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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOLF).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 28, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable FRANK R. WOLF to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair would now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

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 01 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. HOLDING) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

On this day, we ask Your blessing on the men and women, citizens all, whose votes have populated this people's House. Each Member of this House has been given the sacred duty of representing them.

O Lord, we pray that those with whom our Representatives met during this past weekend in their home districts be blessed with peace and an assurance that they have been listened to.

We ask Your blessing now on the Members of this House, whose responsibility lies also beyond the local interests of constituents, while honoring them. Give each Member the wisdom to represent both local and national interests, a responsibility calling for the wisdom of Solomon. Grant them, if You will, a double portion of such wisdom.

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

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. HARRIS 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.

PROMISES MATTER

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, promises matter.

Time and again, President Obama said:

If you like your insurance plan, you will keep it. No one will be able to take that away from you.

My constituent Michael knows better. His family plan is being canceled. Next year, he and his expectant wife could see their monthly insurance payments rise from $324 to $895. Michael told me:

It is now impossible for our family to afford private health insurance.

On January 1, as many as 16 million Americans will have the coverage they are familiar with yanked out from under them. Too many will be caught between a rock and a hard place—struggling to afford pricier plans without the guarantee of subsidies but with the threat of tax.

Yes, today, we all know better. If you like your insurance, you won't necessarily get to keep it because President Obama and 279 congressional Democrats chose to pass a flawed law that, for many, strips the choice away.

IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, The Augusta Chronicle lead editorial on Saturday hit the nail on the head, pointing out the real truths about the ObamaCare train wreck. Americans remember a ''soothing assurance from President Obama in 2009 when he was hawking his Affordable Care Act to the masses—if you like your health care plan, you can keep

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your health care plan. Now tell that to the hundreds of thousands of Americans who already have received letters from health plans essentially telling them, You're on your own.''

As the failed rollout of ObamaCare continues, American families are beginning to see its disastrous impacts—and this is just the beginning. In the coming weeks, more reports will reveal their President's signature health care law will increase premium rates; force employers to cut back on workers' hours, destroying jobs; and terminate existing policies for needy families.

Congress must address this issue. The House has acted. The Senate must do the same to protect every American family from an unsustainable disaster.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

BROKEN PROMISES

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

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, the White House Web site claims:

> If you like your plan, you can keep it, and you don't have to change a thing due to the health care law.

Well, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Maryland said that 76,000 customers in Maryland will lose their current plans because of ObamaCare; in New Jersey, 800,000; in Florida, 300,000; and in California, at least 119,000 will see their policies terminated. It is happening everywhere.

Dana from Denton called my office to tell me she will not be able to keep her Blue Cross & Blue Shield plan because of ObamaCare. The new plan she is required to get will increase her premiums by $350 a month.

Alex from Manchester told me his letter from Blue Cross & Blue Shield said:

> The ACA requires you to pick a new plan to maintain coverage because your current plan will cease to exist at the time of your renewal.

Alex's family will have to pay $300 more per month for the new plan.

Mr. Speaker, the President made a promise to the American people that they would be able to keep their plans. We now know that this is just not true.

JOURNALISTS WRONGLY CHANGE THEIR CODE OF ETHICS

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Society of Professional Journalists has given Americans some bad news about the state of the media. Their previous code of ethics specifically affirmed that:

> News reports should be free of opinion or bias and represent all sides of an issue.

This line has been removed. In fact, the revised code makes no mention that news reports should be free of bias.

How can we expect journalists to cover events in a fair and objective way when their own code of ethics no longer discourages biased reporting? Maybe that explains the slanted coverage we see so often today when news stories have become editorials.

The Society of Professional Journalists should reclaim their ethics and restate their commitment to fair and balanced reporting. The media should provide the American people with the facts, not tell them what to think.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL OF THE LATE HONORABLE C.W. BILL YOUNG

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 384, and the order of the House January 3, 2013, the Speaker on October 24, 2013, appointed the following Members of the House to the committee to attend the funeral of the late Honorable C.W. Bill Young:

The gentlewoman from Florida, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN

The gentleman from Ohio, Mr. BOEHNER

The members of the Florida delegation:

Ms. CORRINE BROWN
Mr. HASTINGS
Mr. MICA
Mr. CRENSHAW
Mr. MILLER
Mr. DIAZ-BALART
Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ
Mr. BILIRAKIS
Mr. BUCHANAN
Ms. CASTOR
Mr. POSEY
Mr. ROONEY
Mr. DEUTCH
Mr. NUGENT
Mr. ROSS
Mr. SOUTHERLAND
Mr. WEBSTER
Ms. WILSON
Mr. GRAYSON
Mr. DESANTIS
Ms. FRANKEL
Mr. GARCIA
Mr. MURPHY
Mr. RADEL
Mr. YOHO

Other Members in attendance:

Mr. CANTOR
Ms. PELOSI
Mr. HOYER
Mr. MCCARTHY, California
Mr. YOUNG, Alaska
Mr. SENSENBRENNER
Mr. ROGERS, Kentucky
Mr. WOLF
Mr. VISCLOSKY
Mr. BISHOP, Georgia
Mr. CALVERT
Mr. MCKEON
Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN
Ms. JACKSON LEE, Texas
Mr. LATHAM
Mr. PRICE, North Carolina
Mr. ADERHOLT
Ms. GRANGER
Mr. SESSIONS
Mr. CARTER
Mr. COLE
Mr. KING, Iowa
Mr. GOHMERT
Mr. ROE, Tennessee
Mr. NUNNELEE
Mr. WOMACK

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 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1601

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI) at 4 o'clock and 1 minute p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

AUTHORIZING AWARD OF MEDAL OF HONOR

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3304) to authorize and request the President to award the Medal of Honor to Bennie G. Adkins and Donald P. Sloat of the United States Army for acts of valor during the Vietnam Conflict and to authorize the award of the Medal of Honor to certain other veterans who were previously recommended for award of the Medal of Honor.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3304

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

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION AND REQUEST FOR AWARD OF MEDAL OF HONOR TO BENNIE G. ADKINS FOR ACTS OF VALOR DURING THE VIETNAM CONFLICT.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—Notwithstanding the time limitations specified in section 3744 of title 10, United States Code, or any other time limitation with respect to the awarding of certain medals to persons who served in the Armed Forces, the President is authorized and requested to award the Medal of Honor under section 3741 of such title to Bennie G. Adkins of the United States Army for the acts of valor during the Vietnam Conflict described in subsection (b).

(b) ACTS OF VALOR DESCRIBED.—The acts of valor referred to in subsection (a) are the actions of then Sergeant First Class Bennie G. Adkins of the United States Army serving with Special Forces Detachment A–102 from March 9 to 12, 1966, during the Vietnam Conflict for which he was originally awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION AND REQUEST FOR AWARD OF MEDAL OF HONOR TO DONALD P. SLOAT FOR ACTS OF VALOR DURING THE VIETNAM CONFLICT.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—Notwithstanding the time limitations specified in section 3744 of title 10, United States Code, or any other time limitation with respect to the awarding of certain medals to persons who served in the Armed Forces, the President is authorized and requested to award the Medal of Honor under section 3741 of such title to Donald P. Sloat of the United States Army for the acts of valor during the Vietnam Conflict described in subsection (b).

(b) ACTS OF VALOR DESCRIBED.—The acts of valor referred to in subsection (a) are the actions of then Specialist Four Donald P. Sloat of the United States Army serving with 3rd Platoon, Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division on January 17, 1970, during the Vietnam Conflict.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION FOR AWARD OF MEDAL OF HONOR TO FORMER MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES PREVIOUSLY RECOMMENDED FOR AWARD OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR.

Section 552(e) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (Public Law 107–107; 10 U.S.C. 3741 note) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(1)'' after ''HONOR.—''; and

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

''(2) In addition to the authority provided by paragraph (1), a Medal of Honor may be awarded to a veteran of the Armed Forces who, although not a Jewish-American war veteran or Hispanic-American war veteran described in subsection (b), was identified during the review of service records conducted under subsection (a) and regarding whom the Secretary of Defense submitted, before January 1, 2014, a recommendation to the President that the President award the Medal of Honor to that veteran.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) and the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material into the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3304. This bill would waive the time limit for the President to consider awarding the Medal of Honor to a handful of American heroes. The battlefield actions of these brave Americans have undergone a thorough review by the Department of Defense and have been determined to merit consideration for our Nation's highest honor.

Among those heroes who would be considered under this bill is Mr. Bennie Adkins of Opelika, Alabama. In 1966, while serving in Vietnam, then-Sergeant First Class Bennie Adkins was assigned to Special Forces Detachment A–102 at Special Forces Camp A Shau in the Republic of Vietnam. From March 9 to March 12 of that year, he displayed extraordinary bravery during a sustained and well-coordinated attack from a determined, vicious, and highly lethal Viet Cong force. Though recommended at the time by his chain of command for the Medal of Honor, he received, instead, the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions.

His citation read:

When the camp was attacked by a large Viet Cong force, Sergeant First Class Adkins rushed through intense hostile fire and manned a mortar position. Although he was wounded, he ran through exploding mortar rounds and dragged several of his comrades to safety.

When the hostile fire subsided, Sergeant First Class Adkins exposed himself to sporadic sniper fire and carried his wounded comrades to the camp dispensary. During the evacuation of a seriously wounded American, Sergeant First Class Adkins maneuvered outside the camp walls to draw fire and successfully cover the rescue.

During the early morning hours of 10 March 1966, a Viet Cong regiment launched its main attack. Within 2 hours, Sergeant First Class Adkins was the only man firing a mortar weapon. Although he was painfully wounded and most of his crew was killed or wounded, he fought off the fanatical waves of attacking Viet Cong. After withdrawing to a communications bunker where several Americans were attempting to fight off a company of Viet Cong, Sergeant First Class Adkins killed numerous insurgents with his suppressive fire.

Running extremely low on ammunition, he returned to the mortar pit, gathered the vital ammunition, and ran through intense fire back to the communications bunker. After being ordered to evacuate the camp, all signal equipment and classified documents were destroyed. Sergeant First Class Adkins and a small group of men fought their way out of the camp and evaded the Viet Cong for 2 days until they were rescued by a helicopter.

Sergeant First Class Adkins' extraordinary heroism in close combat against a numerically superior hostile force was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Mr. Adkins continued his stellar military career until he retired in 1977 at the rank of sergeant major. Mr. Adkins also served a term as the national commander of the Legion of Valor.

Following a thorough review of Mr. Adkins' actions in battle by the Department of Defense, Secretary of Defense Hagel recently wrote to Congress that Mr. Adkins' actions merited the Medal of Honor and that, if Congress would waive the time requirement, he would recommend to President Obama that the President should award the Medal of Honor to Mr. Adkins.

As such, Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit for the RECORD a letter from Secretary Hagel.

This bill would also allow Mr. Donald Sloat to be considered for the Medal of Honor. On January 17, 1970, while serving in Vietnam, then-Specialist Donald Sloat, a machine gunner with Company D, Second Battalion, First Infantry Regiment, 196th Light Infantry, American Division, was killed while saving the lives of his squad members by drawing an enemy grenade to his body and shielding them from the blast. For his ultimate sacrifice to save his fellow soldiers, the DOD determined that Mr. Sloat's actions merited consideration for the Medal of Honor.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to commend the Department of Defense for completing the review of Jewish and Hispanic American veterans going back to World War II in order to correct an injustice to deserving members of our military who risked their lives for their country but whose actions were overlooked due to their ethnicities and religions. While conducting this review, the Department discovered seven individuals who did not meet the exact criteria of the congressionally mandated review but who, nevertheless, were deserving of the Medal of Honor. This bill would allow them to be recognized with the Nation's highest award for valor.

It is important to note that none of these brave Americans asked for this renewed consideration. It was through the advocacy and admiration of loved ones and of those who served with them that led to this effort.

For those brave Americans who show such extraordinary heroism in defense of our liberties, it is never too late to say thank you. To Mr. Adkins and Mr. Sloat and to all of the brave Americans like them, I say thank you.

I reserve the balance of my time.

PENTAGON,
Washington, DC, June 7, 2013.

Hon. MIKE ROGERS,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE ROGERS: I am writing in response to your request for award of the Medal of Honor to then-Sergeant First Class (SFC) Bennie G. Adkins under the provisions of section 1130 of title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.), ''Consideration of proposals for decorations not previously submitted in timely fashion: procedures for review.''

I reviewed the proposal for award of the Medal of Honor to then-SFC Bennie G. Adkins for his valorous acts from March 9 to March 12, 1966, during the Vietnam Conflict. After giving the nomination careful consideration, I believe then-SFC Bennie G. Adkins' actions merit award of the Medal of Honor. However, section 3744 of title 10, U.S.C., requires that the Medal of Honor be awarded ''within three years after the date of the act justifying the award.'' Therefore, a statutory time waiver to section 3744 of title 10, U.S.C. is required before the President of the United States may, if he so chooses, award the Medal of Honor to then-SFC Bennie G. Adkins.

The final award authority for the Medal of Honor rests solely with the President of the United States. My favorable determination in no way presumes what the President's decision might be.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs. A similar letter is being sent to the Chairmen of the Senate and House Committees on Armed Services.

Sincerely,

CHUCK HAGEL,
Secretary of Defense.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 3304, introduced by my friend and colleague, Mr. DEUTCH of Florida.

H.R. 3304 authorizes the President of the United States to award the Medal of Honor to Bennie G. Adkins, Donald P. Sloat, Melvin Morris, Ardie Copas, Jack Weinstein, Leonard Kravitz, Alfred Nietzel, Donald Schwab, and William Leonard.

These individuals have distinguished themselves in service to our Nation in previous conflicts, ranging from World War II to Vietnam. The individuals were reviewed by the appropriate services, and their nominations were given careful consideration by the Secretary of Defense, and their names have been submitted to the Congress.

Section 3744 of title X, United States Code, requires the Medal of Honor to be awarded within 3 years after the date of the act justifying the award, which is why we are here on the floor—to seek a statutory time waiver to allow the President of the United States to award the Medal of Honor to these particular individuals. So I urge my colleagues to support the passage of this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH), the author of this bill.

Mr. DEUTCH. I thank my friend, the gentlelady from Guam.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3304. I was pleased to work with my colleagues, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. BRIDENSTINE of Oklahoma, and Mr. ROONEY of Florida, on this bill; and I appreciate the work that they do on behalf of our veterans and the men and women who serve our country today.

This legislation will waive the time limitation to allow the award of the Medal of Honor to two brave men, Bennie G. Adkins, a constituent of Mr. ROGERS', and Donald P. Sloat, a constituent of Mr. BRIDENSTINE's. I sincerely appreciate my colleagues' support and the support of the House Armed Services Committee in the effort to bring this legislation to the floor today.

This legislation will also allow the award of the Medal of Honor to several other deserving veterans. This bill represents the culmination of a long fight to remedy discrimination against Jewish American and Hispanic American veterans of our Armed Forces who, in spite of their acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty, may have been overlooked as being deserving of the Medal of Honor.

Over 12 years ago, this important effort began because Mitch Libman, a close friend of Leonard Kravitz', made it known that then-Private First Class Kravitz may have been improperly bypassed for the Medal of Honor. After sacrificing his life in combat in Korea, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross with the following citation:

> Upon order to withdraw, Private Kravitz voluntarily remained to provide protective fire for the retiring elements. Traversing the gun to the left to cover the infiltrating enemy and ignoring the pleadings of his comrades to fall back, he fearlessly maintained his position. Detecting a column of Communist troops moving toward friendly positions, he swept the hostile soldiers with deadly accurate fire, killing the entire group. His destructive retaliation caused the enemy to concentrate vicious fire on his position and enabled the friendly elements to effect a withdrawal.

Leonard Kravitz bravely gave his life for the men fighting at his side and for his country. In spite of his acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty, Kravitz was not awarded the Medal of Honor. In fact, when Mr. Libman came forward to share Mr. Kravitz' story, no Jewish American veteran had been recommended to receive the Medal of Honor for service in Korea. To ensure that this disparity was not the result of discrimination, Congress required each military department to conduct a review of veteran files to identify any deserving veteran who may have been overlooked for the Medal of Honor. This review has ensured that our highest military honor will be awarded based only on the acts of valor and courage displayed in battle and that no veteran will be denied the Medal of Honor as a result of his or her religion, race, or heritage.

I am extremely proud of the long, rich history of Jewish Americans and Hispanic Americans serving in our Armed Forces. Over half a million Jewish Americans fought for the United States in World War II, and 11,000 of them perished while fighting for this country. Jewish Americans have served with distinction in Korea, Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm, and countless other missions around the globe. Hispanic Americans have a proud history of military service stretching back to the Revolutionary War. Over 1 million Latino veterans have served courageously in our Armed Forces. Hispanic Americans and Jewish Americans are among the brave young men and women who have stepped forward to serve our Nation in our most recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Members of both of these communities have fought for America's freedom and have had to fight to ensure that they receive the respect and honor they are owed for their service. The review of hundreds of service records resulted in the recommendation of the award of the Medal of Honor to at least seven veterans, including Mr. Kravitz.

I want to thank all of those at the Department of Defense who diligently reviewed their records to make certain that we properly recognize all of the brave veterans deserving of the Medal of Honor.

□ 1615

The President of the United States, Mr. Speaker, has awarded the Medal of Honor to 3,471 of our finest Americans over the course of our Nation's history. With the passage of this bill, the President will be authorized to add Bennie G. Adkins, Donald P. Sloat, and at least seven other veterans whose heroic acts can at last receive the highest honor that they richly deserve.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support the passage of this legislation.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I have no further requests to speak, so I am prepared to close with an urging to my colleagues that they vote in favor of this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, but I do want to commend the author of this bill, this very worthwhile piece of legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3304.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VULNERABLE VETERANS HOUSING REFORM ACT OF 2013

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1742) to exclude from consideration as income under the United States Housing Act of 1937 payments of pension made under section 1521 of title 38, United States Code, to veterans who are in need of regular aid and attendance, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1742

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 ''Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. EXCLUSION FROM INCOME.

Paragraph (4) of section 3(b) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)(4)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and any amounts'' and inserting '', any amounts'';

(2) by striking ''or any deferred'' and inserting '', any deferred''; and

(3) by inserting after ''prospective monthly amounts'' the following: '', and any expenses related to aid and attendance as detailed under section 1521 of title 38, United States Code''.

SEC. 3. UTILITY ALLOWANCES AND DATA.

Section 8(o) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(D) UTILITY ALLOWANCE.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In determining the monthly assistance payment for a family under subparagraphs (A) and (B), the amount allowed for tenant-paid utilities shall not exceed the appropriate utility allowance for the family unit size as determined by the public housing agency regardless of the size of the dwelling unit leased by the family.

''(ii) EXCEPTION FOR CERTAIN FAMILIES.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), upon request by a family that includes a person with disabilities, an elderly family, or a family that includes any person who is less than 18 years of age, the public housing agency shall approve a utility allowance that is higher than the applicable amount on the utility allowance schedule, except that in the case of a family that includes a person with disabilities, the agency shall approve such higher amount only if a higher utility allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by the family member with a disability.''; and

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

''(21) UTILITY DATA.—

''(A) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall, to the extent that data can be collected cost effectively, regularly publish such data regarding utility consumption and costs in local areas as the Secretary determines will be useful for the establishment of allowances for tenant-paid utilities for families assisted under this subsection.

''(B) USE OF DATA.—The Secretary shall provide such data in a manner that—

''(i) avoids unnecessary administrative burdens for public housing agencies and owners; and

''(ii) protects families in various unit sizes and building types, and using various utilities, from high rent and utility cost burdens relative to income.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) and the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CARNEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous material for the RECORD on H.R. 1742, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1742, the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2013, bipartisan legislation that ensures fairness in the housing assistance made available to our veterans who have borne the physical costs of service to the country.

First, H.R. 1742 amends current law to exempt expenses related to a veteran's in-home aid and attendance-care payments from qualifying as income when determining their eligibility and payments from HUD programs. The in-home aid and attendance-care benefit is an enhanced pension program provided by the VA to severely disabled wartime veterans who make less than $12,256 per year. These pensions are provided out of medical necessity and should not be considered disposable income. Including them in income calculations skews eligibility and wrongly reduces the housing assistance that would otherwise be available to thousands of disabled veterans.

The Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act also improves the way utility allowances are calculated by instructing public housing authorities to base payments on family size—that is, the number of people benefiting from a payment—rather than the current standard of dwelling size. Using this approach ensures, for instance, a family of four living in a one-bedroom apartment will not receive less in utility allowance than a single individual living in a two-bedroom apartment. These housing reforms have broad support from State and local housing agencies, low-income housing advocates, and for-profit and nonprofit affordable housing providers.

Mr. Speaker, many of our current veterans assistance programs are flawed—they spend too much and they help too few. Fortunately, the CBO estimates the reforms in this bill will save almost $50 million over 5 years while helping thousands of veterans obtain the appropriate housing assistance.

Sadly, homelessness affects over 60,000 veterans nationwide and approximately 1,000 in my home State of Arkansas. These numbers are unacceptable. As a combat veteran of both Iraq and Afghanistan, I understand not only the difficulties faced while serving in the military, but also the struggles that too many encounter upon returning to civilian life—especially with a life-altering disability. These men and women have put their lives on the line for our country; we should be doing all we can to support them—not making it harder for them to obtain assistance.

I am grateful to my colleague and fellow veteran, Congressman JOE HECK, and the Financial Services Committee for their work on this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and our disabled veterans.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

About a year ago, I talked to a young marine from Magnolia, Delaware, in my district. He had been wounded in Afghanistan and was home recovering. I had called him really just to wish him well and to see how he was doing. This marine was not focused on his injuries. All he could think about and talk to me about was getting back to his base.

Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress, we need to be worthy of this marine's sacrifice, his selflessness, and his dedication to fighting for his country. Our Nation's most sacred obligation is to care for our men and women in uniform, both when they are serving abroad and when they come back home.

Unfortunately, today, we are falling short of this duty. Today, about 60,000 veterans are homeless. Close to 13,000 of these are veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. While veterans represent only 7 percent of the U.S. population, they represent 13 percent of homeless Americans.

These numbers are just unacceptable. That is why I was pleased to join with my colleagues and friends, Mr. HECK and Mr. RENACCI, in introducing the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2013. We are all part of a bipartisan working group that meets a couple of times a month. We have come up with a number of commonsense ideas just like this bill. Mr. DELANEY and Mr. RENACCI have another bill later on today.

