriculture issues will continue to be put to good use. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 16th District of Illinois, I wish to express our deepest thanks to Philip Nelson for his exemplary efforts to advocate for the Illinois agriculture community.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF CORPORAL GEORGE CONKLIN

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life, service, and sacrifice of a constituent, Corporal George Conklin. Mr. Conklin of Phelps, New York, enlisted in the United States Army in 1949 at the young age of seventeen to answer our nation's call to service during the Korean War. Tragically, it took sixty-four years for him to return home.

George Conklin was serving in the 7th Infantry Division's 31st Regimental Combat Team as a Private First-Class in Korea when he disappeared on December 2, 1950. Wounded in the leg, he was loaded onto a transport truck for evacuation, but soon thereafter, he and his colleagues went missing. It was not until the conclusion of the war in 1953 that Corporal Conklin was formally classified as ''Killed In Action.'' The U.S. Army posthumously promoted him to the rank of Corporal and awarded him the Purple Heart.

Corporal Conklin's family never gave up hope that one day he would return home. The family waited for over sixty years until this past September, when his niece, Karen DesCamp, finally received the news that she and George's other relatives had waited a lifetime for. After one of George's brothers donated a DNA sample to the Pentagon, Corporal Conklin's remains were positively identified at a laboratory in Hawaii.

It is with humble appreciation that I acknowledge Corporal George Conklin's return home to Ontario County. Hundreds of civilians and military veterans joined a military honor guard to give him a final welcome home as the plane carrying his casket touched down in Rochester. He was then laid to rest next to his predeceased parents and two brothers in upstate New York.

I cannot begin to imagine the feelings and emotions that have afflicted his family over the past six decades, but I am relieved to know that Corporal Conklin is finally back where he belongs, resting peacefully beside his loved ones. His ultimate sacrifice for the good of our nation and preservation of our freedom will never be forgotten.

HONORING FRED MEURER ON 27 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE CITY OF MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career of a truly remarkable public servant who I am proud to call a friend. Fred Meurer is retiring from the position of City Manager for the City of Monterey, California after holding the job since 1991. That is a remarkably long tenure in any job. In the field of city management, it is unheard of. But for those of us who have had the honor and pleasure of working with Fred over the years, those twenty-two years are a testament to his tremendous ability and professionalism.

Fred joined the City of Monterey in 1986, initially as the Special Projects Manager in the City Manager's office, and then as the City's Public Works Director for the next five years. In July of 1991, the City Council appointed Mr. Meurer to the position of City Manager. Since his appointment, Mr. Meurer has been actively involved in fostering working relationships between business districts, residential districts and City Hall. He has overseen the re-development of the City's residential neighborhoods and business districts. Neighborhood policing, waterfront acquisition, the main street program, tourism development, historic preservation programs and development of the education and research economic clusters have been instrumental in diversifying Monterey's economy. The success in this effort has financed the City's program for developing ''preventive'' programs in policing, fire protection, community services, recreation, public works and other public services.

Fred has been actively involved in developing cooperative relationships between the City and the Department of Defense (DoD) activities in Monterey in an effort to further increase DoD mission effectiveness while reducing their operating costs. Fred was responsible for germinating an idea—which Congress enacted in 1994 as a pilot program—of allowing military installations in Monterey County, California, to purchase a range of maintenance and municipal services from local government agencies in the County. Over the subsequent years, the Army Audit Agency has consistently validated cost savings to the Army and ''the Monterey Model,'' as it become known in the Pentagon, became a permanent national program in 2013.

In conceiving this program, Fred's goal was to provide the same high quality municipal services to DoD activities and personnel as the City provides its civilian neighborhoods, while saving the City money by spreading its overhead over a larger base. Similar cooperative service agreements have been negotiated with other cities in the region. These inter-governmental partnerships have also helped broaden the economic base of the City.

Recognizing the value of integrated municipal services between military installations and the city brings not only financial benefits to both parties but strengthens the town-base relationship. Fred nourished that relationship and looked for ways for the town and the military to interact seamlessly. This inter-relatedness was especially evident during the 1995 and 2005 BRAC rounds when the BRAC Commission determined that, because of the inherent value of the community contribution to the functioning of the local installations, there was no way to reproduce those functions elsewhere and those installations had to remain open and in Monterey.

Fred graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1966, and received graduate degrees from Stanford University in Water Resources Planning and Civil Engineering in 1971. He served overseas assignments in Germany, Viet Nam and Korea. His final active duty tour was as Director of Public Works and Housing at the former Ft. Ord. He retired as a Colonel from the Army in 1986.

Mr. Speaker, Fred Meurer is the epitome of a model public servant who brought wisdom, professionalism, creativity and problem solving skills to the job of City Manager of Monterey and leaves a legacy of accomplishments that not only benefit the residents of Monterey but also serve as a model of sound civic management for others to learn from and emulate. In his 1961 State of the Union address to Congress, President John F. Kennedy commented on his administration's commitment to civil service and the following words, ''Let the public service be a proud and lively career,'' struck me as the embodiment of Fred Meurer's stellar career.

Fred along with his wife Phyllis will now begin a new journey in life. An avid Oakland A's fan, Native American art collector and delicious ice cream maker, new adventures await this dedicated husband, father and grandfather. I wish Fred and his wife all the best in their well-deserved retirement years.

CONGRATULATING HELENE COMBS DREILING

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Helene Combs Dreiling on her election as President of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). This distinguished position is well deserved and reflective of her many professional achievements in the field of architecture.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) is the professional membership organization for American architects, with more than 80,000 members across the country. In addition to her new position as President, Ms. Dreiling has served the AIA in numerous leadership roles.

Currently, Ms. Dreiling serves as Executive Director of the Virginia Center for Architecture, a Richmond-based non-profit that develops

the public understanding of architecture through a broad array of outreach programs. She is also a past member of the board of trustees of the American Architectural Foundation and a past president of the Virginia Society, AIA and AIA Blue Ridge.

Ms. Dreiling received her Bachelor of Architecture degree from the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. She is a resident of Roanoke, VA, which is located in the Sixth Congressional District.

Throughout the ages architecture has been at the very foundation of our society, representing the greatness of our past and the promise of our future. It can be seen in the pyramids of Ancient Egypt, the coliseums of the Roman Empire, and the monuments that grace our nation's capital today. Architecture plays an ever-important role in ensuring the structural foundations of our communities and our legacy for future generations.

It is an honor to recognize Ms. Dreiling. I am certain that the AIA will benefit greatly from her leadership, and I wish her the best of luck during her tenure as President.

HONORING MAYOR DICK PASCO

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a community leader and friend, Mayor Dick Pasco of Greenfield, Indiana.

Dick Pasco was a dedicated public servant who spent the better part of his life serving the people of Greenfield. Dick's work for the city began in 1972 when he was appointed to the Greenfield Park Board. He was later elected to the city council where he would serve for twenty years. Dick would go on to hold a variety of positions on the Greenfield Planning Commission, Council for Economic Development, Hancock Boys and Girls Club, United Way, and Kiwanis International. Dick Pasco served on the Hancock County Council before being elected Mayor in 2011.

The City of Greenfield has lost a pillar of the community and a dedicated civic leader. Mayor Pasco set an example we can all aspire to. His life, including four years in the United States Navy, has been dedicated to serving others and making his community a better place to live. His commitment to Greenfield will be forever appreciated. I will forever appreciate his friendship and ask the citizens of the 6th Congressional District to join me in keeping his wife Joan, daughters Jennifer Pasco-Beck and Patricia Pasco and son Richard Pasco II in your thoughts and prayers.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

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 $17,230,345,583,111.52. We've added $6,603,468,534,198.44 to our debt in 4 years. This is $6.6 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

TRIBUTE TO ANDREW J. LEWIS

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and pay tribute to Mr. Andrew J. Lewis, a pillar of the Columbia, South Carolina community. As an elementary school teacher, assistant principal, and principal, Mr. Lewis touched the lives of countless students over many decades.

Mr. Andrew Jackson Lewis was born on June 2, 1917 in Sumter County, South Carolina, the oldest of eleven children of Sam and Rosa Lewis, Sr. He married Margaret Pearson Lewis on Valentine's Day 1942; they remained married until her death this past April. He leaves behind a daughter, Andrea Lewis Jones, two grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Educated in Sumter County Public Schools, Mr. Lewis was valedictorian of his class at Lincoln High School. He graduated cum laude from Benedict College with a degree in mathematics. At Benedict, he was a member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity, which means I am proud to call him a brother. He went on to receive a Master of Science degree from my alma mater, South Carolina State University. He also served honorably in the U.S. Army Air Forces, earning the rank of Technical Sergeant.