Simply put, the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act ensures that veterans who need and deserve housing assistance get it. Right now, those veterans who are struggling the most—those who are severely disabled and have virtually no income—receive a benefit from the VA to cover the cost of their care. This benefit goes to caretakers who help our veterans with the daily tasks of living, bathing, eating, maintaining prosthetics, and the list goes on. However, when these same veterans go to apply for housing assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, this aid counts as income, making it harder for them to qualify for housing assistance. This policy just doesn't make sense, and it is hurting our veterans.

H.R. 1742, the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act, fixes this problem so that our severely disabled veterans aren't victims of homelessness as well. It excludes this aid—meant to address the health and daily living needs of severely disabled veterans—from the calculation of income in the housing assistance program.

Mr. Speaker, often when Members come in through the doors of the House Chamber to vote, we are greeted by members of our military who have been wounded in service of our Nation. Most have lost limbs, and all their lives are irreparably changed. Despite all they have already given, these men and women come to our Nation's Capitol to continue giving back and to inspire and thank us. We should thank them.

As we approach Veterans Day, I hope the House will honor their sacrifice by passing legislation that will make life just a little easier for those who have given so much to protect ours.

I know my colleagues on both sides of the aisle recognize this as a critical issue. A similar version of this bill passed the House by voice vote in the last Congress. I urge my colleagues to pass this bill once again for the sake of our Nation's most vulnerable veterans.

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

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada, Dr. HECK, the sponsor of this legislation, a colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve and soon to be brigadier general.

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my brother veteran, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), and my friend from the State of Delaware (Mr. CARNEY) for joining me in support of H.R. 1742, this bipartisan bill, the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2013.

As has been stated, this bill would remove an unnecessary barrier that prevents our wartime veterans from receiving the housing assistance they so critically need. This body recognized the importance of this issue when it unanimously passed a substantially similar bill, H.R. 6361, the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2012, which I introduced last year. Unfortunately, that legislation was not considered by the Senate prior to the conclusion of the 112th Congress.

Quite simply, H.R. 1742 prevents the Department of Housing and Urban Development from considering a veteran's ''aid and attendance benefits'' as income when calculating their need and eligibility for housing assistance.

The aid and attendance benefit is an enhanced pension provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to our Nation's wartime veterans who are severely disabled and have little or no income. Veterans eligible for this benefit are those requiring the aid of another person in order to perform their activities of daily living.

In order to receive this benefit, a veteran must first establish his or her eligibility for a low-income pension, which requires an annual adjusted gross income of less than $12,256 for a single veteran with no dependents.

Once eligibility is determined, low-income disabled veterans can receive, roughly, an additional $8,000 in aid and attendance benefits annually to help defray the cost of their medical care. This is an important point: the aid and attendance benefit is for medical care; it is not discretionary income; it cannot be used for groceries, utilities, or transportation.

As you can imagine, these low-income veterans struggle daily to keep the lights on, put food on the table, and to keep a roof over their heads. Add to that the costs of paying for a personal care attendant and it becomes increasingly difficult for them to stay in their homes.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development operates a number of programs to assist these veterans. However, current regulations require that the aid and attendance benefit be counted as income when determining eligibility for housing assistance.

Mr. Speaker, this makes no sense. The VA provides this benefit to ensure that our low-income disabled wartime vets have the necessary resources to receive the medical care they need and that they have earned. While $8,000 per year may seem like a substantial amount of money, it doesn't fully cover the cost of a full-time aide, but it is much more cost effective than placing the veteran in a nursing home or assisted living facility.

Continuing to count the aid and attendance benefit as income does nothing more than to reduce the housing assistance available to our low-income disabled vets and jeopardizes their ability to live independently.

Mr. Speaker, it is its stated goal of both this House and this administration to reduce homelessness in our veteran population. The need for this legislative fix is just as strong today as it was last year. Most recent statistics estimate that approximately 63,000 veterans across America are homeless. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1742 will go a long way toward preventing homelessness for our Nation's veterans.

I urge my colleagues to support this critical legislation.

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I just would like to thank the sponsors, Mr. HECK, Mr. RENACCI, and other veterans, Mr. COTTON, the Members from the Democratic side who cosponsored this, and all the Members of the House who supported this the last time.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Delaware, as well as the gentleman from Nevada, and everybody in this institution that helps serve our veterans every single day.

I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1742.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1630

ESTABLISHING COMMISSION OR TASK FORCE TO EVALUATE THE BACKLOG OF DISABILITY CLAIMS

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2189) to establish a commission or task force to evaluate the backlog of disability claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2189

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

SECTION 1. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Table of contents.
Sec. 2. Scoring of budgetary effects.

TITLE I—IMPROVEMENT OF CLAIMS PROCESSING

Sec. 101. Evaluation of backlog of disability claims and appeals of claims of Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 102. Supplemental reports to the Strategic Plan to Eliminate the Compensation Claims Backlog.
Sec. 103. Expedition of transfer of certain records.
Sec. 104. Claims processors training.
Sec. 105. Report by Comptroller General of the United States.
Sec. 106. Priority for processing claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 107. Public availability of certain information about pending and completed claims for compensation under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 108. Annual report on processing of claims.
Sec. 109. Department of Veterans Affairs notice of average times for processing claims and percentage of claims approved.
Sec. 110. Claim defined.

TITLE II—COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

Sec. 201. Improvements to authority for performance of medical disabilities examinations by contract physicians.
Sec. 202. Consideration by Secretary of Veterans Affairs of resources disposed of for less than fair market value by individuals applying for pension.
Sec. 203. Bifurcated payments of compensation benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 204. Pension for certain veterans covered by Medicaid plans for services furnished by nursing facilities.

TITLE III—OTHER MATTERS

Sec. 301. Review of operation of certain ships during the Vietnam Era.
Sec. 302. Methods for validating certain service considered to be active service by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 303. Designation of American World War II Cities.
Sec. 304. Observance of Veterans Day.

SEC. 2. 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.

TITLE I—IMPROVEMENT OF CLAIMS PROCESSING

SEC. 101. EVALUATION OF BACKLOG OF DISABILITY CLAIMS AND APPEALS OF CLAIMS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is established a commission or task force to evaluate the backlog of claims within the Department of Veterans Affairs and the appeals process of claims.

(b) STUDIES.—

(1) BACKLOG STUDY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission or Task Force, acting through the subcommittee described in subsection (d)(2)(A), shall carry out a study on the backlog of claims, including the current process the Secretary of Veterans Affairs uses to evaluate claims and appeals and the laws and regulations applicable to such claims and appeals. Such study shall be a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of the backlog of claims, an analysis of

possible improvements to the procedures used to process such claims, and any related issues that the Commission or Task Force considers relevant.

(B) MATTERS INCLUDED.—In carrying out the study under subparagraph (A), the Commission or Task Force shall examine the following:

(i) The backlog of claims, including an analysis of—

(I) the most effective means to quickly and accurately resolve all claims pending as of the date of the study; and

(II) with respect to the Department, the annual funding, number of full-time employees, workload management practices, and the progress, as of the date of the study, of the strategic plan.

(ii) Possible improvements to the claims process, including an evaluation and recommendations with respect to whether substantive and structural changes to the overall claims process are required.

(iii) In carrying out the evaluation and recommendations under subparagraph (B), an examination of—

(I) options that make no major substantive changes to the claims process;

(II) options that maintain the process but make minor changes; and

(III) options that make broad changes to the process.

(2) APPEALS PROCESS STUDY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission or Task Force, acting through the subcommittee described in subsection (d)(2)(B), shall carry out a study on the anticipated increase of appeals of claims, including the current appeals process and the laws and regulations applicable to such appeals. Such study shall be a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of such anticipated increase of appeals claims, an analysis of possible improvements to the procedures used to process such appeals, and any related issues that the Commission or Task Force considers relevant.

(B) MATTERS INCLUDED.—In carrying out the study under subparagraph (A), the Commission or Task Force shall examine the following:

(i) The anticipated surge in appeals of claims, including an analysis of—

(I) the most effective means to quickly and accurately resolve pending appeals and future appeals;

(II) with respect to both the Board and the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, the annual funding, number of full-time employees, workload management practices, and the progress, as of the date of the study, of the strategic plan; and

(III) the efficiency, effectiveness, and utility of the Veterans Benefits Management System with respect to appeals operations, including an identification of key changes that may need to be implemented to such system.

(ii) Possible improvements to the appeals process, including an evaluation and recommendations with respect to whether substantive and structural changes to the overall appeals process are required.

(iii) In carrying out the evaluation and recommendations under clause (ii), an examination of—

(I) options that make no major substantive changes to the appeals process;

(II) options that maintain the process but make minor changes;

(III) options that make broad changes to the process;

(IV) the necessity of the multi-tiered levels of appeals at the regional office level, including filing a notice of disagreement, receipt of a statement of the case, supplemental statement of the case (if applicable), and substantive appeal (VA Form 9);

(V) the role of the Board and the Appeals Management Center, including—

(aa) the effectiveness of the workload management of the Board and the Center;

(bb) whether the Board and Center should be regionalized or maintain the centralized structure in the District of Columbia;

(cc) whether Board members should be required to pass the administrative law judges certification examination; and

(dd) whether the Board should continue to require de novo review of appeals; and

(VI) the role of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, including—

(aa) the continued effectiveness and necessity of a multi-tiered structure of judicial review;

(bb) whether the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims should have Article I or Article III status;

(cc) expansion of either the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims or the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit jurisdiction, including by allowing such courts to hear class action lawsuits with respect to claims; and

(dd) the possibility of expanding judicial review of claims to all Federal circuit courts of appeals or allowing judicial review beyond the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims only by the Supreme Court.

(3) CONSIDERATION.—In carrying out the studies under paragraph (1)(A) and (2)(A) and making any recommendations under this section, the Commission or Task Force shall consider the following:

(A) The interests of veterans, including with respect to accuracy, fairness, and transparency in the claims process of the Department.

(B) The values and requirements of the Constitution, including with respect to compliance with procedural and substantive due process.

(C) The public interest, including with respect to the responsible use of available resources.

(D) With respect to the study conducted under paragraph (1)(A), the importance of the claimant friendly, nonadversarial nature of the claims process.

(E) With respect to the study conducted under paragraph (2)(A), the importance of an appeals process that is efficient and easily understandable by a claimant.

(4) ROLE OF SECRETARY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, AND CHIEF JUDGE.—

(A) INFORMATION.—In carrying out each study under paragraph (1)(A) and (2)(A), at times that the Commission or Task Force determines appropriate, the Commission or Task Force shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Chairman of the Board, and the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, as the case may be, information with respect to remedies and solutions that the Commission or Task Force identifies pursuant to such a study.

(B) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary, the Chairman of the Board, and the Chief Judge shall each—

(i) fully consider the remedies and solutions submitted to the Secretary, the Chairman, or the Chief Judge, as the case may be, under subparagraph (A);

(ii) implement such remedies and solutions as the Secretary, the Chairman, or the Chief Judge, respectively, determines appropriate; and

(iii) submit to Congress justification for failing to implement any such remedy or solution.

(C) PLAN.—The Commission or Task Force shall submit to the Secretary, the Chairman of the Board, and the Chief Judge a feasible, timely, and cost-effective plan to eliminate the backlog of appeals of claims based on the remedies and solutions identified pursuant to the study under paragraph (2)(A) and the information submitted under subparagraph (A).

(c) COMPREHENSIVE REPORTS.—

(1) INITIAL COMPREHENSIVE REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the date on which the Commission or Task Force first meets, the Commission or Task Force shall submit to the President and Congress an initial comprehensive report on the studies conducted under paragraphs (1)(A) and (2)(A) of subsection (b), including—

(A) the findings of the causes of the backlog of claims;

(B) a proposed plan to handle the anticipated surge in appeals of claims; and

(C) the level of cooperation the Commission or Task Force has received from the Secretary and the heads of other departments or agencies of the Federal Government.

(2) INTERIM COMPREHENSIVE REPORTS.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Commission or Task Force first meets, and each 30-day period thereafter ending on the date on which the Commission or Task Force submits the final comprehensive report under paragraph (3), the Commission or Task Force shall submit to the President and Congress a comprehensive report on—

(A) the progress of the Secretary with respect to implementing solutions to expedite the elimination of the backlog of claims pursuant to subsection (b)(4)(B)(ii);

(B) the progress of the Secretary, the Chairman of the Board, and the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims with respect to implementing solutions to complete appeals of claims in a timely manner in a timely manner pursuant to such subsection; and

(C) the level of cooperation the Commission or Task Force has received from the Secretary and the heads of other departments or agencies of the Federal Government.

(3) FINAL COMPREHENSIVE REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which the Commission or Task Force first meets, the Commission or Task Force shall submit to the President and Congress a comprehensive report on the following:

(A) With respect to the study conducted under subsection (b)(1)(A)—

(i) The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Commission or Task Force with respect to the matters referred to in such subsection.

(ii) The recommendations of the Commission or Task Force for revising and improving the backlog of claims and the procedures used to process claims.

(iii) The progress of the Secretary with respect to implementing solutions to expedite the elimination of the backlog of claims pursuant to subsection (b)(4)(B)(ii).

(iv) Other information and recommendations with respect to claims as the Commission or Task Force considers appropriate.

(B) With respect to the study conducted under subsection (b)(2)(A)—

(i) The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Commission or Task Force with respect to the matters referred to in such subsection.

(ii) The recommendations of the Commission or Task Force for revising and improving the appeals process;

(iii) The information described in subsection (b)(4)(A).

(iv) The feasible, timely, and cost effective plan described in subsection (b)(4)(C).

(v) The progress of the Secretary, the Chairman of the Board, and the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims

with respect to implementing solutions to provide timely appeals of claims.

(vi) Other information and recommendations with respect to the appeals process as the Commission or Task Force considers appropriate.

(d) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission or Task Force shall be composed of 15 members, appointed as follows:

(A) Two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(B) Two members appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(C) Two members appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(D) Two members appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(E) Three members appointed by the President, two of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(F) One member appointed by the Secretary of Defense, whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims.

(G) Two members appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(H) One member appointed by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(2) SUBCOMMITTEES.—The Commission or Task Force shall have two subcommittees as follows:

(A) A Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims consisting of the eight members designated in accordance with paragraph (1).

(B) A Subcommittee on Appeals consisting of the seven members designated in accordance with paragraph (1).

(3) QUALIFICATIONS.—Each member appointed under paragraph (1) shall be appointed based on the experience of the member as a veteran or on the subject matter expertise or other relevant experience of the member.

(4) ADVISORS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In addition to the 15 members appointed under paragraph (1), the Commission or Task Force shall—

(i) have five nonvoting, nonmember advisors, appointed by a majority of the Commission or Task Force, each from a different organization that represents the interests of veterans; and

(ii) seek advice from experts from nongovernmental organizations (including veterans service organizations and military organizations), the Internet technology industry, and the insurance industry.

(B) ADVICE.—Individuals described in clause (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (A) shall provide advice to both subcommittees described in paragraph (2).

(5) CHAIRMAN.—The President shall designate a member of the Commission or Task Force who is appointed by the President and designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims to serve as the chairman of the Commission or Task Force. The chairman may designate a member to serve as the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and a member to serve as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Appeals to chair such subcommittees as the designee of the chairman of the Commission or Task Force.

(6) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT.—Members of the Commission or Task Force shall be appointed for the life of the Commission or Task Force. A vacancy shall not affect its powers.

(7) VACANCY.—A vacancy on the Commission or Task Force shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

(8) APPOINTMENT DEADLINE.—The appointment of members of the Commission or Task Force established in this section shall be made not later than 15 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(e) MEETINGS.—

(1) INITIAL MEETING.—The Commission or Task Force shall hold its first meeting not later than 15 days after the date on which a majority of the members are appointed.

(2) MEETINGS.—The Commission or Task Force shall meet at the call of the chairman.

(3) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Commission or Task Force shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may hold hearings.

(f) POWERS OF THE COMMISSION OR TASK FORCE.—

(1) HEARINGS.—The Commission or Task Force may hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission or Task Force considers advisable to carry out the purposes of this section.

(2) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The Commission or Task Force may secure directly from any department or agency of the Federal Government such information as the Commission or Task Force considers necessary to carry out the provisions of this section. Upon request of the chairman, the head of such department or agency shall furnish such information to the Commission or Task Force.

(3) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission or Task Force may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

(4) GIFTS.—The Commission or Task Force may accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of service or property.

(g) PERSONNEL MATTERS.—

(1) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—Each member of the Commission or Task Force who is not an officer or employee of the United States shall be compensated at a rate equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States Code, for each day (including travel time) during which the member is engaged in the performance of the duties of the Commission or Task Force. All members of the Commission or Task Force who are officers or employees of the United States shall serve without compensation in addition to that received for their services as officers or employees of the United States.

(2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Commission or Task Force shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of service of the Commission or Task Force.

(3) STAFF.—

(A) APPOINTMENT.—The chairman of the Commission or Task Force may, without regard to the civil service laws and regulations, appoint an executive director and such other personnel as may be necessary to enable the Commission or Task Force to perform its duties. The appointment of an executive director shall be subject to the approval of the Commission or Task Force.

(B) COMPENSATION.—The chairman of the Commission or Task Force may fix the compensation of the executive director and other personnel without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating to classification of positions and General Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of pay for the executive director and other personnel may not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(4) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—Upon request of the chairman of the Commission or Task Force, the head of any department or agency of the Federal Government may detail, on a nonreimbursable basis, any personnel of that department or agency to the Commission or Task Force to assist it in carrying out its duties.

(5) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—The chairman of the Commission or Task Force may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals which do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(h) TERMINATION OF COMMISSION OR TASK FORCE.—The Commission or Task Force shall terminate 60 days after the date on which the Commission or Task Force submits the final comprehensive report under subsection (c)(3).

(i) FUNDING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, upon the request of the chairman of the Commission or Task Force, make available to the Commission or Task Force such amounts as the Commission or Task Force may require to carry out the duties of the Commission or Task Force under this section.

(2) AVAILABILITY.—Any sums made available to the Commission or Task Force shall remain available, without fiscal year limitation, until the termination of the Commission or Task Force.

(j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''appeals process'' means the process to appeal the determination by the Secretary of a claim beginning with the notice of disagreement filed pursuant to section 7105 of title 38, United States Code, and ending with the review of a decision by the Supreme Court pursuant to section 7292(c) of such title.

(2) The term ''Board'' means the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

(3) The term ''strategic plan'' means the Strategic Plan to Eliminate the Compensation Claims Backlog, published by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on January 25, 2013.

SEC. 102. SUPPLEMENTAL REPORTS TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN TO ELIMINATE THE COMPENSATION CLAIMS BACKLOG.

Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 120 days thereafter until Memorial Day (May 25), 2015, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a supplemental report on the implementation by the Department of Veterans Affairs of the Strategic Plan to Eliminate the Compensation Claims Backlog. Each such report shall include—

(1) verification that during the period covered by the report, each claim was approved or denied by not later than 125 days after the date on which the claim is submitted with an accuracy rate of 98 percent, as specified in the Strategic Plan;

(2) a description of the specific measures, procedures, and metrics used to assess the implementation of the Strategic Plan for purposes of the supplemental report; and

(3) a detailed timeline for the implementation of each initiative contained in the Strategic Plan.

SEC. 103. EXPEDITION OF TRANSFER OF CERTAIN RECORDS.

(a) SSA RECORDS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into an agreement with the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration to ensure that the Commissioner transfers to the Secretary disability or medical records of the Commissioner that the Secretary will use to evaluate a claim by not later than 30 days after the Secretary requests such records.

(b) DOD RECORDS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into an agreement with the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the Secretary of Defense transfers to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs medical records of members or former members of the Armed Forces that the Secretary will use to evaluate a claim by not later than 30 days after the Secretary requests such records.

(c) NATIONAL GUARD RECORDS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly—

(1) submit to Congress a plan to reduce to 30 days the amount of time needed to provide members of the National Guard and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with the medical records of such members, including by partnering with appropriate officials of Federal or State departments or agencies; and

(2) implement such plan.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 104. CLAIMS PROCESSORS TRAINING.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a training program to provide newly hired claims processors of the Department of Veterans Affairs with training for a period of not less than two years. In carrying out such program, the Secretary shall identify successful claims processors of the Department who can assist in the training of newly hired claims processors.

(b) ABILITY TO PROCESS CLAIMS.—The Secretary shall carry out the training program established under subsection (a) without increasing the amount of time in which claims are processed by the Department.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 105. REPORT BY COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the progress of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in improving the timeliness of claims processing and eliminating the backlog of claims. The report shall include any recommendations of the Comptroller General with respect to improving the ability of the Secretary to make such progress.

SEC. 106. PRIORITY FOR PROCESSING CLAIMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 51 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 5109C. Priority for processing claims

''(a) PRIORITY.—In processing claims for compensation under this chapter, the Secretary shall provide the following claimants with priority over other claimants:

''(1) Veterans who have attained the age of 70.

''(2) Veterans who are terminally ill.

''(3) Veterans with life-threatening illnesses.

''(4) Homeless veterans (as defined in section 2002 of this title).

''(5) Veterans who were awarded the Medal of Honor.

''(6) Veterans who are former prisoners of war.

''(7) Veterans whose claims are being reviewed again in relation to a previously denied claim relating to military sexual trauma.

''(8) Veterans whom the Secretary determines, on a case-by-case basis, are seriously or very seriously injured.

''(9) Veterans whom the Secretary determines, on a case-by-case basis, should be given priority under this section based on an application for good cause established by the Secretary.

''(b) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe regulations to carry out subsection (a).''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 5109B the following new item:

''5109C. Priority for processing claims.''.

SEC. 107. PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF CERTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT PENDING AND COMPLETED CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION UNDER THE LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 51 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding after section 5109C, as added by section 106, the following new section:

"§ 5109D. Information about pending and completed claims

''(a) AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall maintain on the Internet website of the Department publicly accessible information about pending and completed claims for compensation under chapter 11 of this title. Such information shall include each of the following:

''(1) For each regional office and for the Department as a whole—

''(A) the average number of days between the date of the submittal of a claim and the date of the decision with respect to the claim for each of the preceding three-month and one-year period;

''(B) the average number of days such a claim is pending during the preceding three-month and one-year periods;

''(C) the quality and accuracy rating of the claims adjudication process during the preceding three-month and one-year periods;

''(D) the number of claims pending;

''(E) the number of pending claims that have been pending for more than 125 days; and

''(F) the number of claims completed during—

''(i) the current month, to date;

''(ii) the month preceding the current month;

''(iii) the current calendar year, to date; and

''(iv) the calendar year preceding the current calendar year.

''(2) For each medical condition for which a claim for compensation is submitted, for each regional office and for the Department as a whole—

''(A) the average number of days between the date of the submittal of a claim relating to such medical condition and the date of the decision with respect to the claim for each of the preceding three-month and one-year period;

''(B) the average number of days such a claim is pending during the preceding three-month and one-year periods;

''(C) the quality and accuracy rating of the claims adjudication process as applied to claims relating to such medical condition during the preceding three-month and one-year periods;

''(D) the number of pending claims relating to such condition;

''(E) the number of such pending claims that have been pending for more than 125 days; and

''(F) the number of claims relating to such medical condition completed during—

''(i) the current month, to date;

''(ii) the month preceding current month;

''(iii) the current calendar year, to date; and

''(iv) the calendar year preceding the current calendar year.

''(b) UPDATES.—The Secretary shall update the information on the website under subsection (a) not less frequently than once every seven days.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding after the item relating to section 5109C, as added by section 106, the following new item:

''5109D. Information about pending and completed claims.''.

SEC. 108. ANNUAL REPORT ON PROCESSING OF CLAIMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 51 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding after section 5109D, as added by section 107, the following new section:

"§ 5109E. Annual report on processing of claims

''(a) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Secretary shall include in the annual report to Congress required under section 529 of this title information on the following:

''(1) The automatic processing of claims for compensation.

''(2) The performance of any regional office that fails to meet the administrative goals of the regional office with respect to timeliness and accuracy in processing claims for compensation.

''(3) The timeliness of receiving information pursuant to a request by the Secretary to the head of another department or agency of the United States for information required by the Secretary in adjudicating a claim for compensation under chapter 11 of this title.

''(b) MATTERS INCLUDED.—In carrying out subsection (a) to include information in the report required under section 529 of this title, the Secretary shall include the following:

''(1) With respect to the information required by subsection (a)(1)—

''(A) each medical condition for which claims relating to such condition were processed in an electronic automated fashion during the fiscal year covered by the report;

''(B) the feasibility of processing any additional medical conditions in an electronic automated fashion and any barriers to such processing, including any such barriers relating to the schedule for rating disabilities under section 1155 of this title;

''(C) the number of claims for compensation relating to each medical condition submitted during such fiscal year; and

''(D) for each medical condition, the percentage of claims denied and the percentage of claims approved during such fiscal year.

''(2) With respect to the information required by subsection (a)(2), in the case of any

regional office that, for the fiscal year covered by the report, did not meet the administrative goal of having no claim pending for more than 125 days and achieving an accuracy rating of 98 percent—

''(A) a signed statement prepared by the individual serving as director of the regional office as of the date of the submittal of the report containing—

''(i) an explanation for why the regional office did not meet the goal;

''(ii) a description of the additional resources needed to enable the regional office to reach the goal; and

''(iii) a description of any additional actions planned for the subsequent fiscal year that are proposed to enable the regional office to meet the goal; and

''(B) a statement prepared by the Under Secretary for Benefits explaining how the failure of the regional office to meet the goal affected the performance evaluation of the director of the regional office.

''(3) With respect to the information required by subsection (a)(3)—

''(A) the number of requests described in such paragraph made during the fiscal year covered by the report; and

''(B) the average response time for such requests made during each month of such fiscal year, as determined based on the period beginning on the date on which the Secretary made the request and ending on the date on which the Secretary determines that the request is completed.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding after the item relating to section 5109D, as added by section 107, the following new item:

''5109E. Annual report on processing of claims.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 5109E of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 109. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NOTICE OF AVERAGE TIMES FOR PROCESSING CLAIMS AND PERCENTAGE OF CLAIMS APPROVED.

(a) PUBLIC NOTICE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall post the information described in subsection (c)—

(1) in a conspicuous place in each regional office and claims intake facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(2) on the Internet website of the Department.

(b) NOTICE TO APPLICANTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide to each person who submits a claim for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary before the person submits such claim—

(A) notice of the information described in subsection (c); and

(B) notice that, during the period ending on August 6, 2015, the person is eligible to receive up to an extra year of benefits payments if the person files an original claim that is fully developed.

(2) ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF NOTICE.—Each person who submits a claim for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary shall include in such application a signed form acknowledging that the person received the information described in subsection (c).

(c) INFORMATION DESCRIBED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The information described in this subsection is the following:

(A) The average processing time of the claims described in paragraph (2) and the percentage of such submitted claims for which benefits are awarded.

(B) The percentage of each of the following types of submitted claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for which benefits are awarded:

(i) Claims filed by veterans who authorized a veterans service organization to act on the veterans' behalf under a durable power of attorney.

(ii) Claims filed by veterans who authorized a person other than a veterans service organization to act on the veterans' behalf under a durable power of attorney.

(iii) Claims filed by veterans who did not authorize a person to act on the veterans' behalf under a durable power of attorney.

(2) CLAIMS DESCRIBED.—The claims described in this paragraph are each of the following types of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs:

(A) A fully developed claim that is submitted in standard electronic form.

(B) A fully developed claim that is submitted in standard paper form.

(C) A claim that is not fully developed that is submitted in standard electronic form.

(D) A claim that is not fully developed that is submitted in standard paper form.

(E) A claim that is not fully developed that is submitted in nonstandard paper form.

(3) UPDATE OF INFORMATION.—The information described in this subsection shall be updated not less frequently than once each fiscal quarter.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 110. CLAIM DEFINED.

Except as otherwise provided, in this title, the term ''claim'' means a claim for disability compensation under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE II—COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

SEC. 201. IMPROVEMENTS TO AUTHORITY FOR PERFORMANCE OF MEDICAL DISABILITIES EXAMINATIONS BY CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.

(a) EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY AUTHORITY.—Subsection (c) of section 704 of the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 (38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2016''.

(b) LICENSURE OF CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.—

(1) TEMPORARY AUTHORITY.—Such section 704 is further amended—

(A) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (e); and

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

''(d) LICENSURE OF CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any law regarding the licensure of physicians, a physician described in paragraph (2) may conduct an examination pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (b) at any location in any State, the District of Columbia, or a Commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States, so long as the examination is within the scope of the authorized duties under such contract.

''(2) PHYSICIAN DESCRIBED.—A physician described in this paragraph is a physician who—

''(A) has a current license to practice the health care profession of the physician; and

''(B) is performing authorized duties for the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (b).''.

(2) PILOT PROGRAM.—Section 504 of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 1996 (38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended—

(A) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (d) and (e), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection (c):

''(c) LICENSURE OF CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any law regarding the licensure of physicians, a physician described in paragraph (2) may conduct an examination pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (a) at any location in any State, the District of Columbia, or a Commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States, so long as the examination is within the scope of the authorized duties under such contract.

''(2) PHYSICIAN DESCRIBED.—A physician described in this paragraph is a physician who—

''(A) has a current license to practice the health care profession of the physician; and

''(B) is performing authorized duties for the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (a).''.

(c) EXPANSION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—Subsection (b) of such section 504 is amended to read as follows:

''(b) LOCATIONS.—

''(1) NUMBER.—The Secretary may carry out the pilot program under this section through not more than 15 regional offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

''(2) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall select the regional offices under paragraph (1) by analyzing appropriate data to determine the regional offices that require support. Such appropriate data shall include—

''(A) the number of backlogged claims;

''(B) the total pending case workload;

''(C) the length of time cases have been pending;

''(D) the accuracy of completed cases;

''(E) the overall timeliness of completed cases;

''(F) the availability and workload of the examination units and physicians of the medical centers in the regional office; and

''(G) any other data the Secretary determines appropriate.

''(3) ANNUAL ANALYSIS.—The Secretary shall carry out the data analysis of the regional offices under paragraph (2) during each year in which the program under this section is carried out to determine the regional offices selected under paragraph (1) for such year.''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section and the amendment made by this section shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 202. CONSIDERATION BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF RESOURCES DISPOSED OF FOR LESS THAN FAIR MARKET VALUE BY INDIVIDUALS APPLYING FOR PENSION.

(a) VETERANS.—Section 1522 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by inserting ''(1)'' before ''The Secretary''; and

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

''(2)(A) If a veteran otherwise eligible for payment of pension under section 1513 or 1521 of this title or the spouse of such veteran disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i), the Secretary shall deny or discontinue the payment of pension to such veteran under section 1513 or 1521 of this title, as the case may be, for months during the period beginning on the date described in subparagraph (D) and equal to the number of months calculated as provided in subparagraph (E).

''(B)(i) For purposes of this paragraph, a covered resource is any resource that was a part of the corpus of the estate of the veteran or, if the veteran has a spouse, the corpus of the estates of the veteran and of the veteran's spouse, that the Secretary considers that under all the circumstances, if the veteran or spouse had not disposed of such resource, it would be reasonable that

the resource (or some portion of the resource) be consumed for the veteran's maintenance.

''(ii) For purposes of this paragraph, the Secretary may consider, in accordance with regulations the Secretary shall prescribe, a transfer of an asset (including a transfer of an asset to an annuity, trust, or other financial instrument or investment) a disposal of a covered resource for less than fair market value if such transfer reduces the amount in the corpus of the estate of the veteran or, if the veteran has a spouse, the corpus of the estates of the veteran and of the veteran's spouse, that the Secretary considers, under all the circumstances, would be reasonable to be consumed for the veteran's maintenance.

''(C)(i) The look-back date described in this clause is a date that is 36 months before the date described in clause (ii).

''(ii) The date described in this clause is the date on which the veteran applies for pension under section 1513 or 1521 of this title or, if later, the date on which the veteran (or the spouse of the veteran) disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value.

''(D) The date described in this subparagraph is the first day of the first month in or after which covered resources were disposed of for less than fair market value and which does not occur in any other period of ineligibility under this paragraph.

''(E) The number of months calculated under this subparagraph shall be equal to—

''(i) the total, cumulative uncompensated value of the portion of covered resources so disposed of by the veteran (or the spouse of the veteran) on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i) that the Secretary determines would reasonably have been consumed for the veteran's maintenance; divided by

''(ii) the maximum amount of monthly pension that is payable to a veteran under section 1513 or 1521 of this title, including the maximum amount of increased pension payable under such sections on account of family members, but not including any amount of pension payable under such sections because a veteran is in need of regular aid and attendance or is permanently housebound,

rounded, in the case of any fraction, to the nearest whole number, but shall not in any case exceed 36 months.'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by inserting ''(1)'' before ''The Secretary''; and

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

''(2)(A) If a veteran otherwise eligible for payment of increased pension under subsection (c), (d), (e), or (f) of section 1521 of this title on account of a child, the spouse of the veteran, or the child disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i), the Secretary shall deny or discontinue payment of such increased pension for months during the period beginning on the date described in subparagraph (D) and equal to the number of months calculated as provided in subparagraph (E).

''(B)(i) For purposes of this paragraph, a covered resource is any resource that was a part of the corpus of the estate of the child that the Secretary considers that under all the circumstances, if the veteran, the spouse of the veteran, or the child had not disposed of such resource, it would be reasonable that the resource (or some portion of the resource) be consumed for the child's maintenance.

''(ii) For purposes of this paragraph, the Secretary may consider, in accordance with regulations the Secretary shall prescribe, a transfer of an asset (including a transfer of an asset to an annuity, trust, or other financial instrument or investment) a disposal of a covered resource for less than fair market value if such transfer reduces the amount in the corpus of the estate of the child that the Secretary considers, under all the circumstances, would be reasonable to be consumed for the child's maintenance.

''(C)(i) The look-back date described in this clause is a date that is 36 months before the date described in clause (ii).

''(ii) The date described in this clause is the date on which the veteran applies for payment of increased pension under subsection (c), (d), (e), or (f) of section 1521 of this title on account of a child or, if later, the date on which the veteran, the spouse of the veteran, or the child disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value.

''(D) The date described in this subparagraph is the first day of the first month in or after which covered resources were disposed of for less than fair market value and which does not occur in any other period of ineligibility under this paragraph.

''(E) The number of months calculated under this subparagraph shall be equal to—

''(i) the total, cumulative uncompensated value of the portion of covered resources so disposed of by the veteran, the spouse of the veteran, or the child on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i) that the Secretary determines would reasonably have been consumed for the child's maintenance; divided by

''(ii) the maximum amount of increased monthly pension that is payable to a veteran under subsection (c), (d), (e), or (f) of section 1521 of this title on account of a child,

rounded, in the case of any fraction, to the nearest whole number, but shall not in any case exceed 36 months.''; and

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

''(c)(1) The Secretary shall not deny or discontinue payment of pension under section 1513 or 1521 of this title or payment of increased pension under subsection (c), (d), (e), or (f) of section 1521 of this title on account of a child by reason of the application of subsection (a)(2) or (b)(2) of this section to the disposal of resources by an individual to the extent that—

''(A) a satisfactory showing is made to the Secretary (in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary) that all resources disposed of for less than fair market value have been returned to the individual who disposed of the resources; or

''(B) the Secretary determines, under procedures established by the Secretary, that the denial or discontinuance of payment would work an undue hardship as determined on the basis of criteria established by the Secretary.

''(2) At the time a veteran applies for pension under section 1513 or 1521 of this title or increased pension under subsection (c), (d), (e), or (f) of section 1521 of this title on account of a child, and at such other times as the Secretary considers appropriate, the Secretary shall—

''(A) inform such veteran of the provisions of subsections (a)(2) and (b)(2) providing for a period of ineligibility for payment of pension under such sections for individuals who make certain dispositions of resources for less than fair market value; and

''(B) obtain from such veteran information which may be used in determining whether or not a period of ineligibility for such payments would be required by reason of such subsections.

''(d) Subsections (a)(2) and (b)(2) shall not apply with respect to the disposal of resources or the transfer of an asset if such disposal or transfer is to a trust described in section 1917(d)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396p(d)(4)) that is established for the benefit of a child of the veteran.''.

(b) SURVIVING SPOUSES AND CHILDREN.—Section 1543 of such title is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3);

(B) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph (2):

''(2)(A) If a surviving spouse otherwise eligible for payment of pension under section 1541 of this title disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i), the Secretary shall deny or discontinue the payment of pension to such surviving spouse under section 1541 of this title for months during the period beginning on the date described in subparagraph (D) and equal to the number of months calculated as provided in subparagraph (E).

''(B)(i) For purposes of this paragraph, a covered resource is any resource that was a part of the corpus of the estate of the surviving spouse that the Secretary considers that under all the circumstances, if the surviving spouse had not disposed of such resource, it would be reasonable that the resource (or some portion of the resource) be consumed for the surviving spouse's maintenance.

''(ii) For purposes of this paragraph, the Secretary may consider, in accordance with regulations the Secretary shall prescribe, a transfer of an asset (including a transfer of an asset to an annuity, trust, or other financial instrument or investment) a disposal of a covered resource for less than fair market value if such transfer reduces the amount in the corpus of the estate of the surviving spouse that the Secretary considers, under all the circumstances, would be reasonable to be consumed for the surviving spouse's maintenance.

''(C)(i) The look-back date described in this clause is a date that is 36 months before the date described in clause (ii).

''(ii) The date described in this clause is the date on which the surviving spouse applies for pension under section 1541 of this title or, if later, the date on which the surviving spouse disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value.

''(D) The date described in this subparagraph is the first day of the first month in or after which covered resources were disposed of for less than fair market value and which does not occur in any other period of ineligibility under this paragraph.

''(E) The number of months calculated under this subparagraph shall be equal to—

''(i) the total, cumulative uncompensated value of the portion of covered resources so disposed of by the surviving spouse on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i) that the Secretary determines would reasonably have been consumed for the surviving spouse's maintenance; divided by

''(ii) the maximum amount of monthly pension that is payable to a surviving spouse under section 1541 of this title, including the maximum amount of increased pension payable under such section on account of a child, but not including any amount of pension payable under such section because a surviving spouse is in need of regular aid and attendance or is permanently housebound,

rounded, in the case of any fraction, to the nearest whole number, but shall not in any case exceed 36 months.

''(F) In the case of a transfer by the surviving spouse during the veteran's lifetime that resulted in a period of ineligibility for the veteran under section 1522 of this title,

the Secretary shall apply to the surviving spouse any remaining ineligibility for that period.''; and

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

''(4)(A) If a surviving spouse otherwise eligible for payment of increased pension under subsection (c), (d), or (e) of section 1541 of this title on account of a child or the child disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i), the Secretary shall deny or discontinue payment of such increased pension for months during the period beginning on the date described in subparagraph (D) and equal to the number of months calculated as provided in subparagraph (E).

''(B)(i) For purposes of this paragraph, a covered resource is any resource that was a part of the corpus of the estate of the child that the Secretary considers that under all the circumstances, if the surviving spouse or the child had not disposed of such resource, it would be reasonable that the resource (or some portion of the resource) be consumed for the child's maintenance.

''(ii) For purposes of this paragraph, the Secretary may consider, in accordance with regulations the Secretary shall prescribe, a transfer of an asset (including a transfer of an asset to an annuity, trust, or other financial instrument or investment) a disposal of a covered resource for less than fair market value if such transfer reduces the amount in the corpus of the estate of the child that the Secretary considers, under all the circumstances, would be reasonable to be consumed for the child's maintenance.

''(C)(i) The look-back date described in this clause is a date that is 36 months before the date described in clause (ii).

''(ii) The date described in this clause is the date on which the surviving spouse applies for payment of increased pension under subsection (c), (d), or (e) of section 1541 of this title on account of a child or, if later, the date on which the surviving spouse (or the child) disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value.

''(D) The date described in this subparagraph is the first day of the first month in or after which covered resources were disposed of for less than fair market value and which does not occur in any other period of ineligibility under this paragraph.

''(E) The number of months calculated under this clause shall be equal to—

''(i) the total, cumulative uncompensated value of the portion of covered resources so disposed of by surviving spouse (or the child) on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i) that the Secretary determines would reasonably have been consumed for the child's maintenance; divided by

''(ii) the maximum amount of increased monthly pension that is payable to a surviving spouse under subsection (c), (d), or (e) of section 1541 of this title on account of a child,

rounded, in the case of any fraction, to the nearest whole number, but shall not in any case exceed 36 months.'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by inserting ''(1)'' before ''The Secretary''; and

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

''(2)(A) If a child otherwise eligible for payment of pension under section 1542 of this title or any person with whom such child is residing who is legally responsible for such child's support disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i), the Secretary shall deny or discontinue the payment of pension to such child under section 1542 of this title for months during the period beginning on the date described in subparagraph (D) and equal to the number of months calculated as provided in subparagraph (E).

''(B)(i) For purposes of this paragraph, a covered resource is any resource that was a part of the corpus of the estate of the child or the corpus of the estate of any person with whom such child is residing who is legally responsible for such child's support that the Secretary considers that under all the circumstances, if the child or person had not disposed of such resource, it would be reasonable that the resource (or some portion of the resource) be consumed for the child's maintenance.

''(ii) For purposes of this paragraph, the Secretary may consider, in accordance with regulations the Secretary shall prescribe, a transfer of an asset (including a transfer of an asset to an annuity, trust, or other financial instrument or investment) a disposal of a covered resource for less than fair market value if such transfer reduces the amount in the corpus of the estate described in clause (i) that the Secretary considers, under all the circumstances, would be reasonable to be consumed for the child's maintenance.

''(C)(i) The look-back date described in this clause is a date that is 36 months before the date described in clause (ii).

''(ii) The date described in this clause is the date on which the child applies for pension under section 1542 of this title or, if later, the date on which the child (or person described in subparagraph (B)) disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value.

''(D) The date described in this clause is the first day of the first month in or after which covered resources were disposed of for less than fair market value and which does not occur in any other period of ineligibility under this paragraph.

''(E) The number of months calculated under this clause shall be equal to—

''(i) the total, cumulative uncompensated value of the portion of covered resources so disposed of by the child (or person described in subparagraph (B)) on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i) that the Secretary determines would reasonably have been consumed for the child's maintenance; divided by

''(ii) the maximum amount of monthly pension that is payable to a child under section 1542 of this title,

rounded, in the case of any fraction, to the nearest whole number, but shall not in any case exceed 36 months.''; and

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

''(c)(1) The Secretary shall not deny or discontinue payment of pension under section 1541 or 1542 of this title or payment of increased pension under subsection (c), (d), or (e) of section 1541 of this title on account of a child by reason of the application of subsection (a)(2), (a)(4), or (b)(2) of this section to the disposal of resources by an individual to the extent that—

''(A) a satisfactory showing is made to the Secretary (in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary) that all resources disposed of for less than fair market value have been returned to the individual who disposed of the resources; or

''(B) the Secretary determines, under procedures established by the Secretary, that the denial or discontinuance of payment would work an undue hardship as determined on the basis of criteria established by the Secretary.

''(2) At the time a surviving spouse or child applies for pension under section 1541 or 1542 of this title or increased pension under subsection (c), (d), or (e) of section 1541 of this title on account of a child, and at such other times as the Secretary considers appropriate, the Secretary shall—

''(A) inform such surviving spouse or child of the provisions of subsections (a)(2), (a)(4), and (b)(2), as applicable, providing for a period of ineligibility for payment of pension or increased pension under such sections for individuals who make certain dispositions of resources for less than fair market value; and

''(B) obtain from such surviving spouse or child information which may be used in determining whether or not a period of ineligibility for such payments would be required by reason of such subsections.

''(d) Paragraphs (2) and (4) of subsection (a) and subsection (b)(2) shall not apply with respect to the disposal of resources or the transfer of an asset if such disposal or transfer is to a trust described in section 1917(d)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396p(d)(4)) that is established for the benefit of a child of the veteran or surviving spouse.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsections (a)(2), (b)(2), and (c) of section 1522 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), and subsections (a)(2), (a)(4), (b)(2), and (c) of section 1543 of such title, as added by subsection (b), shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply with respect to payments of pension and increased pension applied for after such date and to payments of pension and increased pension for which eligibility is redetermined after such date, except that no reduction in pension shall be made under such subsections because of any disposal of covered resources made before such date.