Mr. Lewis's professional career began at Celia Saxon Elementary School in 1946. He later became Assistant Principal at W.A. Perry Middle School and then Principal at Greenview Elementary School, a position he held for 16 years until his retirement in 1982. My three daughters attended Greenview Elementary School, and I saw firsthand the positive impact he had on them and all of the students under his charge. He was held in such high regard at Greenview that after his retirement, the school was renamed the A.J. Lewis Greenview Elementary School.

A devoted member of Chappelle Memorial AME Church, Mr. Lewis served on the Steward Board under three different pastors, worked diligently on the Budget and Finance Committee, and chaired the Men's Day programs for ten years. With this level of dedication, Mr. Lewis was given the well-deserved honor of "Man of the Year" by the church in 1985.

Mr. Lewis was widely involved in the broader Columbia community as well. He was a member of the Capital City Lodge #47 (Price Hall F&A Masons), the Columbia Transportation and Advisory Committee, the Columbia Municipal Elections Committee, and the Richland County and South Carolina Retired Educators Associations. He served as chaplain of the Benedict Columbia Alumni #2 Club, president and vice president of the Columbia Luncheon Club, president of the United Martin Family of South Carolina, as vice president of the Shandon Neighborhood Council, and as a member of the committee that renamed Valley Park the Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.

In recognition of this impressive record of service to the community, Mr. Lewis received the O.P. Taylor Humanitarian Award and the Living the Legacy Award as an outstanding educator from the National Council of Negro Women. Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in remembering this distinguished educator and community leader. Mr. Lewis will be sorely missed, but his contributions will live on in perpetuity.

CONGRATULATING ERIE FOODS INTERNATIONAL ON THEIR 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Erie Foods International in Erie, Illinois, on the occasion of their 75th anniversary.

Erie Foods International manufactures ingredients that are used in many different brands of nutritional beverages and bars, dairy products, sports drinks, coffee and more. Founded as Erie Casein Dryers in 1938 by Arden and Marjorie Reisenbigler, Erie Foods is truly a family business. The company is currently run by their son, David Reisenbigler, whose older brother was CEO for five years beginning in 1977 and whose son and sister also work for Erie Foods. In the past 75 years, Erie Foods has grown to a global company, with 194 employees worldwide, including 33 in Erie.

Additionally, Erie Foods makes it a point to buy from local dairies at many of their plants and donates a portion of their profits to charitable organizations. CEO David Reisenbigler explains that "we want to be more than a company that just takes profits. We want to improve the communities where we are."

Mr. Speaker, I want to again congratulate Erie Foods International for reaching this impressive milestone and I wish them even more success over the next 75 years.

HONORING DOROTHY BARKER

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the outstanding career of Dorothy Barker.

On November 26, 2013, Dorothy retired after an incredible career in sales and real estate. She began working with me at Billy Long Auctioneers and Realtors in 1988 and has been with Murney Associates, Realtors since 2002.

Dorothy is a beloved member of the community. She has been very active in her church, the Evangel Temple in Springfield, Missouri. She is also a proud and loving mother to three and grandmother to eight.

I am extremely proud of the work that Dorothy has accomplished. I am honored to have been able to work side by side with her for so many years, and anybody that has worked with Dorothy would be sure to agree with me. Dorothy has truly brightened the lives of many throughout her successful career.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF SERVICE OF THE LINKS, INCORPORATED, MORRIS COUNTY CHAPTER

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Morris County Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, located in Morris County, New Jersey, as it is celebrating 30 years of community service.

Established in 1946, The Links, Incorporated is a not-for-profit organization that combines the ideals of friendship and community service to focus on civic, cultural, and educational endeavors. The Morris County Chapter of The Links, Incorporated (The Links) was chartered in May, 1982, under the guidance of Elizabeth Quick. One of the organization's first projects was the Open Door program, established to provide newly relocated minorities with an orientation and welcoming committee, often catering to particular needs. Around the same time, The Links also began the Hands Across Generations program to help establish and build relationships between senior citizens and the younger generations.