(d) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act and not less frequently than once each year thereafter through 2018, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the administration of subsections (a)(2), (b)(2), and (c) of section 1522 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), and subsections (a)(2), (a)(4), (b)(2), and (c) of section 1543 of such title, as added by subsection (b), during the most recent 12-month period.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following, for the period covered by the report:

(A) The number of individuals who applied for pension under chapter 15 of such title.

(B) The number of individuals who received pension under such chapter.

(C) The number of individuals with respect to whom the Secretary denied or discontinued payment of pension under the subsections referred to in paragraph (1).

(D) A description of any trends identified by the Secretary regarding pension payments that have occurred as a result of the amendments made by this section.

(E) Such other information as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(3) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(A) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Select Committee on Aging of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 203. BIFURCATED PAYMENTS OF COMPENSATION BENEFITS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 51 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 5127. Bifurcated payments of compensation benefits

''(a) IN GENERAL.—During the eight-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this section, in the case of a claim described in subsection (b), prior to adjudicating the claim, the Secretary shall make payments of monetary benefits to the claimant based on any disability for which the Secretary has made a decision. Upon the adjudication of the claim, the Secretary shall pay to the claimant any monetary benefits awarded to the claimant for the period of payment under section 5111 of this title less the amount of such benefits paid to the claimant under this section.

''(b) CLAIM DESCRIBED.—A claim described in this subsection is a claim for disability compensation under chapter 11 of this title—

''(1) the adjudication of which requires the Secretary to make decisions with respect to two or more disabilities; and

''(2) for which, before completing the adjudication of the claim, the Secretary makes a decision with respect to a disability that would result in the payment of monetary benefits to the claimant upon the adjudication of the claim.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end of the items relating to such subchapter the following new item:

''5127. Bifurcated payments of compensation benefits.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 5127 of title 38, United State Code, as added by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 204. PENSION FOR CERTAIN VETERANS COVERED BY MEDICAID PLANS FOR SERVICES FURNISHED BY NURSING FACILITIES.

Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''November 30, 2016'' and inserting ''September 30, 2018''.

TITLE III—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 301. REVIEW OF OPERATION OF CERTAIN SHIPS DURING THE VIETNAM ERA.

(a) REVIEW REQUIRED.—By not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall review the logs of each ship under the authority of the Secretary of the Navy that is known to have operated in the waters near Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, to determine—

(1) whether each such ship operated in the territorial waters of the Republic of Vietnam during such period; and

(2) for each such ship that so operated—

(A) the date or dates when the ship so operated; and

(B) the distance from the shore of the location where the ship operated that was the closest proximity to shore.

(b) PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Upon a determination that any such ship so operated, the Secretary of Defense shall provide such determination, together with the information described in subsection (a)(2) about the ship, to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make publicly available all unclassified information provided to the Secretary under subsection (b).

SEC. 302. METHODS FOR VALIDATING CERTAIN SERVICE CONSIDERED TO BE ACTIVE SERVICE BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The Merchant Marine Act, 1936 established the United States Maritime Commission, and stated as a matter of policy that the United States should have a merchant marine that is ''capable of serving as a naval and military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency''.

(2) The Social Security Act Amendments of 1939 (Public Law 76–379) expanded the definition of employment to include service ''on or in connection with an American vessel under contract of service which is entered into within the United States or during the performance of which the vessel touches at a port in the United States, if the employee is employed on and in connection with such vessel''.

(3) The Joint Resolution to repeal sections 2, 3, and 6 of the Neutrality Act of 1939, and for other purposes (Public Law 77–294; 55 Stat. 764) repealed section 6 of the Neutrality Act of 1939 (related to the arming of United States vessels) and authorized the President during the national emergency to arm or permit to arm any United States vessel.

(4) On February 7, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, through Executive Order Number 9054, established the War Shipping Administration that was charged with building or purchasing, and operating the civilian shipping vessels needed for the war effort.

(5) During World War II, United States merchant mariners transported goods and materials through ''contested waters'' to the various combat theaters.

(6) At the conclusion of World War II, United States merchant mariners were responsible for transporting several million members of the United States Armed Forces back to the United States.

(7) The GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977 (Public Law 95–202) provided that the Secretary of Defense could determine that service for the Armed Forces by organized groups of civilians, or contractors, be considered ''active service'' for benefits administered by the Veterans Administration.

(8) Department of Defense Directive 1000.20 directed that the determination be made by the Secretary of the Air Force, and established the Civilian/Military Service Review Board and Advisory Panel.

(9) In 1987, three merchant mariners along with the AFL–CIO sued Edward C. Aldridge, Secretary of the Air Force, challenging the denial of their application for veterans status. In *Schumacher* v. *Aldridge* (665 F. Supp. 41 (D.D.C. 1987)), the Court determined that Secretary Aldridge had failed to ''articulate clear and intelligible criteria for the administration'' of the application approval process.

(10) During World War II, women were repeatedly denied issuance of official documentation affirming their merchant marine seaman status by the War Shipping Administration.

(11) Coast Guard Information Sheet #77 (April 1992) identifies the following acceptable forms of documentation for eligibility meeting the requirements set forth in the GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977 (Public Law 95–202) and Veterans Programs Enhancement Act of 1998 (Public Law 105–368):

(A) Certificate of shipping and discharge forms.

(B) Continuous discharge books (ship's deck or engine logbooks).

(C) Company letters showing vessel names and dates of voyages.

(12) Coast Guard Commandant Order of March 20, 1944, relieved masters of tugs, towboats, and seagoing barges of the responsibility of submitting reports of seamen shipped or discharged on forms, meaning certificates of shipping and discharge forms are not available to all eligible individuals seeking to document their eligibility.

(13) Coast Guard Information Sheet #77 (April 1992) states that ''deck logs were traditionally considered to be the property of the owners of the ships. After World War II, however, the deck and engine logbooks of vessels operated by the War Shipping Administration were turned over to that agency by the ship owners, and were destroyed during the 1970s'', meaning that continuous discharge books are not available to all eligible individuals seeking to document their eligibility.

(14) Coast Guard Information Sheet #77 (April, 1992) states ''some World War II period log books do not name ports visited during the voyage due to wartime security restrictions'', meaning that company letters showing vessel names and dates of voyages are not available to all eligible individuals seeking to document their eligibility.

(b) METHODS FOR VALIDATING CERTAIN SERVICE CONSIDERED TO BE ACTIVE SERVICE BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For the purposes of verifying that an individual performed service under honorable conditions that satisfies the requirements of a coastwise merchant seaman who is recognized pursuant to section 401 of the GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977 (Public Law 95–202; 38 U.S.C. 106 note) as having performed active duty service for the purposes described in paragraph (3)(A), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall accept the following:

(A) In the case of an individual who served on a coastwise merchant vessel seeking such recognition for whom no applicable Coast Guard shipping or discharge form, ship logbook, merchant mariner's document or Z-card, or other official employment record is available, the Secretary shall provide such recognition on the basis of applicable Social Security Administration records submitted for or by the individual, together with validated testimony given by the individual or the primary next of kin of the individual that the individual performed such service during the period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on December 31, 1946.

(B) In the case of an individual who served on a coastwise merchant vessel seeking such recognition for whom the applicable Coast Guard shipping or discharge form, ship logbook, merchant mariner's document or Z-card, or other official employment record has been destroyed or otherwise become unavailable by reason of any action committed by a person responsible for the control and maintenance of such form, logbook, or record, the Secretary shall accept other official documentation demonstrating that the individual performed such service during period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on December 31, 1946.

(C) For the purpose of determining whether to recognize service allegedly performed during the period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on December 31, 1946, the Secretary shall recognize masters of seagoing vessels or other officers in command of similarly organized groups as agents of the United States who were authorized to document any individual for purposes of hiring the individual to perform service in the merchant marine or discharging an individual from such service.

(2) TREATMENT OF OTHER DOCUMENTATION.—Other documentation accepted by the Secretary of Homeland Security pursuant to paragraph (1)(B) shall satisfy all requirements for eligibility of service during the period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on December 31, 1946.

(3) BENEFITS ALLOWED.—

(A) BURIAL BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY.—Service of an individual that is considered active duty pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be considered as active duty service with respect to providing burial benefits under chapters 23

and 24 of title 38, United States Code, to the individual.

(B) MEDALS, RIBBONS, AND DECORATIONS.—An individual whose service is recognized as active duty pursuant to paragraph (1) may be awarded an appropriate medal, ribbon, or other military decoration based on such service.

(C) STATUS OF VETERAN.—An individual whose service is recognized as active duty pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be honored as a veteran but shall not be entitled by reason of such recognized service to any benefit that is not described in this subsection.

(4) DETERMINATION OF COASTWISE MERCHANT SEAMAN.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall verify that an individual performed service under honorable conditions that satisfies the requirements of a coastwise merchant seaman pursuant to this section without regard to the sex, age, or disability of the individual during the period in which the individual served as such a coastwise merchant seaman.

(5) DEFINITION OF PRIMARY NEXT OF KIN.—In this section, the term ''primary next of kin'' with respect to an individual seeking recognition for service under this section means the closest living relative of the individual who was alive during the period of such service.

(6) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 303. DESIGNATION OF AMERICAN WORLD WAR II CITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall designate at least one city in the United States each year as an ''American World War II City''.

(b) CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION.—After the designation made under subsection (c), the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, shall make each designation under subsection (a) based on the following criteria:

(1) Contributions by a city to the war effort during World War II, including those related to defense manufacturing, bond drives, service in the Armed Forces, and the presence of military facilities within the city.

(2) Efforts by a city to preserve the history of the city's contributions during World War II, including through the establishment of preservation organizations or museums, restoration of World War II facilities, and recognition of World War II veterans.

(c) FIRST AMERICAN WORLD WAR II CITY.—The city of Wilmington, North Carolina, is designated as an ''American World War II City''.

SEC. 304. OBSERVANCE OF VETERANS DAY.

(a) TWO MINUTES OF SILENCE.—Chapter 1 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 145. Veterans Day

''The President shall issue each year a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe two minutes of silence on Veterans Day in honor of the service and sacrifice of veterans throughout the history of the Nation, beginning at—

''(1) 3:11 p.m. Atlantic standard time;

''(2) 2:11 p.m. eastern standard time;

''(3) 1:11 p.m. central standard time;

''(4) 12:11 p.m. mountain standard time;

''(5) 11:11 a.m. Pacific standard time;

''(6) 10:11 a.m. Alaska standard time; and

''(7) 9:11 a.m. Hawaii-Aleutian standard time.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 1 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''145. Veterans Day.''.

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 material they may have on H.R. 2189.

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, one of the most challenging issues facing the Department of Veterans Affairs and the veterans it serves is the huge disability backlog. According to last week's backlog report, there were 717,000 claims for disability compensation waiting for a decision, and almost 412,000, or 57 percent, of those claims were above the Secretary's stated processing goal of 125 days. In short, 57 percent of VA's claims work is currently backlogged. Although I am glad we have seen some progress of late, a 57 percent backlog is not acceptable. If we are going to reach the Secretary's goal of ending the backlog by 2015, we will all need a focused effort, and the provisions of this bill will help achieve that goal.

H.R. 2189, as amended, reflects the committee's bipartisan efforts to bring additional transparency to this very troubling and decades-old problem. I know that other Members are here to provide a brief description of the bill that they have sponsored, or those who have worked closely on the legislation, but I want to highlight some of the key provisions.

Title I would establish a commission or a task force to evaluate the backlog of disability claims and the appeals process related to those claims. Time is of the essence, so the commission would be required to submit a series of interim reports to Congress and a final report to the President and to the Congress 180 days after the commission's first meeting. The purpose of the task force is very simple: we need the best and the brightest minds to put forward workable solutions that can be implemented immediately. Even though VA has made recent progress, it is still well short of its own goals. We must not take our foot off the gas when it comes to ending the backlog once and for all, and ideas coming from this focused task force will assist in that effort.

Title I of the bill would also direct VA to provide a supplemental report to its strategic plan to eliminate the compensation claims backlog within 60 days of enactment and every 120 days thereafter until May 25, 2015. The purpose of this provision is to hold VA accountable for the full execution of its own strategic plan. Too often, VA has made lofty promises, and its efforts have fallen short. This provision, authored by our majority whip, will verify progress every single step of the way.

Title II of the bill would extend and expand VA's authority to use contract examinations during its disability examination process. VA's use of contract providers serves two purposes. First, because quality and timely exams are an essential component of the claims process, having additional providers to assist in the effort is critical. Second, use of non-VA examiners frees up the time that VA medical professionals can spend treating veterans at clinics and hospitals.

Finally, title III would require the Secretary of Defense to catalog all Vietnam-era ships as serving in either ''blue'' or ''brown'' water for purposes of awarding service-connection on a presumptive basis to veterans potentially exposed to agent orange. Currently, only veterans serving in the inland waterways, or ''brown'' waters, of Vietnam are eligible for compensation on a presumptive basis. The problem is that some vessels which served offshore in the ''blue'' waters of Vietnam sent smaller vessels ashore. Without an accurate cataloging of these visits, compensation may unfairly be denied to deserving veterans. This provision will assist VA in making accurate decisions in this sensitive area.

Enactment of H.R. 2189 will not completely solve the claims backlog, but I do think it is a good step in the right direction. I thank the subcommittee chairman, Mr. RUNYAN, and his ranking member, Ms. TITUS, for their hard work in moving the bill through the subcommittee as well. Everybody on the committee worked together to bring this piece of legislation to the floor tonight.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2189, as amended, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2189, as amended, is a bipartisan omnibus bill addressing veterans' disability benefits and compensation. This bill includes provisions from nine other measures. These bills are part of the slate of commonsense legislation introduced in May of this year. It provides the Department of Veterans Affairs with additional tools and reforms to assist in eliminating the backlog.

Included are provisions from H.R. 2086, the Pay As You Rate Act, introduced by the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee ranking member, Representative TITUS of Nevada; H.R. 1809, the Faster Filing Act, introduced by Representative O'ROURKE from Texas; H.R. 1623, the Claims Efficiency Through Information Act, introduced by Representative NEGRETE MCLEOD of California; H.R. 1759, introduced by Representative

RUIZ of California; H.R. 1805, the Veterans Claims Efficiency Through Automation Act, introduced by Representative KUSTER of New Hampshire; H.R. 1824, the VA Regional Office Accountability Act, introduced by Representative MENG of New York; H.R. 1521, the Disabled Veterans Red Tape Reduction Act, introduced by Representative SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York; H.R. 864, which will designate at least one city in the United States each year as an ''American World War II City,'' introduced by Representative MCINTYRE of North Carolina; and H.R. 1288, the World War II Merchant Mariner Service Act, introduced by Representative BUTTERFIELD of North Carolina.

Collectively, H.R. 2189, as amended, gives VA real, useful tools they can begin using now. These tools will assist the Department of Veterans Affairs in making significant progress on its goal of eliminating the backlog by 2015.

The legislation will require VA to pay veterans more quickly. It will provide them with information that may lead to veterans receiving a quicker decision on their claims. It will formulate a task force to attack the growing appeals backlog, and it will require the VA to start tracking information that will help them better understand the claims inventory.

I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their bipartisan effort to create a smart, pragmatic solution. Together we will help VA provide better benefits and services to our veterans. I also want to thank the staff on both sides of the aisle for their work on this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2189, as amended.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN), who chairs the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman MILLER for yielding to me.

As chairman of the House Veterans' Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, I am keenly aware that one of the most critical issues impacting our Nation's veterans is the severe veterans' claims backlog.

Recently, the Department of Veterans Affairs reported it had a backlog of more than 400,000 veterans' benefits claims as the fiscal year ended in September. This is simply unacceptable. To help speed up the veterans' claims process, we must look at every phase of that process.

One of the first steps in this process is the medical exam to determine benefit eligibility. That is why earlier this year I introduced H.R. 2423, the Disabled Veterans' Access to Medical Exams Improvement Act, provisions of which are now contained within section 201 of H.R. 2189. This section would extend the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with private physicians to conduct veterans' medical disability evaluations.

With the passage of this bill, this successful program allowing physicians outside the VA to conduct contract examinations would continue for an additional 3 years, until 2016. This would allow VA to more quickly evaluate veterans' disabilities and facilitate quicker access to the care they need.

Second, this bill would also extend license portability to contract examination providers, meaning that physicians with an active State license may provide C&P exams in other States because they are working on behalf of the Federal Government. Although the VA and DOD already provide license portability for physicians working directly for them, this authority is not extended to contract examination providers. This provision is designed to facilitate the C&P examination process by allowing contract physicians the flexibility to travel and assist in areas that are experiencing lengthy delays in scheduling examinations.

Finally, this piece of legislation would also expand the number of VA regional offices that would utilize contract examinations from 10 to 15. These medical examinations are a key component of the disability claims process. By expanding the authority and scope of the contract examinations process, veterans would receive the necessary medical evidence for their claim in a timely manner.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman.

This would reduce overall claim development and processing time, resulting in the faster issuance of a final decision for the claim.

I support H.R. 2189, as amended to include my provision, and encourage all Members to support this important bill for veterans.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS).

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. MICHAUD for yielding to me.

As ranking member of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, I strongly support the bill before us, the omnibus bill, H.R. 2189.

This legislation includes my bill, H.R. 2086, the Pay As You Rate Act, which would require the VA to pay benefits to veterans as individual components of their claims are reviewed rather than at the completion of the entire claim.

Currently, veterans typically receive payments when all medical conditions within a claim are fully adjudicated. Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan average 8.5 components in their claims. While some of these are very complex and time-consuming, other components are simpler.

The Pay As You Rate Act will require the VA to pay veterans as individual medical conditions are adjudicated, providing tens of thousands of veterans and their families much-needed financial support while the VA continues to work on the more complex aspects of their claims.

I thank Chairman MILLER, Ranking Member MICHAUD, and Chairman RUNYAN for including my provision and other Democratic bills in this legislation.

Collectively, the legislation before us today should assist VA in its continued effort to transform the claims process from mountains of paper to a more efficient, effective electronic system. In just the past few months, the VA has made great strides in serving our Nation's heroes by reducing the benefits backlog. The VA has set ambitious goals, and Congress should work to support those efforts. More needs to be done, and it needs to be done quickly to ensure that veterans receive the benefits they have earned in a timely fashion.

I am also pleased to have worked with Chairman MILLER on some of the task force provisions of this legislation. The provision that I added at the full committee markup would improve the proposed task force by including a subcommittee to look at the appeals process. While the VA is making significant progress in reducing the backlog, it is important that we are not creating a new backlog of appeals in the years to come. This subcommittee would be charged with making recommendations aimed at preventing that future backlog of appeals.

So I thank you, and I support the bill.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROONEY).

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Mr. ROONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Veterans Pension Protection Act as part of this important legislation.

Last year, veterans groups came to my office with a problem called ''pension poaching'' that targets retired veterans. Currently, the VA only considers income at the time a veteran applies for benefits, meaning it can't determine if an applicant has diverted assets to qualify for benefits.

Under this scam, unethical financial advisers and firms prey on elderly veterans by promising to help them qualify for VA pension benefits if they divert their assets into trusts or annuities and charge excessive fees for their services. GAO has identified this fraud as a major weakness in the VA pension program, leaving taxpayers and retired veterans on the hook.

My bill imposes a 36-month look-back period that would track veterans' incomes to determine if they are truly eligible. This will discourage financial predators from duping elderly veterans, help reduce the claims backlog, and ensure that low-income individuals for whom the program was intended are not robbed of their benefits.

I want to thank Congressmen SCHRADER, BILIRAKIS, and BARBER for their work on this bill, and especially Chairman MILLER for including it as part of this package to improve services for our Nation's veterans.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD).

Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 2189, which includes provisions from the VA Claims Efficiency Through Information Act of 2013, which I introduced in April, that will require VA to track the time spent evaluating each medical condition in a disability compensation claim. VA would have to report the number of completed claims by region and by medical condition for the current and preceding month and year.

As Veterans Day approaches, we should remember veterans who are struggling to find work while living with service-connected disabilities. VA compensation is needed so veterans can support themselves and avoid homelessness.

The VA's legacy paper system has made it difficult to process claims of older veterans who need additional compensation later in life. Claims of younger veterans can also take longer to process because they have multiple medical conditions.

The claims backlog is a serious problem for the VA and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Since July, the Los Angeles regional office has reduced the average time to process claims from 600 days to 400 days. The VA still has a long way to go to meet its own goal of 125 days, and the backlog will not end overnight and may even go up as more men and women apply for benefits.

No one is looking at directing blame but, instead, searching for a way to work together, and Congress and the VA must be willing to explore new methods for delivering services to veterans in the 21st century for the growing veteran population.

I thank Mr. MILLER for allowing my bill to be included in his.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD for their leadership on the committee and their commitment to maintaining strong oversight over the VA and their goal to reduce the backlog.

During my time on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have enjoyed the strong bipartisanship and the committee's dedication to get results for our veterans. Whether it is between Ranking Member KIRKPATRICK and me on the Oversight Committee or Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD on the full committee, we all share the same desire to help our veterans and do everything we can to help the VA operate more efficiently and effectively.

Fortunately for our veterans, this desire to help goes beyond the Veterans' Affairs Committee and is present in the entire House of Representatives. Earlier this year, I, along with 150 Members of the House, sent a letter to the President urging his immediate action to reduce this backlog.

Today, the House will have another opportunity to show its unity for veterans in passing H.R. 2189. This bill will aid the VA by establishing a task force to evaluate the backlog of veterans' disability claims, ensuring the VA will find innovative ways to reduce the backlog.

Currently, there are over 400,000 claims that have been waiting for over 125 days to process.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. COFFMAN. Although the VA has made some progress recently, the pace is still too slow for many of our veterans waiting for their claims to be processed.

As a Marine Corps combat veteran, I am proud to join my colleagues on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to urge the passage of H.R. 2189. There are nearly 400,000 veterans in Colorado, and these men and women need Washington to step up and help the VA to reduce the backlog.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER).

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. MICHAUD and our chair.

As a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I was proud that we worked together to draft this bipartisan legislative package to help get veterans' claims settled faster and more efficiently.

Today, I am happy to join my colleagues from both sides of the aisle in passing this package, which includes my bill, the Veterans Claims Efficiency Through Automation Act. This commonsense legislation will push the VA to focus on the greater use of automation to boost efficiency and settle claims faster.

As our servicemembers and veterans transition back to civilian life, it is imperative that the VA and the DOD continue to collaborate on improving the delivery of care, eliminating the claims backlog, and mitigating the impact of sequestration.

It is simply unacceptable that so many of our heroic veterans are unable to get timely access to the care and services that they have earned. This bill is an important step toward addressing this problem, and I will keep fighting to end the backlog until the job is done.

We owe it to our men and women in uniform, to our veterans, and to our military families to do all that we can to ensure that their benefits and other services transfer from the Department of Defense to the Veterans Administration. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure effective and timely collaboration between the two departments and to eliminate this claims backlog once and for all.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Kinderhook, New York (Mr. GIBSON).

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Speaker, as I rise in support of the bill, I thank the chairman, the ranking member, and all the members of the committee and the staff for their work.

Our veterans deserve our very best effort, and it is simply taking too long to process these claims. We have got to do better. I believe this bill will take a step in the right direction.

I also appreciate the leadership of this committee including one of my bills along with this bill.

Since arriving here, I have been working on supporting our Vietnam veterans who have been exposed to agent orange. The chairman mentioned that if you served on the ground or in the river in the Navy, you get presumed coverage; but if you served just offshore, you don't get that presumed coverage. I believe that needs to change.

I have the bill to do that. Until the time of such policy change, I believe the DOD and VA need to be better organized so that we can work this out on a case-by-case basis, which is what we are doing right now. The leadership was kind enough to include that bill in this effort. I think we are going to make a positive difference.

I do want to give a shout-out to a couple of ladies in upstate New York making a difference, Carol Olszanecki and Susie Belanger, for the work that they have done on this, and we are going to continue to work it together.

I urge support of this bill.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE).

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation, which will help us to reduce the unacceptably long wait times for our veterans who are waiting to hear back on service-connected disability claims.

In El Paso, Texas, I have the honor of representing almost 80,000 veterans. Right now, their average wait time out of the Waco regional office is nearly 460 days to hear back on a service-connected disability claim. I visited that office not too long ago and witnessed people carrying around the claims files for single veterans in hand trucks with the files and the paperwork measuring 3 to 4 feet in some cases.

That is why, along with PAUL COOK, I introduced bipartisan legislation earlier this year to work with no cost to reduce that wait time by informing veterans of the average wait time to file a disability claim amongst all available methods. From the slowest, which is an incomplete paper-based

claim, to the fastest, which is a fully developed claim filed online.

I am pleased that this legislation in section 109 includes this bill called the Faster Filing Act. I am convinced it will help us to get our veterans the response in the time they deserve. After all, they have sacrificed their health, their security, and their safety for ours. We need to meet our end of the obligation.

I want to thank Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD. I also want to thank Mr. BROUN from the committee staff and Erin Snow from my legislative team for helping to write the legislation. And I encourage all of my colleagues in the House to pass this without delay.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from the 12th District of Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2189. This legislation is an important step forward in addressing and resolving the VA's disability claims backlog.

We owe our veterans a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. Unfortunately, veterans in western Pennsylvania and around the Nation are forced to endure excessive wait times for their disability claims to be processed. That is unacceptable, and our veterans deserve better.

Finding ways to better serve our veterans is one of my top priorities in Congress. The legislation we are considering today increases reporting and oversight, improves coordination between the VA and other Federal agencies, provides more training for VA claims processors, and establishes a task force to look for other ways to address the backlog. Together these actions will bring transparency and accountability to the VA all in an effort to improve customer service to our veterans and their families.

I thank House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman JEFF MILLER, Ranking Member MICHAUD, and Majority Whip KEVIN MCCARTHY for their leadership; and I look forward to continuing to work with them to find ways to better serve our veterans.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH).

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member for yielding me time, and I also want to thank Chairman MILLER for his hard work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2189. This legislation takes important steps to address the deplorable disability claims backlog at the Veterans Affairs Administration.

It does so by establishing a special task force to evaluate the full extent of the backlog and, more importantly, to determine solutions to eliminate the backlog. We all agree our veterans deserve better.

It is in this same spirit that I introduced H.R. 2185, Veterans Day Moment of Silence Act. This bill brings together all Americans to observe 2 minutes of silence each Veterans Day. It is a time when we all, regardless of ideology, can stop and reflect on the brave service of generations of U.S. veterans.

I want to thank Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD for including the text of my bill into the text of H.R. 2189. Particularly, I want to thank Daniel and Michael Bendetson and their father, Dr. Peter Bendetson. As a family, they have worked relentlessly to bring the moment-of-silence provision to fruition, and I am honored to present this proposal today on their behalf in this 113th Congress.

Again, I am thankful to Mr. MICHAUD and to Chairman MILLER for enabling this provision to come to a vote today, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2189. It is a very timely bill. With hundreds of thousands of returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan and with over 700,000 veterans waiting for disability determinations, it is a very important bill.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the majority whip, who has been a strong supporter of veterans issues in this legislative body.

□ 1700

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2189, legislation that will provide real relief to hundreds of thousands of our Nation's veterans.

I first want to thank Chairman MILLER because this bill includes the provisions that are a result of the GAO audit that Chairman MILLER and I requested on the Department of Veterans Affairs due to the numerous complaints from veterans in all of our districts who had to wait months and, oftentimes, years for benefits. The audit confirmed these veterans' worst complaints about the severity of the claims and the backlog.

The GAO identified the Los Angeles regional office, which serves many of my local veterans in my home district, as one of the worst in the country. According to the current data, 61 percent of the over 16,000 claims are still backlogged.

Recent data from the VA shows that the Department processed 100,000 less claims than they planned for fiscal year 2013. Clearly, the VA is unable to implement needed reforms themselves.

This legislation today addresses the backlog problems in the VA by focusing on streamlining required paperwork and communications between Federal agencies and ensuring continued and, if needed, relentless congressional oversight of the administration's timeline to clear the compensation claims backlog.

When called to serve the United States of America, our Nation's veterans have answered. It is time Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs answer their call as well.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting our veterans and supporting this bill to end the backlog.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I would encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support H.R. 2189, as amended.

Once again, I want to thank Chairman MILLER and his staff for working very diligently on this piece of legislation, along with my staff on the minority side, and for bringing this forward.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2189 is a strong step forward in helping to resolve the severe backlog of disability claims that exist today at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I thank all the members of our committee for their bipartisan work on this bill, and I urge my colleagues to join us in passing H.R. 2189, as amended.

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

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2189, legislation to establish a commission to evaluate the backlog of disability claims at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Although the VA has made important progress on reducing the backlog over the past several months, it still fell nearly 100,000 claims short of its Fiscal Year 2013 processing goal. As of October 19th, more than 400,000 disability claims remain backlogged at the VA. This problem persists despite the fact that Congress has given the VA every resource that they have asked for to end this problem. We must remain committed to a goal of completely eliminating this backlog.

Our veterans deserve timely processing of claims so that they can get the care and compensation that they so deserve. The legislation before us today will get us closer to that goal by establishing a task force to evaluate the backlog and appeals process of claims. Furthermore, H.R. 2189 directs the commission to analyze potential improvements to the current system and solutions to solve the problem and in turn requires the VA to implement appropriate solutions.

Our brave men and women in uniform put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms, and we must do everything in our power to demonstrate our gratitude for their dedication and sacrifice. A first step in that process is ensuring that our veterans are not forced to wait hundreds of days simply to have their disability claims processed.

Mr. Speaker, we owe our veterans efficient and effective care. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2189 so that we can find a solution to ending the backlog once and for all.

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. 2189, 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. MICHAUD. 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.

VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2013

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2481) to amend title 38, United States Code, to codify and improve the election requirements for the receipt of educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2481

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 ''Veterans Economic Opportunity 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. Establishment of Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration of Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 5. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity.
Sec. 6. Five-year extension of homeless veterans reintegration programs.
Sec. 7. Entitlement of children of certain deceased veterans to educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
Sec. 8. Recodification and improvement of election process for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program.
Sec. 9. Centralized reporting of veteran enrollment by certain groups, districts, and consortiums of educational institutions.
Sec. 10. Extension of loan guaranty fee for certain subsequent loans.
Sec. 11. Mortgage protection for members of the Armed Forces, surviving spouses, and certain veterans.
Sec. 12. Treatment of relocation for active duty for purposes of mortgage refinancing.
Sec. 13. Requirements for lending institutions that are creditors for obligations and liabilities covered by the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.
Sec. 14. Protection of child custody arrangements for parents who are members of the Armed Forces.

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. ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADMINISTRATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Part V is amended by adding at the end the following new chapter:

''CHAPTER 80—VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADMINISTRATION

''8001. Organization of Administration.
''8002. Functions of Administration.

''§ 8001. Organization of Administration

''(a) VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADMINISTRATION.—There is in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration. The primary function of the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration is the administration of the programs of the Department which provide assistance related to economic opportunity to veterans and their dependents and survivors.

''(b) UNDER SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.—The Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration is under the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity, who is directly responsible to the Secretary for the operations of the Administration.

''§ 8002. Functions of Administration

''The Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration is responsible for the administration of the following programs of the Department:

''(1) Vocational rehabilitation and employment programs.

''(2) Educational assistance programs.

''(3) Veterans' housing loan and related programs.

''(4) The veterans small business program under section 8127 of this title.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—The tables of chapters at the beginning of title 38, United States Code, and of part V of title 38, United States Code, are each amended by inserting after the item relating to chapter 79 the following new item:

''80. Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration ..... 8001''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Chapter 80 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) shall take effect on October 1, 2014.

SEC. 5. UNDER SECRETARY FOR VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.

(a) UNDER SECRETARY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 is amended by inserting after section 306 the following new section:

''§ 306A. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity

''(a) UNDER SECRETARY.—There is in the Department an Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity, who is appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity shall be appointed without regard to political affiliation or activity and solely on the basis of demonstrated ability in—

''(1) information technology; and

''(2) the administration of programs within the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration or programs of similar content and scope.

''(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity is the head of, and is directly responsible to the Secretary for the operations of, the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration.

''(c) VACANCIES.—(1) Whenever a vacancy in the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity occurs or is anticipated, the Secretary shall establish a commission to recommend individuals to the President for appointment to the position.

''(2) A commission established under this subsection shall be composed of the following members appointed by the Secretary:

''(A) Three persons representing education and training, vocational rehabilitation, employment, real estate, mortgage finance and related industries, and survivor benefits activities affected by the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration.

''(B) Two persons representing veterans served by the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration.

''(C) Two persons who have experience in the management of private sector benefits programs of similar content and scope to the economic opportunity programs of the Department.

''(D) The Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

''(E) The chairman of the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education formed under section 3692 of this title.

''(F) One person who has held the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity, if the Secretary determines that it is desirable for such person to be a member of the commission.

''(3) A commission established under this subsection shall recommend at least three individuals for appointment to the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity. The commission shall submit all recommendations to the Secretary. The Secretary shall forward the recommendations to the President and the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives with any comments the Secretary considers appropriate. Thereafter, the President may request the commission to recommend additional individuals for appointment.

''(4) The Assistant Secretary or Deputy Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs who performs personnel management and labor relations functions shall serve as the executive secretary of a commission established under this subsection.

''(d) QUALIFICATIONS OF RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUALS.—Each individual recommended to the President by the commission for appointment to the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity shall be an individual who has held a senior level position in the private sector with responsibilities relating to at least one of the following:

''(1) Education policy.

''(2) Vocational rehabilitation.

''(3) Employment.

''(4) Home loan finance.

''(5) Small business development.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 306 the following new item:

''306A. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Title 38, United States Code, is further amended—

(1) in section 306(c)(2), by striking subparagraphs (A) and (E) and redesignating subparagraphs (B), (C), (D), and (F), as subparagraphs (A) through (D), respectively;

(2) in section 317(d), by inserting after ''Under Secretary for Benefits,'' the following: ''the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity,'';

(3) in section 318(d)(2), by inserting after ''Under Secretary for Benefits,'' the following: ''the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity,'';

(4) in section 516(e)(2)(C), by striking ''Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits'' and inserting ''Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity'';

(5) in section 541(a)(2)(B), by striking ''Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits'' and inserting ''Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity'';

(6) in section 542(a)(2)(B)(iii), by striking ''Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits'' and inserting ''Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity'';

(7) in section 544(a)(2)(B)(vi), by striking ''Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits'' and inserting ''Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity'';

(8) in section 709(c)(2)(A), by inserting after ''Under Secretary for Benefits,'' the following: ''the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity,''.

(9) in section 7701(a), by inserting after ''assistance'' the following: '', other than assistance related to economic opportunity,''; and

(10) in section 7703, by striking paragraphs (2) and (3) and redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (2) and (3), respectively.

(c) FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES.—For fiscal years 2014 and 2015, the aggregate number of full-time equivalent employees authorized for the Veterans Benefit Administration and the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration, as established under chapter 80 of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 2, may not exceed 20,851.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 306A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), and the amendments made by this section, shall take effect on October 1, 2014.

SEC. 6. FIVE-YEAR EXTENSION OF HOMELESS VETERANS REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS.

Section 2021(e)(F) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''2013'' and inserting ''2018''.

SEC. 7. ENTITLEMENT OF CHILDREN OF CERTAIN DECEASED VETERANS TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER THE POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3311(b)(9) is amended—

(1) by striking ''2001, dies in line of duty while serving on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces.'' and inserting ''2001—''; and

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

''(A) dies in line of duty while serving on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces; or

''(B) is awarded the Purple Heart for an injury and dies as a result of that injury during the 31-day period beginning on the date of the person's discharge or release from active duty service in the Armed Forces.''.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a person who dies on or after September 11, 2001.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on October 1, 2014, and apply to payments of educational assistance for programs of education pursued after that date.

SEC. 8. RECODIFICATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF ELECTION PROCESS FOR POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 33 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 3326. Election to receive educational assistance

''(a) INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE TO ELECT PARTICIPATION IN POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.—An individual may elect to receive educational assistance under this chapter if such individual—

''(1) as of August 1, 2009—

''(A) is entitled to basic educational assistance under chapter 30 of the title and has used, but retains unused, entitlement under that chapter;

''(B) is entitled to educational assistance under chapter 107, 1606, or 1607 of title 10 and has used, but retains unused, entitlement under the applicable chapter;

''(C) is entitled to basic educational assistance under chapter 30 of this title but has not used any entitlement under that chapter;

''(D) is entitled to educational assistance under chapter 107, 1606, or 1607 of title 10 but has not used any entitlement under such chapter;

''(E) is a member of the Armed Forces who is eligible for receipt of basic educational assistance under chapter 30 this title and is making contributions toward such assistance under section 3011(b) or 3012(c) of this title; or

''(F) is a member of the Armed Forces who is not entitled to basic educational assistance under chapter 30 of this title by reason of an election under section 3011(c)(1) or 3012(d)(1) of this title; and

''(2) as of the date of the individual's election under this paragraph, meets the requirements for entitlement to educational assistance under this chapter.

''(b) CESSATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD GI BILL.—Effective as of the first month beginning on or after the date of an election under subsection (a) of an individual described by paragraph (1)(E) of that subsection, the obligation of the individual to make contributions under section 3011(b) or 3012(c) of this title, as applicable, shall cease, and the requirements of such section shall be deemed to be no longer applicable to the individual.

''(c) REVOCATION OF REMAINING TRANSFERRED ENTITLEMENT.—

''(1) ELECTION TO REVOKE.—If, on the date an individual described in paragraph (1)(A) or (1)(C) of subsection (a) makes an election under that subsection, a transfer of the entitlement of the individual to basic educational assistance under section 3020 of this title is in effect and a number of months of the entitlement so transferred remain unutilized, the individual may elect to revoke all or a portion of the entitlement so transferred that remains unutilized.

''(2) AVAILABILITY OF REVOKED ENTITLEMENT.—Any entitlement revoked by an individual under this paragraph shall no longer be available to the dependent to whom transferred, but shall be available to the individual instead for educational assistance under chapter 33 of this title in accordance with the provisions of this section.

''(3) AVAILABILITY OF UNREVOKED ENTITLEMENT.—Any entitlement described in paragraph (1) that is not revoked by an individual in accordance with that paragraph shall remain available to the dependent or dependents concerned in accordance with the current transfer of such entitlement under section 3020 of this title.

''(d) POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2) and except as provided in subsection (e), an individual making an election under subsection (a) shall be entitled to educational assistance under this chapter in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, instead of basic educational assistance under chapter 30 this title, or educational assistance under chapter 107, 1606, or 1607 of title 10, as applicable.

''(2) LIMITATION ON ENTITLEMENT FOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS.—In the case of an individual making an election under subsection (a) who is described by paragraph (1)(A) of that subsection, the number of months of entitlement of the individual to educational assistance under this chapter 33 shall be the number of months equal to—

''(A) the number of months of unused entitlement of the individual under chapter 30 of this title, as of the date of the election, plus

''(B) the number of months, if any, of entitlement revoked by the individual under subsection (c)(1).

''(e) CONTINUING ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE NOT AVAILABLE UNDER 9/11 ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the event educational assistance to which an individual making an election under subsection (a) would be entitled under chapter 30 of this title, or chapter 107, 1606, or 1607 of title 10, as applicable, is not authorized to be available to the individual under the provisions of this chapter the individual shall remain entitled to such educational assistance in accordance with the provisions of the applicable chapter.

''(2) CHARGE FOR USE OF ENTITLEMENT.—The utilization by an individual of entitlement under paragraph (1) shall be chargeable against the entitlement of the individual to educational assistance under this chapter at the rate of one month of entitlement under this chapter for each month of entitlement utilized by the individual under paragraph (1) (as determined as if such entitlement were utilized under the provisions of chapter 30 of this title, or chapter 107, 1606, or 1607 of title 10, as applicable).

''(f) ADDITIONAL POST-9/11 ASSISTANCE FOR MEMBERS HAVING MADE CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD GI BILL.—

''(1) ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE.—In the case of an individual making an election under subsection (a) who is described by subparagraph (A), (C), or (E) of paragraph (1) of that subsection, the amount of educational assistance payable to the individual under this chapter 33 as a monthly stipend payable under paragraph (1)(B) of section 3313(c) of this title, or under paragraphs (2) through (7) of that section (as applicable), shall be the amount otherwise payable as a monthly stipend under the applicable paragraph increased by the amount equal to—

''(A) the total amount of contributions toward basic educational assistance made by the individual under section 3011(b) or 3012(c) of this title, as of the date of the election, multiplied by

''(B) the fraction—

''(i) the numerator of which is—

''(I) the number of months of entitlement to basic educational assistance under chapter 30 of this title remaining to the individual at the time of the election; plus

''(II) the number of months, if any, of entitlement under such chapter 30 revoked by the individual under subsection (c)(1); and

''(ii) the denominator of which is 36 months.

''(2) MONTHS OF REMAINING ENTITLEMENT FOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS.—In the case of an individual covered by paragraph (1) who is described by subsection (a)(1)(E), the number of months of entitlement to basic educational assistance remaining to the individual for purposes of paragraph (1)(B)(i)(II) shall be 36 months.

''(3) TIMING OF PAYMENT.—The amount payable with respect to an individual under paragraph (1) shall be paid to the individual together with the last payment of the monthly stipend payable to the individual under paragraph (1)(B) of section 3313(c) of

this title, or under subsections (b) through (g) of that section (as applicable), before the exhaustion of the individual's entitlement to educational assistance under this chapter.

''(g) CONTINUING ENTITLEMENT TO ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR CRITICAL SKILLS OR SPECIALITY AND ADDITIONAL SERVICE.—An individual making an election under subsection (a)(1) who, at the time of the election, is entitled to increased educational assistance under section 3015(d) of this title, or section 16131(i) of title 10, or supplemental educational assistance under subchapter III of chapter 30 of this title, shall remain entitled to such increased educational assistance or supplemental educational assistance in the utilization of entitlement to educational assistance under this chapter, in an amount equal to the quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, equivalent of the monthly amount of such increased educational assistance or supplemental educational assistance payable with respect to the individual at the time of the election.

''(h) ALTERNATIVE ELECTION BY SECRETARY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an individual who, on or after October 1, 2014, submits to the Secretary an election under this section that the Secretary determines is clearly against the interests of the individual, the Secretary may make an alternative election on behalf of the individual that the Secretary determines is in the best interests of the individual.

''(2) NOTICE.—If the Secretary makes an election on behalf of an individual under this subsection, the Secretary shall notify the individual by not later than seven days after making such election and shall provide the individual with a 30-day period, beginning on the date of the individual's receipt of such notice, during which the individual may modify or revoke the election made by the Secretary on the individual's behalf. The Secretary shall include, as part of such notice, a clear statement of why the alternative election made by the Secretary is in the best interests of the individual as compared to the election submitted by the individual. The Secretary shall provide the notice required under this paragraph by electronic means whenever possible.

''(i) IRREVOCABILITY OF ELECTIONS.—An election under subsection (a) or (c)(1) is irrevocable.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''3326. Election to receive educational assistance.''.

(c) CONFORMING REPEAL.—Subsection (c) of section 5003 of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 38 U.S.C. 3301 note) is hereby repealed.

SEC. 9. CENTRALIZED REPORTING OF VETERAN ENROLLMENT BY CERTAIN GROUPS, DISTRICTS, AND CONSORTIUMS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3684(a) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''32, 33,'' after ''31,''; and

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

''(4) For purposes of this subsection, the term 'educational institution' may include a group, district, or consortium of separately accredited educational institutions located in the same State that are organized in a manner that facilitates the centralized reporting of the enrollments in such group, district, or consortium of institutions.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to reports submitted on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 10. EXTENSION OF LOAN GUARANTY FEE FOR CERTAIN SUBSEQUENT LOANS.

(a) EXTENSION.—Section 3729(b)(2)(B) is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking ''October 1, 2017'' and inserting ''October 1, 2018''; and

(2) in clause (ii), by striking ''October 1, 2017'' and inserting ''October 1, 2018''.

SEC. 11. MORTGAGE PROTECTION FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, SURVIVING SPOUSES, AND CERTAIN VETERANS.

(a) MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, SURVIVING SPOUSES, AND CERTAIN DISABLED VETERANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 303 the following new section:

''SEC. 303A. MORTGAGES AND TRUST DEEDS OF CERTAIN SERVICEMEMBERS, SURVIVING SPOUSES, AND DISABLED VETERANS.

''(a) MORTGAGE AS SECURITY.—This section applies only to an obligation on real or personal property owned by a covered individual that—

''(1) originated at any time and for which the covered individual is still obligated; and

''(2) is secured by a mortgage, trust deed, or other security in the nature of a mortgage.