As new technologies were brought into society's everyday life, the organization developed the Digital Divide. The Digital Divide partners with Morristown High School and its students to help teach senior citizens how to use computers.

The organization also maintains a strong commitment to the arts through various events and exhibits. One very special program, the Literary Teas program, utilizes forums to promote African American authors within the community.

Three years ago, The Links began Working with the Morristown Neighborhood House, an organization that supports our low-income community and fosters cross-cultural acceptance, and developed a program called Rhythms for Life: Music Matters in Morris County, which offers instructor-led violin lessons to grammar and middle school students.

The Links has directed many of its programs and activities towards the youth of Morris County. The organization provides and sponsors various mentoring and educational programs. The Film Workshop, a recent mentoring program, teaches students the phases of film making. So far the program has produced three films that have won national recognition. The Links also recognizes the importance of education, and has awarded more than $100,000 in scholarships to deserving college students in Morris County.

The Links, Incorporated looks forward to facing the challenges ahead and plans to continue promoting and maintaining civic, educational, and intercultural activities to help enrich the members of the Morris County community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating Morris County Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, as they celebrate 30 years of community service.

RECOGNIZING TOYOTA MATERIAL HANDLING, U.S.A., INC.

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Toyota Material Handling, U.S.A., INC. which recently moved its North American headquarters to Columbus, Indiana in my congressional district.

Toyota Material Handling, U.S.A., INC. (TMHU) has been operating in North America for 45 years and in 1990 began lift truck production at the Toyota Industrial Equipment Manufacturing facility in Columbus. The company has been producing the number-one selling lift truck in the U.S. since 2002. The majority of all Toyota lift trucks sold in the U.S. are manufactured in Columbus.

Recently Toyota celebrated the official grand opening of their multi-million dollar investment in their new campus and the line-off of the first large capacity Toyota 8-Series lift truck. The same event also marked the 450,000th lift truck produced at the Columbus plant. By moving their headquarters to Columbus TMHU continues its investment in Southeastern Indiana and support for the community's economic vitality.

I ask the entire 6th Congressional District to join me in recognizing Toyota Material Handling, U.S.A., INC. Their leadership and economic impact on our state has been invaluable. TMHU is a great community partner, and I look forward to working with them often in the future.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. JOHN E. PICKELMAN

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding leader in higher education in my district. Chancellor Emeritus Dr. John E. Pickelman became the second chancellor of North Harris County College in 1991 and served until his retirement in 2007.

During his service as chancellor, enrollment increased from 14,000 to over 49,000 and grew from three colleges—LSC–North Harris, LSC–Kingwood and LSC–Tomball to five colleges, with the addition of LSC–Montgomery and LSC–CyFair, the first community college to open in the 21st century.

Under his strong commitment to provide access to quality education for all citizens, LSCS's boundaries expanded from five to eleven independent school districts and added six satellite centers.

Dr. Pickelman expanded the dual credit program and created early college high schools in partnership with local school districts which allowed qualified high school students to earn college credit while still in high school.

He established The University Center, an innovative, highly successful multi-university teaching facility in The Woodlands, providing students and the community the opportunity to earn a bachelors or master's degree from six public universities.

Dr. Pickelman was also credited with establishing a university-level sabbatical program for the benefit of Lone Star College System faculty and administrators to continue professional work in their respective fields.

He served as a tireless advocate and leader for higher education at the local, state and national level and championed the college's role in economic development, establishing the center for Business and Economic Development, the Chamber Alliance and Leadership North Houston.

Some of his leadership roles in numerous national, state and local organizations include chairman of the board of directors of the Southern Association Colleges and Schools, chairman of the board of the Texas Association of Community Colleges and president of the Association of Texas Colleges and Universities.

Dr. Pickelman earned a bachelor's degree in English from Albion College and a master's degree in education from the University of Missouri at Kansas City. He received his Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin, where he received a distinguished graduate award from the College of Education.

Dr. Pickelman and his wife, Barbara, are proud parents of two sons, Matthew and Jason; and four grandchildren. He is an excellent chef and he has personally raised over $100,000 for student scholarships auctioning off his culinary evenings.

In recognition for his years of accomplished service in higher education, the Lone Star College System will rename the student center at the Lone Star College–Kingwood campus the Dr. John E. Pickelman Student Center.