''(b) STAY OF PROCEEDINGS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In accordance with subsection (d)(1), in a judicial action pending or in a nonjudicial action commenced during a covered time period to enforce an obligation described in subsection (a), a court—

''(A) may, after a hearing and on its own motion, stay the proceedings until the end of the covered time period; and

''(B) shall, upon application by a covered individual, stay the proceedings until the end of the covered time period.

''(2) OBLIGATION TO STOP PROCEEDINGS.—Upon receipt of notice provided under subsection (d)(1), a mortgagee, trustee, or other creditor seeking to foreclose on real property secured by an obligation covered by this section using any judicial or nonjudicial proceedings shall immediately stop any such proceeding until the end of the covered time period.

''(c) SALE OR FORECLOSURE.—A sale, judicial or nonjudicial foreclosure, or seizure of property for a breach of an obligation described in subsection (a) that is not stayed under subsection (b) shall not be valid during a covered time period except—

''(1) upon a court order granted before such sale, judicial or nonjudicial foreclosure, or seizure with a return made and approved by the court; or

''(2) if made pursuant to an agreement as provided in section 107.

''(d) NOTICE REQUIRED.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—To be covered under this section, a covered individual shall provide to the mortgagee, trustee, or other creditor written notice that such individual is so covered.

''(2) MANNER.—Written notice under paragraph (1) may be provided electronically.

''(3) TIME.—Notice provided under paragraph (1) shall be provided during the covered time period.

''(4) CONTENTS.—With respect to a servicemember described in subsection (g)(1)(A), notice shall include—

''(A) a copy of the servicemember's official military orders, or any notification, certification, or verification from a servicemember's commanding officer that provides evidence of servicemember's eligibility for special pay as described in subsection (g)(1)(A); or

''(B) an official notice using a form designed under paragraph (5).

''(5) OFFICIAL FORMS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall design and distribute an official Department of Defense form that can be used by an individual to give notice under paragraph (1).

''(B) USE OF OFFICIAL FORM NOT REQUIRED.—Failure by any individual to use a form designed or distributed under subparagraph (A) to provide notice shall not make such provision of notice invalid.

''(e) AGGREGATE DURATION.—The aggregate duration for which a covered individual (except a servicemember described in subsection (g)(1)(A)) may be covered under this section is one year.

''(f) MISDEMEANOR.—A person who knowingly makes or causes to be made a sale, foreclosure, or seizure of property that is prohibited by subsection (c), or who knowingly attempts to do so, shall be fined as provided in title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both.

''(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—The term 'covered individual' means the following individuals:

''(A) A servicemember who is or was eligible for hostile fire or imminent danger special pay under section 310 of title 37, United States Code, during a period of military service.

''(B) A servicemember placed on convalescent status, including a servicemember transferred to the temporary disability retired list under section 1202 or 1205 of title 10, United States Code.

''(C) A veteran who was medically discharged and retired under chapter 61 of title 10, United States Code, except for a veteran described in section 1207 of such title.

''(D) A surviving spouse (as defined in section 101(3) of title 38, United States Code, and in accordance with section 103 of such title) of a servicemember who died while in military service if such spouse is the successor in interest to property covered under subsection (a).

''(2) COVERED TIME PERIOD.—The term 'covered time period' means the following time periods:

''(A) With respect to a servicemember who is or was eligible for hostile fire or imminent danger special pay under section 310 of title 37, United States Code, during a period of military service, during the period beginning on the first day on which the servicemember is or was eligible for such special pay during such period of military service and ending on the date that is one year after the last day of such period of military service.

''(B) With respect to a servicemember described in paragraph (1)(B), during the one-year period beginning on the date on which the servicemember is placed on convalescent status or transferred to the temporary disability retired list under section 1202 or 1205 of title 10, United States Code.

''(C) With respect to a veteran described in paragraph (1)(C), during the one-year period beginning on the date of the retirement of such veteran.

''(D) With respect to a surviving spouse of a servicemember as described in paragraph (1)(D), during the one-year period beginning on the date on which the spouse receives notice of the death of the servicemember.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of such Act is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 303 the following new item:

''Sec. 303A. Mortgages and trust deeds of certain servicemembers, surviving spouses, and disabled veterans.''.

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 107 of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 517) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) OTHER INDIVIDUALS.—For purposes of this section, the term 'servicemember' includes any covered individual under section 303A.''.

(b) INCREASED CIVIL PENALTIES FOR MORTGAGE VIOLATIONS.—Paragraph (3) of section 801(b) of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 597(b)(3)) is amended to read as follows:

''(3) to vindicate the public interest, assess a civil penalty—

''(A) with respect to a violation of section 207, 303, or 303A regarding real property—

''(i) in an amount not exceeding $110,000 for a first violation; and

''(ii) in an amount not exceeding $220,000 for any subsequent violation; and

''(B) with respect to any other violation of this Act—

''(i) in an amount not exceeding $55,000 for a first violation; and

''(ii) in an amount not exceeding $110,000 for any subsequent violation.''.

(c) CREDIT DISCRIMINATION.—Section 108 of such Act (50 U.S.C. App. 518) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Application by'' and inserting ''(a) APPLICATION OR RECEIPT.—Application by''; and

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

''(b) ELIGIBILITY.—In addition to the protections under subsection (a), an individual who is entitled to any right or protection provided under this Act may not be denied or refused credit or be subject to any other action described under paragraphs (1) through (6) of subsection (a) solely by reason of such entitlement.''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 303A of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, as added by subsection (a), and the amendments made by this section, shall take effect on October 1, 2014.

SEC. 12. TREATMENT OF RELOCATION FOR ACTIVE DUTY FOR PURPOSES OF MORTGAGE REFINANCING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 531 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 303A, as added by section 11(a)(1), the following new section:

''SEC. 303B. TREATMENT OF RELOCATION FOR ACTIVE DUTY FOR PURPOSES OF MORTGAGE REFINANCING.

''(a) TREATMENT OF ABSENCE FROM RESIDENCE DUE TO ACTIVE DUTY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), if, at any time that a servicemember who is the mortgagor under an existing mortgage does not reside in the residence that secures the existing mortgage because of relocation described in subsection (c)(1)(B), such servicemember inquires about or applies for a covered refinancing mortgage, such servicemember shall be, for all purposes relating to the covered refinancing mortgage, including such inquiry or application and eligibility for and compliance with any underwriting criteria and standards regarding such covered refinancing mortgage, considered to occupy the residence that secures the existing mortgage to be paid or prepaid by such covered refinancing mortgage as the principal residence of the servicemember during the period of any such relocation.

''(2) LIMITATION.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply with respect to a servicemember at any time if, during the five-year period preceding such time, the servicemember entered into a covered refinancing mortgage pursuant to this section.

''(b) MORTGAGES ORIGINATED BEFORE PERIOD MILITARY SERVICE.—If a covered refinancing mortgage is entered into pursuant to this section with respect to an existing mortgage that originated before the period of the servicemember's military service, such covered refinancing mortgage shall be deemed to be an obligation that originated before the period of the servicemember's military service and for which the servicemember is still obligated for purposes of section 303(a)(1).

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) EXISTING MORTGAGE.—The term 'existing mortgage' means a mortgage that is secured by a 1- to 4-family residence, including a condominium or a share in a cooperative ownership housing association, that was the principal residence of a servicemember for a period that—

''(A) had a duration of 13 consecutive months or longer; and

''(B) ended upon the relocation of the servicemember caused by the servicemember receiving military orders for a permanent change of station or to deploy with a military unit, or as an individual in support of a military operation, for a period of not less than 90 days that did not allow the servicemember to continue to occupy such residence as a principal residence.

''(2) COVERED REFINANCING MORTGAGE.—The term 'covered refinancing mortgage' means any mortgage—

''(A) that is made for the purpose of paying or prepaying, and extinguishing, the outstanding obligations under an existing mortgage or mortgages; and

''(B) that is secured by the same residence that secured such existing mortgage or mortgages.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for such Act is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 303A the following new item:

''Sec. 303B. Treatment of relocation for active duty for purposes of mortgage refinancing.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 303B of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, as added by subsection (a), and the amendments made by this section, shall take effect on October 1, 2014.

SEC. 13. REQUIREMENTS FOR LENDING INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE CREDITORS FOR OBLIGATIONS AND LIABILITIES COVERED BY THE SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT.

Section 207 of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 527) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (d) and (e) as subsections (e) and (f), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (c) the following new subsection (d):

''(d) LENDING INSTITUTION REQUIREMENTS.—

''(1) COMPLIANCE OFFICERS.—Each lending institution subject to the requirements of this section shall designate an employee of the institution as a compliance officer who is responsible for ensuring the institution's compliance with this section and for distributing information to servicemembers whose obligations and liabilities are covered by this section.

''(2) TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBER.—During any fiscal year, a lending institution subject to the requirements of this section that had annual assets for the preceding fiscal year of $10,000,000,000 or more shall maintain a toll-free telephone number and shall make such telephone number available on the primary Internet website of the institution.''.

SEC. 14. PROTECTION OF CHILD CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS FOR PARENTS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) CHILD CUSTODY PROTECTION.—Title II of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 521 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 208. CHILD CUSTODY PROTECTION.

''(a) RESTRICTION ON TEMPORARY CUSTODY ORDER.—If a court renders a temporary order for custodial responsibility for a child based solely on a deployment or anticipated deployment of a parent who is a servicemember, then the court shall require that, upon the return of the servicemember from deployment, the custody order that was in effect immediately preceding the temporary order shall be reinstated, unless the court finds that such a reinstatement is not in the best interest of the child, except that any such finding shall be subject to subsection (b).

''(b) LIMITATION ON CONSIDERATION OF MEMBER'S DEPLOYMENT IN DETERMINATION OF CHILD'S BEST INTEREST.—If a motion or a petition is filed seeking a permanent order to modify the custody of the child of a servicemember, no court may consider the absence of the servicemember by reason of deployment, or the possibility of deployment, as the sole factor in determining the best interest of the child.

''(c) NO FEDERAL JURISDICTION OR RIGHT OF ACTION OR REMOVAL.—Nothing in this section shall create a Federal right of action or otherwise give rise to Federal jurisdiction or create a right of removal.

''(d) PREEMPTION.—In any case where State law applicable to a child custody proceeding involving a temporary order as contemplated in this section provides a higher standard of protection to the rights of the parent who is a deploying servicemember than the rights provided under this section with respect to such temporary order, the appropriate court shall apply the higher State standard.

''(e) DEPLOYMENT DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'deployment' means the movement or mobilization of a servicemember to a location for a period of longer than 60 days and not longer than 540 days pursuant to temporary or permanent official orders—

''(1) that are designated as unaccompanied;

''(2) for which dependent travel is not authorized; or

''(3) that otherwise do not permit the movement of family members to that location.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of such Act is amended by adding at the end of the items relating to title II the following new item:

''208. Child custody protection.''.

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 within which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous material they may have on H.R. 2481, 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.

H.R. 2481 represents the collective work of our Economic Opportunity Subcommittee. Provisions of this bill streamline eligibility for veterans' GI Bill benefits that would ensure that surviving loved ones of servicemembers who die as a result of service have all the educational assistance benefits that they are entitled to and makes improvements to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

I know other Members are here today to speak on provisions of this bill that they have authored, so at this time, I will focus on just a few areas.

Sections 4 and 5 of the bill would establish, within existing resources, a Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration at the Department of Veterans Affairs as an Under Secretary to head the effort. The purpose of creating a parallel administration is to serve alongside VA's Veterans Benefits Administration, the Veterans Health Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration; it is to raise in importance the issues affecting veterans' readjustment to civilian life.

Too often these issues, such as education, job training, and vocational counseling, do not receive the focus that they deserve because they are subsumed within an administration that also has responsibility for disability claims processing. Highlighting and emphasizing the importance of jobs and careers for veterans was an important reason why the Committee on Veterans' Affairs created for itself a separate Economic Opportunity Subcommittee several years ago. These provisions would advance the same model within the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is my hope that the new Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity would be a powerful advocate serving veterans' readjustment interests, whether at school, during TAP transition classes for departing servicemembers, or as a liaison with the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service.

The second provision I would like to touch on was authored by the late C.W. Bill Young. It would permit the children of certain severely disabled servicemembers, who die shortly after their military service and who have received a Purple Heart, to be eligible for the Fry Educational Scholarship. The Fry Scholarship provides certain post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for the children of servicemembers, but only those who die on Active Duty.

Chairman Young rightly believed that the kids of those who may have been mortally wounded in service but who died shortly thereafter ought to be eligible for this benefit as well. I am honored to say that section 7 of the bill carries forward Bill's provision and that his memory lives on in our work today in this legislation.

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

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 2481, as amended, the Veterans Economic Opportunity Act of 2013, and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2481, as amended, makes several significant improvements to VA's structure as well as several benefits programs. This bill represents the work of Members, both on and off the Veterans' Affairs Committee, to improve veterans lives. I want to take a few minutes to highlight two of the key provisions of this measure.

Mr. CUMMINGS of Maryland originally introduced H.R. 1842, the Military Family Home Protection Act. Language from this measure is included in H.R. 2481, as amended, and aims to strengthen the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act foreclosure protections for servicemembers and their families during the course of deployment, regardless of when the home was purchased. Military homeowners deserve these protections so they can have peace of mind while they serve. We all have heard the horror stories of families fighting for their homes and, sadly, losing their homes while the family members were in harm's way in Iraq or Afghanistan.

The 5-year extension of the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program in this bill is vital to veterans. There are still approximately 62,000 homeless veterans on the streets each night. This program provides services to assist in reintegrating them into meaningful employment in the labor force. The HVRP is the only nationwide program that focuses on assisting homeless veterans by connecting them to employment. If we are to meet the goal of ending homeless veterans by 2015, we need to extend the help that is included in this bill.

I strongly support H.R. 2481, as amended, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FLORES), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2481, as amended, and I thank Chairman MILLER for allowing me to express my support for this bill today.

This bill contains the original text of the Veterans GI Bill Enrollment Clarification Act of 2013, which I introduced in June, as well as the collective work of the subcommittee that I am honored to chair, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

I want to thank the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, Mr. TAKANO, as well as Chairman MILLER and ranking member of the full committee, Mr. MICHAUD, for bringing this bill to the floor. Finally, I also thank the other members of the committee who authored the provisions that are included in this bill for their thoughtful legislation.

Mr. Speaker, sections 4 and 5, originally authored by Chairman MILLER, would authorize using existing VA resources for the creation of a fourth administration at VA, which will improve oversight over VA's education, vocational rehabilitation, and home loan programs, and the Center for Veterans Enterprise. Too often, these programs are overshadowed by VA's efforts to reduce the disability claims backlog, and I am hopeful that this new fourth administration will streamline oversight over these important VA programs that will help veterans reach economic success.

Section 6 includes Mr. COOK's bill that would extend the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, which provides grant funding for job training services for homeless veterans.

Section 7 includes a bill authored by our late colleague, Mr. Young of Florida. This section would modify the Fry Scholarship program to include the children of certain veterans who die within 31 days of discharge from a service-connected cause. This is an issue that I know Mr. Young was personally passionate about, and I am thankful that we are able to include it in this bill that is being considered today.

Section 8 includes the original text of my bill, H.R. 2481, that would clarify the process to assist veterans in choosing the best GI Bill benefit to meet their unique education needs. I believe that, by making this one small change, we can reduce veterans' wait times and streamline their use of the benefits that they have earned.

Section 9 reflects a bill introduced by Mr. CALVERT and cosponsored by Mr. TAKANO to streamline the reporting of student data by college consortiums.

Section 10 would extend several existing VA loan guarantee funding fees to provide CutGo funding offsets for the costs of the bill.

Sections 11 and 12 contain the provisions of Mr. CUMMINGS' bill to expand several mortgage foreclosure and refinancing-related protections and rights in the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to surviving spouses and Active Duty members. The section would also clarify refinancing options available for servicemembers, as well as penalties for violations of the SCRA law.

I want to thank Mr. CUMMINGS and his staff for working with us on this section over the past year. I believe these provisions would go a long way in protecting servicemembers and their families.

The final section would amend SCRA to protect child custody agreements of servicemembers while they are deployed. This provision, sponsored by Mr. TURNER, has passed the House multiple times in the last few Congresses, and it is designed to ensure that military service doesn't impact existing child custody agreements unless it is in the best interests of the child.

Once again, I thank all of the Members for their thoughtful contributions to this bill, and I encourage its passage.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maine, the ranking member of our committee, for yielding time, and I thank Chairman FLORES of the subcommittee for his hard work.

I am pleased to see that the Veterans Economic Opportunity Act of 2013 is receiving a vote today on the floor, as every Member of this distinguished

body has servicemembers in his or her congressional district, and all of us believe that taking care of these heroes, when they complete their service, should be a top priority.

Bipartisanship in this Congress is rare, but Republicans and Democrats all agree that Congress should be making it easier for our servicemembers as they transition back to civilian life.

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The House Veterans' Affairs Committee has a strong track record of being the least partisan committee in Congress, and this very bill is consistent with that record, as it passed in committee unanimously this past September.

I am especially proud that H.R. 331, which I originally introduced with my Republican colleague from California, Representative CALVERT, was included in the final legislation. With Riverside Community College District campuses in both of our congressional districts and with Riverside County having the eighth largest veterans population in the country, I am proud that Representative CALVERT and I joined forces to make it easier for veterans to receive their veterans education benefits.

Our legislation will help decrease education benefit processing times by eliminating unnecessary and duplicative paperwork for individual community colleges that are part of a group, district, or consortium. Specifically, it will allow a multicollege system, such as the Riverside Community College District, to verify a student's class enrollment number with the Department of Veterans Affairs instead of requiring each individual constituent college to do so. Centralizing the reporting for veterans enrollment at multicollege systems will be a great benefit to veterans in the Inland Empire, as unnecessary and duplicative paperwork delays benefits, increases processing times, and increases costs to the Department of Veterans Affairs and multicollege systems, such as the Riverside Community College District.

I am also pleased to see the Military Family Home Protection Act, of which I was a lead cosponsor, included in the final bill. This portion of the legislation will expand foreclosure protections to all servicemembers regardless of when they purchased their home and will stay home foreclosures for servicemembers who are receiving hostile or imminent danger pay. It will also prohibit banks from discriminating against servicemembers, veterans, and surviving spouses who are looking for home loans and mortgages. Finally, it will double civil penalties for mortgage-related violations.

The veterans who so bravely served this country deserve every opportunity for success and every protection possible.

I thank my Republican colleagues from the Veterans' Affairs Committee for pushing this legislation, and I look forward to its passage.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT).

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Veterans Economic Opportunity Act of 2013.

As our servicemembers return home from war, it is incumbent on all of us and all Americans to ensure that they are receiving the support and opportunities they need to succeed in civilian life. This bill establishes the Economic Opportunity Administration, which would focus its efforts entirely on veteran education, employment, small business, and housing. The bill also contains the text of legislation I introduced earlier this year along with my colleague from California, Representative TAKANO, which is vital to my and his congressional districts.

For community college districts that have multiple colleges as part of the district, the Department of Veterans Affairs requires each campus to certify that their veteran students are enrolled for a specific number of classes before the VA will disburse student benefits. Under current regulations, each of the colleges in the district must write letters to other colleges within the district to verify their classes and meet regulations. For the Riverside Community College District in Riverside, California, this unnecessary paperwork delays benefits to veterans and increases processing times and the costs to college districts as well as the VA.

This bill, which was wrapped into H.R. 2481, corrects that problem by permitting each college in the district to verify and certify veterans for all classes attended within the district rather than just for classes attended at that particular college. H.R. 331 would update the rules, which would mean veterans would receive their benefits sooner, and the VA would have less paperwork to process.

I would like to thank subcommittee Chairman FLORES and his staff, Ranking Member TAKANO, full committee Chairman MILLER, and full committee Ranking Member MICHAUD for their efforts to support our veterans, and specifically for the Veterans Economic Opportunity Act.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS).

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding; and I want to thank Chairman MILLER, Congressman FLORES, Ranking Member MICHAUD, Congressman TAKANO, and members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee for working together in a truly bipartisan way to include provisions in this legislation to extend home foreclosure provisions to our servicemembers, veterans with disabilities, and surviving spouses.

For the last 2 years, I have aggressively investigated illegal foreclosures, inflated fees, and other abuses by banks against our servicemembers, veterans, and their families. In my opinion, no one is more deserving of our help than our servicemembers who have sacrificed so much, who have given their blood, sweat, tears, and sometimes their lives. Yet under current law, certain servicemembers, veterans with disabilities, and surviving spouses are not receiving the critical protections they need and truly deserve. As a result, banks are foreclosing on homes at the very moment when our heroes and their families deserve our support.

As a country, we can and must do better. That is why I introduced H.R. 1842, the Military Family Home Protection Act, which the House Veterans' Affairs Committee included in the bill before us today, and I am most grateful. These commonsense provisions will better protect military families and veterans with disabilities by closing loopholes and providing needed reforms to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

These provisions are supported by the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans, Military Officers Association of America, Gold Star Wives of America, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, all of whom have written strong letters of support. This legislation has overwhelming bipartisan support, and I thank every single member of the committee for their continued support.

With Veterans Day approaching, I believe one of the best ways to honor our veterans and those that serve is to help keep a roof over their heads after they have sacrificed so much for our freedom and for our way of life. I ask every Member to support this effort.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Dayton, Ohio (Mr. TURNER), home of the United States Air Force Museum.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman for his diligence on a provision of this bill that would protect the custody rights of our servicemembers. I also want to thank the ranking member and the staff of the VA Committee for also being so diligent as to include this provision.

This provision has passed the House five times as part of the National Defense Authorization Act and three times as provisions coming from the VA Committee. It is an essential provision that would provide servicemembers the confidence and protection of the custody arrangements once they are deployed.

Unbelievably, across this Nation, family law court judges have been taking custody away from servicemembers upon their return from deployment, using their time against them in deciding a custody case. There are even cases in our Nation where the family law court judge took custody away based on the potential threat of deployment of servicemembers. I don't think anyone believes that it is in the best

interest of the child for them to believe that there is something wrong with serving your country.

We have a national military that needs a national standard. Men and women who are serving need to know what standard is going to be applied. Many of these cases have multiple State provisions. This does not provide Federal jurisdiction for custody cases. It retains the State's authority on this, but merely provides a minimum standard upon which servicemembers can rely that says that their custody decisions will not be based solely upon the issue of their past or future deployment. This is the minimum that we could do for our servicemembers.