Dr. Pickelman, I congratulate you on this honor and I want to thank you for your years of service to higher education and for your generous commitment to serving others.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 612, I was unavoidably detained off of the House floor due to unforeseen travel circumstances. Therefore, I was unable to cast my vote for H.R. 3547, the Space Launch Liability Indemnification Extension Act.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S8581–S8606

Measures Introduced: Fourteen bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 1785–1798, and S. Res. 314–316. **Pages S8601–02**

Measures Passed:

Supreme Court Police: Senate passed H.R. 2922, to extend the authority of the Supreme Court Police to protect court officials away from the Supreme Court grounds. **Page S8605**

Southern Judicial District of Mississippi: Senate passed H.R. 2871, to amend title 28, United States Code, to modify the composition of the southern judicial district of Mississippi to improve judicial efficiency. **Page S8605**

Authorizing Production of Records: Senate agreed to S. Res. 315, to authorize the production of records by the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. **Pages S8605–06**

Measures Considered:

Workforce Investment Act: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1356, to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to strengthen the United States workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training, and education programs in the United States, and to promote individual and national economic growth. **Pages S8581–83**

Pillard Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Cornelia T. L. Pillard, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit. **Pages S8594–95**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 54 yeas to 44 nays (Vote No. 253), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to the motion to reconsider the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination. **Page S8594**

By 54 yeas to 44 nays (Vote No. 254), Senate agreed to the motion to reconsider the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination. **Page S8594**

By 56 yeas to 42 nays (Vote No. 255), Senate upon reconsideration agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S8595**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at approximately 2 p.m., on Wednesday, December 11, 2013; and that time during adjournment count post-cloture. **Page S8606**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 56 yeas to 38 nays (Vote No. EX. 247), Patricia Ann Millett, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit. **Pages S8583–84, S8606**

By 57 yeas to 41 nays (Vote No. EX. 252), Melvin L. Watt, of North Carolina, to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency for a term of five years. **Pages S8586–93, S8606**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 54 yeas to 42 nays (Vote No. 248), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to the motion to reconsider the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination. **Pages S8584–85**

By 54 yeas to 42 nays (Vote No. 249), Senate agreed to the motion to reconsider the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination. **Page S8585**

By 51 yeas to 45 nays (Vote No. 250), Senate upheld the ruling of the Chair that under precedent set by the Senate on Thursday, November 21, 2013, the threshold for cloture on nominations, not including those of the Supreme Court, is now a majority. Subsequently, Senator McConnell motion to appeal the ruling of the Chair was rejected. **Page S8585**

By 57 yeas to 40 nays (Vote No. 251), Senate upon reconsideration agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Pages S8585–86**

Messages from the House: **Page S8600**

Measures Referred: **Page S8600**

Measures Read the First Time: **Page S8600**

Executive Communications: **Pages S8600–01**

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S8602–03

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Pages S8603–05

Additional Statements: Pages S8599–S8600

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S8605

Record Votes: Nine record votes were taken today. (Total—255) Pages S8584–86, S8593–95

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:20 p.m., until 2 p.m. on Wednesday, December 11, 2013. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S8606.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

ASSISTANCE FOR JORDAN AND LEBANON

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs concluded a hearing to examine assistance for Jordan and Lebanon, after receiving testimony from Anne Richard, Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration; Alia Bouran, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United States, Amman; Antoine Chedid, Ambassador of the Lebanese Republic to the United States, Beirut; and Andrew Harper, and Ewen Macleod, both of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, New York, New York.

HOUSING FINANCE REFORM

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine housing finance reform, focusing on the fundamentals of transferring credit risk in a future housing finance system, including S. 1217, to provide secondary mortgage market reform, after receiving testimony from Wanda DeLeo, Deputy Director, Division of Conservatorship, Federal Housing Finance Agency; Kevin Palmer, Freddie Mac, Leesburg, Virginia; Laurel Davis, Fannie Mae, Washington, D.C.; Ted Durant, MGIC, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Sandeep Bordia, Barclays, Udaipur, India.