This arises in part out of the case of Eva Slusher, who was a Kentucky National Guard member. Her daughter, Sara, she had raised for 6 years alone after divorce. Upon returning from deployment, the court awarded her ex-husband custody. She fought for 2 years and spent $25,000 to get her daughter back. She should be the type of servicemember who knows that there is a standard so that when she returns, that her time away will not be used against her.

This is important also so that servicemembers, when they are making arrangements upon departure, do not have the anxiety, when they are deployed, that when they return they might not get their families back.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. TURNER. Eva Slusher famously said that, under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, she is required to get her job back when she returns. She believes that, under that act, she should also be able to get her child back.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to thank Chairman MILLER for bringing this bill to the floor, as well as Chairman FLORES and Ranking Member TAKANO of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity for their work on this particular bill, and I would encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it unanimously.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the members of our committee for their bipartisan efforts in bringing this piece of legislation to the floor.

I would ask all Members here to support this as we go forward with a vote to pass H.R. 2481, as amended.

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. 2481, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to benefits, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DENIAL OF BENEFIT REQUIREMENT

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1405) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include an appeals form in any notice of decision issued for the denial of a benefit sought, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1405

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

SECTION 1. INCLUSION OF APPEALS FORMS IN NOTICES OF DECISIONS OF BENEFITS DENIALS ISSUED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5104(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''and (2)'' and inserting ''(2)''; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', and (3) a form that may be used to file an appeal of the decision''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to decisions made by the Secretary under section 511 of title 38, United States Code, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SECTION 1. INCLUSION OF NOTICE OF DISAGREEMENT FORMS IN NOTICES OF DECISIONS OF BENEFITS DENIALS ISSUED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5104(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''and (2)'' and inserting ''(2)''; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', and (3) a form that may be used to file a notice of disagreement to the decision''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to decisions made by the Secretary under section 511 of title 38, United States Code, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2. PROVISION OF STATUS UNDER LAW BY HONORING CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS AS VETERANS.

(a) VETERAN STATUS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 107 the following new section:

''§ 107A. Honoring as veterans certain persons who performed service in the reserve components

''Any person who is entitled under chapter 1223 of title 10 to retired pay for nonregular service or, but for age, would be entitled under such chapter to retired pay for nonregular service shall be honored as a veteran but shall not be entitled to any benefit by reason of this section.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 107 the following new item:

''107A. Honoring as veterans certain persons who performed service in the reserve components.''.

(b) CLARIFICATION REGARDING BENEFITS.—No person may receive any benefit under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs solely by reason of section 107A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

SEC. 3. PROVISION OF ACCESS TO CASE-TRACKING INFORMATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 59 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 5906. Provision of access to case-tracking information

''(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) In accordance with subsection (b), the Secretary shall provide a covered employee with access to the case-tracking system to provide a veteran with information regarding the status of a claim submitted by such veteran if such employee is acting under written permission or a power of attorney executed by such veteran.

''(2) In providing a covered employee with access to the case-tracking system under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure—

''(A) that such access—

''(i) is provided in a manner that does not allow such employee to modify the data contained in such system; and

''(ii) does not include access to medical records; and

''(B) that each time a covered employee accesses such system, the employee must certify that such access is for official purposes only.

''(b) PRIVACY CERTIFICATION COURSE.—The Secretary may not provide a covered employee with access to the case-tracking system under subsection (a)(1) unless the covered employee has successfully completed a certification course on privacy issues provided by the Secretary.

''(c) TREATMENT OF DISCLOSURE.—The access to information by a covered employee pursuant to subsection (a)(1) shall be deemed to be—

''(1) a covered disclosure under section 552a(b) of title 5; and

''(2) a permitted disclosure under regulations promulgated under section 264(c) of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. 1320d–2 note).

''(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'case-tracking system' means the system of the Department of Veterans Affairs that provides information regarding the status of a claim submitted by a veteran.

''(2) The term 'covered employee' means an employee of a State or local governmental agency (including a veterans service officer) who, in the course of carrying out the responsibilities of such employment, assists veterans with claims for any benefit under the laws administered by the Secretary.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''5906. Provision of access to case-tracking information.''.

SEC. 4. IMPROVEMENT OF FIDUCIARIES FOR VETERANS.

(a) APPOINTMENT AND SUPERVISION.—

(1) Section 5502 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 5502. Appointment of fiduciaries

''(a) APPOINTMENT.—(1) Where it appears to the Secretary that the interest of the beneficiary would be served thereby, payment of benefits under any law administered by the Secretary may be made directly to the beneficiary or to a relative or some other fiduciary for the use and benefit of the beneficiary, regardless of any legal disability on the part of the beneficiary.

''(2) When in the opinion of the Secretary, a temporary fiduciary is needed in order to protect the benefits provided to the beneficiary under any law administered by the Secretary while a determination of incompetency is being made or appealed or a fiduciary is appealing a determination of misuse, the Secretary may appoint one or more temporary fiduciaries for a period not to exceed 120 days. If a final decision has not been made within 120 days, the Secretary may not continue the appointment of the fiduciary without obtaining a court order for appointment of a guardian, conservator, or other fiduciary under the authority provided in section 5502(b) of this title.

''(b) APPEALS.—(1) If the Secretary determines a beneficiary to be mentally incompetent for purposes of appointing a fiduciary under this chapter, the Secretary shall provide such beneficiary with a written statement detailing the reasons for such determination.

''(2) A beneficiary whom the Secretary has determined to be mentally incompetent for purposes of appointing a fiduciary under this chapter may appeal such determination.

''(c) MODIFICATION.—(1) A beneficiary for whom the Secretary appoints a fiduciary under this chapter may, at any time, request the Secretary to—

''(A) remove the fiduciary so appointed; and

''(B) have a new fiduciary appointed.

''(2) The Secretary shall comply with a request under paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines that the request is made in good faith and—

''(A) the fiduciary requested to be removed receives a fee from the beneficiary and a suitable volunteer fiduciary is available to assist the beneficiary; or

''(B) the beneficiary provides credible information that the fiduciary requested to be removed is—

''(i) not acting in the interest of the beneficiary ;or

''(ii) unable to effectively serve the beneficiary because of an irreconcilable personality conflict or disagreement.

''(3) The Secretary shall ensure that any removal or new appointment of a fiduciary under paragraph (1) does not delay or interrupt the beneficiary's receipt of benefits administered by the Secretary.

''(d) INDEPENDENCE.—A fiduciary appointed by the Secretary shall operate independently of the Department to determine the actions that are in the interest of the beneficiary.

''(e) PREDESIGNATION.—A veteran may predesignate a fiduciary by—

''(1) submitting written notice to the Secretary of the predesignated fiduciary; or

''(2) submitting a form provided by the Secretary for such purpose.

''(f) APPOINTMENT OF NON-PREDESIGNATED FIDUCIARY.—If a beneficiary designates an individual to serve as a fiduciary under subsection (e) and the Secretary appoints an individual not so designated as the fiduciary for such beneficiary, the Secretary shall notify such beneficiary of—

''(1) the reason why such designated individual was not appointed; and

''(2) the ability of the beneficiary to modify the appointed fiduciary under subsection (c).

''(g) PRIORITY OF APPOINTMENT.—In appointing a fiduciary under this chapter, if a beneficiary does not designate a fiduciary pursuant to subsection (e), to the extent possible the Secretary shall appoint a person who is—

''(1) a relative of the beneficiary;

''(2) appointed as guardian of the beneficiary by a court of competent jurisdiction; or

''(3) authorized to act on behalf of the beneficiary under a durable power of attorney.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 55 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 5502 and inserting the following:

''5502. Appointment of fiduciaries.''.

(b) SUPERVISION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 55 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 5502, as amended by subsection (a)(1), the following new section:

''§ 5502A. Supervision of fiduciaries

''(a) COMMISSION.—(1)(A) In a case in which the Secretary determines that a commission is necessary in order to obtain the services of a fiduciary in the best interests of a beneficiary, the Secretary may authorize a fiduciary appointed by the Secretary to obtain from the monthly benefits provided to the beneficiary a reasonable commission for fiduciary services rendered, but the commission for any month may not exceed the lesser of the following amounts:

''(i) The amount that equals three percent of the monthly monetary benefits under laws administered by the Secretary paid on behalf of the beneficiary to the fiduciary.

''(ii) $35.

''(B) A commission paid under this paragraph may not be derived from any award to a beneficiary regarding back pay or retroactive benefits payments.

''(C) A commission may not be authorized for a fiduciary who receives any other form of remuneration or payment in connection with rendering fiduciary services for benefits under this title on behalf of the beneficiary.

''(D) In accordance with section 6106 of this title, a commission may not be paid to a fiduciary if the Secretary determines that the fiduciary misused any benefit payments of a beneficiary.

''(E) If the Secretary determines that the fiduciary has misused any benefit or payments of a beneficiary, the Secretary may revoke the fiduciary status of the fiduciary.

''(2) Where, in the opinion of the Secretary, any fiduciary receiving funds on behalf of a Department beneficiary is acting in such a number of cases as to make it impracticable to conserve properly the estates or to supervise the persons of the beneficiaries, the Secretary may refuse to make future payments in such cases as the Secretary may deem proper.

''(b) COURT.—Whenever it appears that any fiduciary, in the opinion of the Secretary, is not properly executing or has not properly executed the duties of the trust of such fiduciary or has collected or paid, or is attempting to collect or pay, fees, commissions, or allowances that are inequitable or in excess of those allowed by law for the duties performed or expenses incurred, or has failed to make such payments as may be necessary for the benefit of the ward or the dependents of the ward, then the Secretary may appear, by the Secretary's authorized attorney, in the court which has appointed such fiduciary, or in any court having original, concurrent, or appellate jurisdiction over said cause, and make proper presentation of such matters. The Secretary, in the Secretary's discretion, may suspend payments to any such fiduciary who shall neglect or refuse, after reasonable notice, to render an account to the Secretary from time to time showing the application of such payments for the benefit of such incompetent or minor beneficiary, or who shall neglect or refuse to administer the estate according to law. The Secretary may require the fiduciary, as part of such account, to disclose any additional financial information concerning the beneficiary (except for information that is not available to the fiduciary). The Secretary may appear or intervene by the Secretary's duly authorized attorney in any court as an interested party in any litigation instituted by the Secretary or otherwise, directly affecting money paid to such fiduciary under this section.

''(c) PAYMENT OF CERTAIN EXPENSES.—Authority is hereby granted for the payment of any court or other expenses incident to any investigation or court proceeding for the appointment of any fiduciary or other person for the purpose of payment of benefits payable under laws administered by the Secretary or the removal of such fiduciary and appointment of another, and of expenses in connection with the administration of such benefits by such fiduciaries, or in connection with any other court proceeding hereby authorized, when such payment is authorized by the Secretary.

''(d) TEMPORARY PAYMENT OF BENEFITS.—All or any part of any benefits the payment of which is suspended or withheld under this section may, in the discretion of the Secretary, be paid temporarily to the person having custody and control of the incompetent or minor beneficiary, to be used solely for the benefit of such beneficiary, or, in the case of an incompetent veteran, may be apportioned to the dependent or dependents, if any, of such veteran. Any part not so paid and any funds of a mentally incompetent or insane veteran not paid to the chief officer of the institution in which such veteran is a patient nor apportioned to the veteran's dependent or dependents may be ordered held in the Treasury to the credit of such beneficiary. All funds so held shall be disbursed under the order and in the discretion of the Secretary for the benefit of such beneficiary or the beneficiary's dependents. Any balance remaining in such fund to the credit of any beneficiary may be paid to the beneficiary if the beneficiary recovers and is found competent, or if a minor, attains majority, or otherwise to the beneficiary's fiduciary, or, in the event of the beneficiary's death, to the beneficiary's personal representative, except as otherwise provided by law; however, payment will not be made to the beneficiary's personal representative if, under the law of the beneficiary's last legal residence, the beneficiary's estate would escheat to the State. In the event of the death of a mentally incompetent or insane veteran, all gratuitous benefits under laws administered by the Secretary deposited before or after August 7, 1959, in the personal funds of patients trust fund on account of such veteran shall not be paid to the personal representative of such veteran, but shall be paid to the following persons living at the time of settlement, and in the order named: The surviving spouse, the children (without regard to age or marital status) in equal parts, and the dependent parents of such veteran, in equal parts. If any balance remains, such balance shall be deposited to the credit of the applicable current appropriation; except that there may be paid only so much of such balance as may be necessary to reimburse a person (other than a political subdivision of the United States) who bore the expenses of last sickness or burial of the veteran for such expenses. No payment shall be made under the two preceding sentences of this subsection unless claim therefor is filed with the Secretary within five years after the death of the veteran, except that, if any person so entitled under said two sentences is under legal disability at the time of death of the veteran, such five-year period of limitation shall run from the termination or removal of the legal disability.

''(e) ESCHEATMENT.—Any funds in the hands of a fiduciary appointed by a State court or the Secretary derived from benefits payable under laws administered by the Secretary, which under the law of the State

wherein the beneficiary had last legal residence would escheat to the State, shall escheat to the United States and shall be returned by such fiduciary, or by the personal representative of the deceased beneficiary, less legal expenses of any administration necessary to determine that an escheat is in order, to the Department, and shall be deposited to the credit of the applicable revolving fund, trust fund, or appropriation.

''(f) ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall provide to a fiduciary appointed under section 5502 of this title materials and tools to assist the fiduciary in carrying out the responsibilities of the fiduciary under this chapter, including—

''(1) handbooks, brochures, or other written material that explain the responsibilities of a fiduciary under this chapter;

''(2) tools located on an Internet website, including forms to submit to the Secretary required information; and

''(3) assistance provided by telephone.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 55 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 5502 the following new item:

''5502A. Supervision of fiduciaries.''.

(c) DEFINITION OF FIDUCIARY.—Section 5506 of title 38, United States Code is amended—

(1) by striking ''For purposes'' and inserting ''(a) For purposes''; and

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

''(b)(1) For purposes of subsection (a), the term 'person' includes any—

''(A) State or local government agency whose mission is to carry out income maintenance, social service, or health care-related activities;

''(B) any State or local government agency with fiduciary responsibilities; or

''(C) any nonprofit social service agency that the Secretary determines—

''(i) regularly provides services as a fiduciary concurrently to five or more individuals; and

''(ii) is not a creditor of any such individual.

''(2) The Secretary shall maintain a list of State or local agencies and nonprofit social service agencies under paragraph (1) that are qualified to act as a fiduciary under this chapter. In maintaining such list, the Secretary may consult the lists maintained under section 807(h) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1007(h)).''.

(d) QUALIFICATIONS.—Section 5507 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 5507. Inquiry, investigations, and qualification of fiduciaries

''(a) INVESTIGATION.—Any certification of a person for payment of benefits of a beneficiary to that person as such beneficiary's fiduciary under section 5502 of this title shall be made on the basis of—

''(1) an inquiry or investigation by the Secretary of the fitness of that person to serve as fiduciary for that beneficiary to be conducted in advance of such certification and in accordance with subsection (b);

''(2) adequate evidence that certification of that person as fiduciary for that beneficiary is in the interest of such beneficiary (as determined by the Secretary under regulations);

''(3) adequate evidence that the person to serve as fiduciary protects the private information of a beneficiary in accordance with subsection (d)(1); and

''(4) the furnishing of any bond that may be required by the Secretary in accordance with subsection (f).

''(b) ELEMENTS OF INVESTIGATION.—(1) In conducting an inquiry or investigation of a proposed fiduciary under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall conduct—

''(A) a face-to-face interview with the proposed fiduciary by not later than 30 days after the date on which such inquiry or investigation begins; and

''(B) a background check of the proposed fiduciary to—

''(i) in accordance with paragraph (2), determine whether the proposed fiduciary has been convicted of a crime; and

''(ii) determine whether the proposed fiduciary will serve the best interest of the beneficiary, including by conducting a credit check of the proposed fiduciary and checking the records under paragraph (5).

''(2) The Secretary shall request information concerning whether that person has been convicted of any offense under Federal or State law. If that person has been convicted of such an offense, the Secretary may certify the person as a fiduciary only if the Secretary finds that the person is an appropriate person to act as fiduciary for the beneficiary concerned under the circumstances.

''(3) The Secretary shall conduct the background check described in paragraph (1)(B)—

''(A) each time a person is proposed to be a fiduciary, regardless of whether the person is serving or has served as a fiduciary; and

''(B) at no expense to the beneficiary.

''(4) Each proposed fiduciary shall disclose to the Secretary the number of beneficiaries that the fiduciary acts on behalf of.

''(5) The Secretary shall maintain records of any person who has—

''(A) previously served as a fiduciary; and

''(B) had such fiduciary status revoked by the Secretary.

''(6)(A) If a fiduciary appointed by the Secretary is convicted of a crime described in subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall notify the beneficiary of such conviction by not later than 14 days after the date on which the Secretary learns of such conviction.

''(B) A crime described in this subparagraph is a crime—

''(i) for which the fiduciary is convicted while serving as a fiduciary for any person;

''(ii) that is not included in a report submitted by the fiduciary under section 5509(a) of this title; and

''(iii) that the Secretary determines could affect the ability of the fiduciary to act on behalf of the beneficiary.

''(c) INVESTIGATION OF CERTAIN PERSONS.—(1) In the case of a proposed fiduciary described in paragraph (2), the Secretary, in conducting an inquiry or investigation under subsection (a)(1), may carry out such inquiry or investigation on an expedited basis that may include giving priority to conducting such inquiry or investigation. Any such inquiry or investigation carried out on such an expedited basis shall be carried out under regulations prescribed for purposes of this section.

''(2) Paragraph (1) applies with respect to a proposed fiduciary who is—

''(A) the parent (natural, adopted, or stepparent) of a beneficiary who is a minor;

''(B) the spouse or parent of an incompetent beneficiary;

''(C) a person who has been appointed a fiduciary of the beneficiary by a court of competent jurisdiction;

''(D) being appointed to manage an estate where the annual amount of veterans benefits to be managed by the proposed fiduciary does not exceed $3,600, as adjusted pursuant to section 5312 of this title; or

''(E) a person who is authorized to act on behalf of the beneficiary under a durable power of attorney.

''(d) PROTECTION OF PRIVATE INFORMATION.—(1) A fiduciary shall take all reasonable precautions to—

''(A) protect the private information of a beneficiary, including personally identifiable information; and

''(B) securely conducts financial transactions.

''(2) A fiduciary shall notify the Secretary of any action of the fiduciary that compromises or potentially compromises the private information of a beneficiary.

''(e) POTENTIAL MISUSE OF FUNDS.—(1) If the Secretary has reason to believe that a fiduciary may be misusing all or part of the benefit of a beneficiary, the Secretary shall—

''(A) conduct a thorough investigation to determine the veracity of such belief; and

''(B) if such veracity is established, transmit to the officials described in paragraph (2) a report of such investigation.

''(2) The officials described in this paragraph are the following:

''(A) The Attorney General.

''(B) Each head of a Federal department or agency that pays to a fiduciary or other person benefits under any law administered by such department of agency for the use and benefit of a minor, incompetent, or other beneficiary.

''(f) BOND.—In determining whether a proposed fiduciary is required to furnish a bond under subsection (a)(4), the Secretary shall consider—

''(1) the existence of any familial or other personal relationship between the proposed fiduciary and the beneficiary; and

''(2) the care the proposed fiduciary has taken to protect the interests of the beneficiary.

''(g) LIST OF FIDUCIARIES.—Each regional office of the Veterans Benefits Administration shall maintain a list of the following:

''(1) The name and contact information of each fiduciary, including address, telephone number, and email address.

''(2) With respect to each fiduciary described in paragraph (1)—

''(A) the date of the most recent background check and credit check performed by the Secretary under this section;

''(B) the date that any bond was paid under this section;

''(C) the name, address, and telephone number of each beneficiary the fiduciary acts on behalf of; and

''(D) the amount that the fiduciary controls with respect to each beneficiary described in subparagraph (C).''.

(e) ANNUAL RECEIPT OF PAYMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 5509 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)——

(i) by striking ''may require a fiduciary to file a'' and inserting ''shall require a fiduciary to file an annual''; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''The Secretary shall transmit such annual report or accounting to the beneficiary and any legal guardian of such beneficiary.'';

(B) by adding at the end the following new subsections:

''(c) MATTERS INCLUDED.—Except as provided by subsection (f), an annual report or accounting under subsection (a) shall include the following:

''(1) For each beneficiary that a fiduciary acts on behalf of—

''(A) the amount of the benefits of the beneficiary provided under any law administered by the Secretary accrued during the year, the amount spent, and the amount remaining; and

''(B) if the fiduciary serves the beneficiary with respect to benefits not administered by the Secretary, an accounting of all sources of benefits or other income the fiduciary oversees for the beneficiary.

''(2) A list of events that occurred during the year covered by the report that could affect the ability of the fiduciary to act on behalf of the beneficiary, including—

''(A) the fiduciary being convicted of any crime;

''(B) the fiduciary declaring bankruptcy; and

''(C) any judgments entered against the fiduciary.

''(d) RANDOM AUDITS.—The Secretary shall annually conduct random audits of fiduciaries who receive a commission pursuant to subsection 5502A(a)(1) of this title.

''(e) STATUS OF FIDUCIARY.—If a fiduciary includes in the annual report events described in subsection (c)(2), the Secretary may take appropriate action to adjust the status of the fiduciary as the Secretary determines appropriate, including by revoking the fiduciary status of the fiduciary.

''(f) CAREGIVERS AND CERTAIN OTHER FIDUCIARIES.—(1)(A) In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall ensure that a caregiver fiduciary is required only to file an annual report or accounting under subsection (a) with respect to the amount of the benefits of the beneficiary provided under any law administered by the Secretary—

''(i) spent on—

''(I) food and housing for the beneficiary; and

''(II) clothing, health-related expenses, recreation, and other personal items for the beneficiary; and

''(ii) saved for the beneficiary.

''(B) The Secretary shall coordinate with the Under Secretary for Benefits and the Under Secretary for Health to—

''(i) minimize the frequency with which employees of the Department visit the home of a caregiver fiduciary and beneficiary; and

''(ii) limit the extent of supervision by such Under Secretaries with respect to such a fiduciary and beneficiary.