CRAFTING A SUCCESSFUL INCENTIVE AUCTION

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine crafting a successful incentive auction, focusing on the stakeholders' perspectives, after receiving testimony from Gary Epstein, Special Advisor and Chair, Incentive Auction Task Force, Federal Communications Commission; Joan Marsh, AT&T, Hal J. Singer, Progressive Policy Institute, Steven K. Berry, Competitive Carriers Association, Rick Kaplan, National Association of Broadcasters, and Harold Feld, Public Knowledge, all of Washington, D.C.; and Preston Padden, Expanding Opportunities for Broadcasters Coalition, Boulder, Colorado.

NOMINATION

Committee on Finance: Committee held a hearing to examine the nomination of John Andrew Koskinen, of the District of Columbia, to be Commissioner of Internal Revenue, Department of the Treasury, the nominee testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

Hearing recessed subject to the call and will meet again on Wednesday, December 11, 2013.

AFGHANISTAN

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the transition in Afghanistan, after receiving testimony from James F. Dobbins, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Department of State; and Donald L. Sampler, Assistant to the Administrator and Director of the Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs, U.S. Agency for International Development.

NOMINATION

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of David Weil, of Massachusetts, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senator Warren, testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 10 public bills, H.R. 3683–3692; and 3 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 70; and H. Res. 435–436 were introduced. **Pages H7627–28**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H7628**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Recess: The House recessed at 12:22 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H7611**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Department of Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Lease Authorization Act of 2013: H.R. 3521, amended, to authorize Department of Veterans Affairs major medical facility leases, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 346 yeas to 1 nay, Roll No. 630 and **Pages H7612–14, H7617–18**

Veterans Paralympic Act of 2013: H.R. 1402, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the authorization of appropriations for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay a monthly assistance allowance to disabled veterans training or competing for the Paralympic Team and the authorization of appropriations for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide assistance to United States Paralympics, Inc., by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 353 yeas with none voting "nay," Roll No. 631. **Pages H7614–17, H7618–19**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring provisions of law, and for other purposes.". **Page H7619**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:30 p.m. and reconvened at 4 p.m. **Page H7617**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on pages H7618 and H7618–19.

Quorum Calls—Votes:

Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages . There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Committee Meetings

ONLINE GAMING

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade held a hearing entitled "The State of Online Gaming". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Health held a markup on H.R. 3527, the "Poison Center Network Act of 2013"; and H.R. 1098, the "Traumatic Brain Injury Reauthorization Act". H.R. 3527 was forwarded, without amendment; and H.R. 1098 was forwarded, as amended.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Full Committee began a markup on the following measures: H.R. 3527, the "Poison Center Network Act of 2013"; H.R. 1098, the "Traumatic Brain Injury Reauthorization Act"; H.R. 724, to amend the Clean Air Act to remove the requirement for dealer certification of new light-duty motor vehicles; H.R. 3683, to amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to strengthen the collaboration between the United States and Israel on energy development and to bolster the existing United States-Israel energy relationship by encouraging increased cooperation between the two countries; H.R. 3675, the "Federal Communications Commission Process Reform Act of 2013"; and H.R. 3674, the "Federal Spectrum Incentive Act of 2013".

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN EGYPT

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations; and Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa held a hearing entitled "Human Rights Abuses in Egypt". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "The Iran Nuclear Deal: Does It Further U.S. National Security?". Testimony was heard from John F. Kerry, Secretary of State, Department of State.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2013

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Subcommittee on Economic Policy, to hold hearings to examine rebuilding American manufacturing, 3:30 p.m., SD–538.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety, to hold an oversight hearing to examine domestic renewable fuels, 9 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Finance: to continue hearings to examine the nomination of John Andrew Koskinen, of the District of Columbia, to be Commissioner of Internal Revenue, Department of the Treasury, 9:15 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Catherine Ann Novelli, of Virginia, to be an Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment, Alternate Governor of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Alternate Governor of the Inter-American Development Bank, and Alternate Governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Charles Hammerman Rivkin, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs, Tina S. Kaidanow, of the District of Columbia, to be Coordinator for Counterterrorism, with the rank of Ambassador at Large, Puneet Talwar, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs, Michael A. Hammer, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Chile, Kevin Whitaker, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia, and Bruce Heyman, of Illinois, to be Ambassador to Canada, all of the Department of State, 10 a.m., SD–419.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: business meeting to consider the nomination of Alejandro Nicholas Mayorkas, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, 9:30 a.m., SD–342.

Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight, to hold hearings to examine streamlining overseas trade and development agencies, focusing on a more efficient and effective government, 2 p.m., SD–342.

Committee on Indian Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Vincent G. Logan, of New York, to be Special Trustee, Office of Special Trustee for American Indians, Department of the Interior; to be immediately followed by an oversight hearing to examine implementation of the Department of the Interior's Land Buy-Back Program, 2 p.m., SD–628.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine continued oversight of the United States government surveillance authorities, 2 p.m., SD–226.

Committee on Rules and Administration: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Thomas Hicks, of Virginia, and Myrna Perez, of Texas, both to be a Member of the Election Assistance Commission, 10 a.m., SR–301.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the Veterans Affairs (VA) claims system, focusing on a review of the Veterans Affairs' transformation progress, 10 a.m., SR–418.

Special Committee on Aging: to hold hearings to examine protecting seniors from medication labeling mistakes, 3:45 p.m., SD–562.

House

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, hearing on U.S. Asia-Pacific Strategic Considerations Related to P.L.A. Naval Forces Modernization, 3:30 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''PPACA Implementation Failures: What's Next?'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Full Committee, continued markup on the following measures: H.R. 3527, the ''Poison Center Network Act of 2013''; H.R. 1098, the ''Traumatic Brain Injury Reauthorization Act''; H.R. 724, to amend the Clean Air Act to remove the requirement for dealer certification of new light-duty motor vehicles; H.R. 3683, to amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to strengthen the collaboration between the United States and Israel on energy development and to bolster the existing United States-Israel energy relationship by encouraging increased cooperation between the two countries; H.R. 3675, the ''Federal Communications Commission Process Reform Act of 2013''; and H.R. 3674, the ''Federal Spectrum Incentive Act of 2013'', 12:30 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Afghanistan 2014: Year of Transition'', 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, markup on H. Res. 418, Urging the Government of Burma to end the persecution of the Rohingya people and respect internationally recognized human rights for all ethnic and religious minority groups within Burma; and H. Res. 281, Expressing concern over persistent and credible reports of systematic, state-sanctioned organ harvesting from nonconsenting prisoners of conscience, in the People's Republic of China, including from large numbers of Falun Gong practitioners imprisoned for their religious beliefs, and members of other religious and ethnic minority groups, 3 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on House Administration, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Establishing a Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum'', 10:30 a.m., 1310 Longworth.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment, hearing entitled ''A Factual Look at the Relationship Between Climate and Weather'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Full Committee, markup on the following measures: H.R. 2413, the ''Weather Forecasting Improvement Act of 2013''; H.R. 2431, the ''National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2013'', H.R. 2981, the ''Technology and Research Accelerating National Security and Future Economic Resiliency Act of 2013''; and H.R. 3625, to provide for termination liability costs for certain National Aeronautics and Space Administration projects, and for other purposes, 2 p.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The Small Business Health Options Program: Is It Working for Small Businesses'', 1 p.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, hearing entitled ''Coast Guard Mission Execution: How is the Coast Guard Meeting Its Mission Goals?'', 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Highway and Transit, hearing entitled ''Examining the Current and Future Demands on FTA's Capital Investment Grants'', 2 p.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations; and Committee on Small Business Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce, hearing entitled ''Contracting Away Accountability—Reverse Auctions in Federal Agency Acquisitions'', 10 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Joint Meetings

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: to hold hearings to examine resolving crises in East Asia through a new system of collective security, focusing on the Helsinki process as a model, 1 p.m., SD–106.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

2 p.m., Wednesday, December 11

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Cornelia T.L. Pillard, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit, post-cloture. If all post-cloture time is used, Senate will vote on confirmation of the nomination at approximately 1 a.m., on Thursday, December 12, 2013.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, December 11

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of the following measures under suspension of the rules: (1) H.R. 2319—Native American Veterans' Memorial Amendments Act of 2013; (2) S. 1471—Alicia Dawn Koehl Respect for National Cemeteries Act; (3) H.R. 3212—Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2013, as amended; (4) H.R. 1992—Israel QME Enhancement Act, as amended; and (5) H.R. 2019—Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act of 2013, as amended.

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