''(C) In this paragraph, the term 'caregiver fiduciary' means a fiduciary who—

''(i) in addition to acting as a fiduciary for a beneficiary, is approved by the Secretary to be a provider of personal care services for the beneficiary under paragraph (3)(A)(i) of section 1720G(a) of this title;

''(ii) in carrying out such care services to such beneficiary, has undergone not less than four home visits under paragraph (9)(A) of such section; and

''(iii) has not been required by the Secretary to take corrective action pursuant to paragraph (9)(C) of such section.

''(2) In carrying out this section, the Secretary may adjust the matters required under an annual report or accounting under subsection (a) with respect to a fiduciary whom the Secretary determines to have effectively protected the interests of the beneficiary over a sustained period.''; and

(C) by striking the section heading and inserting the following: ''**Annual reports and accountings of fiduciaries**''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 55 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 5509 and inserting the following new item:

''5509. Annual reports and accountings of fiduciaries.''.

(f) REPAYMENT OF MISUSED BENEFITS.—Section 6107(a)(2)(C) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting before the period the following: '', including by the Secretary not acting in accordance with section 5507 of this title''.

(g) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Section 5510 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''The Secretary shall include in the Annual Benefits Report of the Veterans Benefits Administration or the Secretary's Annual Performance and Accountability Report'' and inserting ''Not later than July 1 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a separate report containing''.

(h) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a comprehensive report on the implementation of the amendments made by this Act, including—

(1) detailed information on the establishment of new policies and procedures pursuant to such amendments and training provided on such policies and procedures; and

(2) a discussion of whether the Secretary should provide fiduciaries with standardized financial software to simplify reporting requirements.

SEC. 5. LIMITATION ON AWARDS AND BONUSES TO EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

For each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not pay more than $345,000,000 in awards or bonuses under chapter 45 or 53 of title 5, United States Code, or any other awards or bonuses authorized under such title.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS) 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 have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous material they may have on H.R. 1405, 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 want to commend the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS) for identifying another step in cleaning up the claims process. Her bill also includes provisions authored by the former sergeant major of the Minnesota National Guard, Mr. WALZ, to provide honorary veteran status to members of the National Guard and Reserves.

H.R. 1405 would also improve access to veterans' claims information by certain State and local government officials. And finally, the bill would revise the process by which fiduciary agents are assigned and limit the amount of bonuses that can be paid under chapters 45 and 53 of title V.

Again, I know that there are other Members who wish to speak in more detail on the provisions of this bill, so at this time, I will reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 1405, as amended.

I introduced this legislation, H.R. 1405, to improve the veterans' claims appeals process. Currently, a veteran must first exercise his or her appeal rights before the appeal process formally begins and the VA sends the required forms.

H.R. 1405, as amended, requires the VA to include an appeals form with the notice of decision for every claim. This cuts out several steps and speeds up the appeals process. This commonsense change will immediately reduce the time frame of the appeals process by 60 days.

H.R. 1405 will also allow the VA to provide better customer service to those veterans who are already struggling with significant delays and bureaucratic challenges.

This legislation is, indeed, a commonsense improvement that will result in veterans in southern Nevada receiving the benefits they have earned in a timely fashion. I constantly hear from veterans in Las Vegas that the process is too complicated and takes too long. This change will eliminate an unnecessary bureaucratic step and speed up the process for those veterans and all our veterans across the country.

H.R. 1405, as amended, is supported by the VA and the veterans service organizations who came and testified.

This piece of legislation also includes language from three other bills: H.R. 679, the Honor America's Guard-Reserve Retirees Act, introduced by Representative WALZ of Minnesota; Chairman RUNYAN's bill, H.R. 733, the Access to Veterans Benefits Improvement Act; and Mr. JOHNSON's bill, H.R. 894, to reform VA's fiduciary program.

I want to thank the chairman of our subcommittee, Mr. RUNYAN, for moving this legislation through the subcommittee and for the bipartisan cooperation that guides our work on behalf of Nevada's veterans.

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I also want to thank the many veteran service organizations for their helpful input and for supporting this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 1405, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN), the subcommittee chairman for Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Mr. RUNYAN. Thank you, Chairman MILLER, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have sponsored H.R. 733, the Access to Veterans Benefits Improvement Act, with my good friend and colleague, Mr. TIM WALZ of Minnesota. This legislation is included as section 3 of H.R. 1405 and would provide certain local and State government employees access to case-tracking information through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

There is no doubt that we have a responsibility to veterans to ensure that every effort is made to simplify the claims process. Key to this effort are the County Service Veterans Officers, whose expertise in claims development

helps veterans in New Jersey and in communities all across America.

Veterans are often frustrated, as they ask for help from a county service officer, that this person acting on their behalf cannot directly access even the most basic information about the status of their claim. However, while looking to remedy that complication and broaden access to case-tracking information, consideration must also be given to the protection of veterans' private information. That is the balance that this bill strikes.

Mr. Speaker, I support section 3 of H.R. 1405, along with all the other provisions contained within the bill, and I encourage all Members to join me in support of the legislation.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ), who brings incredible expertise and compassion to the committee as a decorated veteran himself.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chairman and the ranking member of the full committee and the subcommittees for doing exceptional work, for putting our veterans first, for bringing a package of commonsense legislation to honor our Nation's veterans, and doing it in the best and smartest manner we can. If the entire Congress functioned like the VA Committee, I think the American public would be far better served.

There is a provision in this bill that is very simple. It recognizes the service and sacrifice of members of the National Guard and Reserves. These are the men and women of our Reserve component. They take the same oath of office. They do the same training. They and their family sacrifice their time and energy and stand at the ready at all times. They assist flood victims in Colorado and Minnesota, fight fires across the Western United States, and stand ready to fight and defend this Nation at a moment's notice. They truly are the minutemen.

I would guess that the vast majority of Americans and maybe even Members of this body don't recognize that you can serve 20 years doing that, and if you are not called to a specific title X service, you cannot be considered a veteran. You can go to the VA hospital, you can go use the GI Bill, you can be buried in a veterans' cemetery, but you are technically a military retiree.

This may seem like a small thing, but it is not. The title of ''veteran'' means more than just a license plate you get from your State. It is something your neighbors know about. These people don't and should not have to explain that they are technically not a veteran.

This piece of legislation—and I thank, again, the people who made this possible—simply corrects that. Very seldom do we get a chance to do this. It doesn't add any cost, and it does the right thing. So it is not an added benefit—which was earned, by the way. It simply corrects this, puts it in line, and honors. If you serve 20 or more years in uniform, you stand ready, you train people who went to war, we are going to give you the dignity and the honor of calling you a veteran.

So I ask my colleagues to support this important package of legislation. This one small piece is the right thing to do. It is many, many years overdue. I ask for the support of H.R. 1405.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOHNSON), a former member of the VA Committee and a 26-plus year veteran of the United States Air Force.

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. I thank the chairman for recognizing me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support today of H.R. 1405, which, in addition to improving the disability claims appeals process for veterans, contains language from H.R. 894, legislation I introduced to provide necessary reforms to the Department of Veterans Affairs' Fiduciary Program.

In response to an investigation by the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, which I chaired in the last Congress, this legislation includes significant changes that will strengthen the VA's standards for administering the Fiduciary Program and increase protection for vulnerable veterans.

Requiring background checks and lowering the fee a fiduciary can charge would increase scrutiny over fiduciaries and help root out potential predators. It also adds a layer of protection for veterans with fiduciaries by allowing veterans to petition to have their fiduciary removed and replaced. Importantly, it would also enable veterans to appeal their incompetency status at any time. That is a right not currently granted to veterans.

I would like to thank Chairman RUNYAN and Ranking Member TITUS of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee for their support of this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to join us in support of H.R. 1405, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1405, as amended, is yet another bipartisan bill that has been advanced out of our committee. I, again, thank all the members for their collaborative work on this bill, and I urge my colleagues to join us in passing H.R. 1405, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1405. This straightforward legislation contains several provisions relating to veterans benefits, and also includes a cut in bonuses at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Under current practice, the VA pays out about $400 million in bonuses to its workers each year. Recently we have seen these bonuses too often go to people whose work does not merit a reward, and to the contrary, may even merit reprimand.

This practice has been evident at the Atlanta VA Medical Center, where despite the fact that four unexpected deaths were attributed to mismanagement and lack of oversight, tens of thousands of dollars in bonuses were awarded to top level executives at the facility. It is past time that we stop rewarding people for simply showing up to work—bonuses should be the exception, not the norm. Furthermore, at a time when so many of our soldiers are returning from war, and in light of the deaths in Atlanta, I believe the VA should prioritize veterans' health and well-being above all else.

H.R. 1405 takes a positive step in ensuring that more discretion is used when providing bonus payments to employees at the VA. The legislation caps financial awards at the VA to no more than $345 million for fiscal years 2014 to 2018. It is time we stop rewarding lackluster work and focus instead on providing the best possible care for our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in showing our gratitude for our nation's veterans by supporting H.R. 1405.

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. 1405, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include a notice of disagreement form in any notice of decision issued for the denial of a benefit sought, to improve the supervision of fiduciaries of veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2013

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2011) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a two-year extension of the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2011

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 ''Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. TWO-YEAR EXTENSION OF VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

Section 3692 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by inserting ''31,'' after ''30,''; and

(B) by striking ''and the Persian Gulf War'' and inserting ''the Persian Gulf War, and the post-9/11 operations in Iraq and Afghanistan''; and

(2) in subsection (c), by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2015''.

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 include any extraneous material they may have on H.R. 2011.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, having the right skills is one of the keys to finding a good job, and America's taxpayers are now providing the most valuable GI Bill benefit to veterans and dependents since World War II.

To assist VA and the Congress in making sure that veterans' educational assistance benefits are meeting the needs of our veterans, title 38 has established a committee to advise the Secretary on the needs of veteran students. The committee's statutory term will expire on December 31 of this year. H.R. 2011 would extend that term for 2 years. I thank Mr. DELANEY for bringing his bill forward to our committee.

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. 2011, the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act of 2013. The Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education provides advice to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the administration of education and training programs for veterans and servicemembers, Reservists and Guard personnel, and dependents of veterans. The Advisory Committee is composed of veterans and persons who are eminent in their respective fields of education, labor, and management and are representatives of institutions and establishments furnishing education to veterans.

Besides providing advice to the Secretary, the Advisory Committee recommends new educational benefits and services. It also plays a key role in the long-range planning and development of existing education benefit programs for our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, as our post-9/11 GI Bill continues to evolve and be fully understood by the VA, colleges, veterans, and their dependents, the Advisory Committee is crucial to full implementation and resolving lingering issues. The authority for the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education is slated to end on December 31, 2013. H.R. 2011 would extend this authority for 2 years so that the Advisory Committee can continue its important work in ensuring that veterans receive the full value of their educational benefits.

I wish to thank Representative DELANEY of Maryland for introducing this bill and Chairman MILLER for bringing it to the floor today. I wish also to thank Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Chairman FLORES and Ranking Member TAKANO for their hard work on this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the 16th District of Ohio (Mr. RENACCI).

Mr. RENACCI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today with many of my colleagues who worked together as part of a bipartisan working group, including Mr. CARNEY, Mr. HECK, Mr. DELANEY, and others, in strong support of H.R. 2011, the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act. It was my great pleasure to join my good friend, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. DELANEY), in introducing this legislation.

America's veterans sacrifice dearly for this country, and I believe it is our obligation to help them once their service is complete.

The Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education was created in 1972 to advise the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on education and job training programs. Our legislation will not only continue the work of this valuable committee by reauthorizing it for 2 years, but it will also expand the committee to include representatives for those that served after September 11, 2001.

Every military conflict has its own unique atrocities and every generation of veterans faces a unique set of obstacles as they rejoin the civilian job market. For this reason, it is critical that we include members to represent those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As a Member of Congress, I believe there is no greater cause than protecting and caring for our service men and women. I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 2011. Doing so will ensure that our troops receive the most effective education and training opportunities available.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. DELANEY).

Mr. DELANEY. I want to thank the ranking member for yielding. I also want to thank Chairman MILLER and the rest of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for their support during this committee process.

The Veterans Affairs Committee does some of the most important work here in Congress and has long been applauded as a place where both parties work together. In that vein, our bill, H.R. 2011, the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act, is bipartisan legislation which I was pleased to introduce with my colleague from Ohio, Congressman RENACCI. H.R. 2011 is commonsense legislation designed to improve the VA's education and job training programs, and I am proud that it is being considered on the House floor today.

Mr. Speaker, one of the real privileges of our work in Congress is getting to meet so many dedicated servicemen and veterans and learn about the incredible work they have done to keep our country safe and defend our way of life. Likewise, in our district work, one of the most essential services in our offices is to provide help to veterans so that they can earn the benefits that they deserve. When we travel across our districts, what we see is the deep appreciation the American people have for her veterans. There is a reverence for their heroism and gratitude for their service.

Mr. Speaker, the American people feel strongly that our veterans deserve to be repaid for their service. I believe that one of the most significant commitments that we can make to these servicemen is their education.

Going back to 1944, with the first GI Bill, we have joined together as a Nation and said that when our veterans come home, they are going to be able to receive the education they need. In today's high-tech global economy, that commitment is more important than ever. The veterans' unemployment rate is too low, especially for post-9/11.

To give our veterans the best chance to succeed, we need to make sure that they have a choice in the VA, we need to make sure that our current benefit programs are working, and we need to make sure that our veterans' education programs are adapting to an ever-changing world.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation does two very important things.

□ 1745

First, it reauthorizes the Veterans Advisory Committee on Education through 2015. Absent congressional action, the Veterans Advisory Committee on Education will sunset this December.

Second, this legislation updates the U.S. Code to ensure that the committee includes post-9/11 veterans. There are over 2 million post-9/11 veterans in the United States, and their perspectives need to be heard on the committee and at the VA.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to note that H.R. 2011 is supported by numerous important veterans organizations, including the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the Military Officers Association of America, the Student Veterans Association, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I can't think of better endorsements than these.

Helping our veterans transition to civilian life is one of the most critical challenges facing our country. These men and women are truly our country's heroes, and they deserve a world-class education. Our constituents feel strongly that this is something that we get right.

I thank the ranking member for his time, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. So if my good friend Mr. MICHAUD is ready to close, so am I.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I also have no further requests for time.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2011, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I, too, Mr. Speaker, ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2011, 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. 2011.

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. MICHAUD. 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 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 47 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MEADOWS) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes 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. 2189, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 2011, 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.

ESTABLISHING COMMISSION OR TASK FORCE TO EVALUATE BACKLOG OF DISABILITY CLAIMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2189) to establish a commission or task force to evaluate the backlog of disability claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 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 404, nays 1, not voting 25, as follows:

[Roll No. 561]

YEAS—404

Amash
Amodei
Andrews
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Conyers
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
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
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Guthrie
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Moore
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
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
Radel
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IN)

NAYS—1

Sanford

NOT VOTING—25

Aderholt
Butterfield
Campbell
Connolly
Cooper
Graves (MO)
Grijalva
Grimm
Gutiérrez
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Kind
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
Moran
Noem
Owens
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Rush
Schwartz
Speier
Stutzman
Wilson (FL)
Young (AK)

□ 1854

Messrs. ROHRABACHER and BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

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 improve the processing of disability claims by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT 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. 2011) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a two-year extension of the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education 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.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 404, nays 2, not voting 24, as follows:

[Roll No. 562]

YEAS—404

Amash
Amodei
Andrews
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Conyers
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
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
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Guthrie
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Moore
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
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
Radel
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IN)

NAYS—2

Massie
Schweikert

NOT VOTING—24

Aderholt
Butterfield
Campbell
Connolly
Cooper
Graves (MO)
Grijalva
Grimm
Gutiérrez
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Kind
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
Moran
Noem
Owens
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Rush
Schwartz
Speier
Stutzman
Young (AK)

□ 1903

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 992, SWAPS REGULATORY IMPROVEMENT ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2374, RETAIL INVESTOR PROTECTION ACT

Mr. SESSIONS from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113–253) on the resolution (H. Res. 391) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 992) to amend provisions in section 716 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act relating to Federal assistance for swaps entities, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2374) to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide protections for retail customers, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN HONOR OF CONGRESSMAN MAJOR R. OWENS

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

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, we were all saddened last Monday evening to hear of the passing of my predecessor, the Honorable Congressman Major R. Owens, and I stand here with colleagues to commemorate his life and his record of dedicated service to the people of central Brooklyn.

Congressman Owens was committed to the children and families who had been marginalized and ignored by the body politic. He worked to involve the community in the control of local public schools in Brooklyn and was a strong advocate for education as a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. His efforts were critical to the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Congressman Owens had always been dedicated to expanding access to information and the empowerment of the citizenry. Before being elected to the New York State Senate, he was a proud librarian at the Brooklyn Public Library, and he remains the only librarian to have been a Member of Congress; and he was a mayoral appointee of Mayor John Lindsay as commissioner for the Community Development Agency, fighting on behalf of impoverished New York citizens.

Congressman Major Owens retired from elected office. He devoted himself to training the next generation of leaders. As a professor, he shared his experience with the students at Medgar Evers College.

Mr. Speaker, the example of Congressman Major R. Owens' public service will remain an inspiration to this and future generations of elected officials in Brooklyn and across the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the House stand to offer a moment of silence in honor of the late Congressman Major R. Owens.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay homage and respect, to the life and legacy of Major Owens. Having been elected to the United States Congress in 1992, I got the grand opportunity to work alongside Major until his retirement in 2007. During this time, Major was a hardworking member and great person. He was resolute in

his desire to help others and improve the quality of life for his constituents.

Finding a career as librarian prior to coming to Congress in 1983, I can vividly remember how wise and articulate he was. Often times during a special order, Major would control the entire time speaking about issues impacting those in his district and the broader African American community.

While in Congress, Major was a champion for many issues. Among his greatest accomplishments was securing over $100 million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, helping pass the Americans with Disabilities Act, and consistently ensuring the voices of the disenfranchised did not go mute during his tenure.

My continued thoughts and prayers are with his wife, children, family, friends, and colleagues during this difficult time. I pray that they find solace in knowing that Major lived a great life in which they and many others, can be proud of and inspired by.

A man who believed in God, provided for his family, and served his country. Major was the absolute epitome of what it is to be a model citizen.

There is an old gospel song that says . . . "May the works I've done speak for me." There is no doubt that the great things Major accomplished during his 24 years as a Member of Congress will surely speak for him. May his soul rest in peace and legacy forever live on.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable man, a twenty four year distinguished Member of this body and an outstanding American, Congressman Major Owens.

It was through his work in the community as a librarian, chief administrator of New York City's anti-poverty program and a State Senator where he learned the benevolence of kindness and value of public service.

In Congress, Congressman Owens worked tirelessly to improve education for all. His dedication to this cause extended further than the boundaries of our country and touched countless lives.

Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent upon this body to acknowledge Congressman Owens service which has improved our Nation.

On behalf of the people of the 30th Congressional District of Texas and the United States Congress, I extend my heartfelt sympathy to his family and celebrate his life of service.

ACA RAISES COSTS ON YOUNG AND HEALTHY COVERAGE

(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, on Wednesday, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius is scheduled to testify before the House Energy and Commerce Committee on the massive technological failures of the online rollout of the Affordable Care Act; and while some of my colleagues would lead you to believe that these are only minor Web site glitches, I rise to address a more basic, fundamental flaw in the construct of the Affordable Care Act.

The structure of the design, admittedly by an MIT economist who helped create ObamaCare, was to increase rates for the young and healthy while decreasing rates for the elderly or sick. The problem is this only serves to deter young Americans from purchasing health care when faced with the costs of education, a first home, and the prospect of starting a family.

We all want Americans to be covered, but higher premiums for the young and healthy to subsidize those who are greater consumers of health care was not the bill of goods the American people were originally sold. Mr. Speaker, young Americans deserve better.

IMMIGRATION AND WOMEN

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

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, achieving immigration reform is not just an issue of security or economics; it is also an issue of women's rights. It is women who disproportionately bear the brunt of our inability to fix the immigration system. Undocumented women are more likely to suffer from domestic violence, poor work conditions, or be victims of human trafficking. They are afraid to demand justice for crimes that are committed against them, and they are afraid of retaliation and deportation.

A pathway to citizenship is critical to putting an end to a system that encourages the exploitation of women. Far too many mothers have been separated from their children because our immigration system does not value family unity and parental rights. Family values are American values. Women waiting decades to reunite with their families is not acceptable.

Ensuring that our family-based immigration policies are strong and that they come with rights to employment are key to promoting the well-being of women. We benefit as a Nation when women have the ability to reach their full potential. With the help of women, it is projected that comprehensive immigration reform will reduce our deficit by $1 trillion over 10 years.

I know that my neighbors care about women's rights and care about keeping families together. That is why we need to pass comprehensive immigration reform now.

COMMEMORATING CHLI'S 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute, known as CHLI.

Through his vision and leadership, former Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart has guided CHLI in its mission to advance our community's diversity of thought, while preparing young Hispanics to become the leaders of tomorrow.

CHLI's programs and initiatives focus on a wide variety of issues, from public service to commerce and technology. This month, I spoke at CHLI's Trade and International Affairs Symposium to highlight the importance of our community's contribution to the global economy. As the fastest growing group of both consumers and producers, Hispanics can benefit from reducing trade barriers and opening new markets.

CHLI has also helped many young people and provided them with the necessary tools to succeed in this increasingly globalized world. Through CHLI's Global Leaders Internship and Fellowship Program, students from across our Nation have expanded their professional horizons and enhanced their understanding of the public and private sectors.

As a CHLI board member, I am proud of the opportunities that CHLI provides to our youth and its commitment to ensuring that we continue to prosper as a Nation.

IN RECOGNITION OF YVONNE ''BONNIE'' GONZALEZ OF SOUTH TEXAS

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

Mr. HINOJOSA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Yvonne ''Bonnie'' Gonzalez, an extraordinary public servant who has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of south Texas residents.

As CEO of Workforce Solutions, she has played a vitally important role in leading transformational change in the Rio Grande Valley and in the workforce industry. In fact, due to her exemplary leadership, Workforce Solutions has become one of the highest performing workforce boards in Texas.

Prior to joining Workforce Solutions as their CEO, Ms. Gonzalez served as founding president and CEO of the RGV Empowerment Zone Corporation. Under her direction, the Empowerment Zone took a $40 million Federal investment and leveraged an additional $416 million in local, State, national, and private sector investment into the Empowerment Zone communities.

As a devoted public servant, Ms. Gonzalez has inspired others to strive for excellence and to put the needs of our community first. Today I congratulate Ms. Bonnie Gonzalez on her new venture as president of the Knapp Community Care Foundation and thank her for the many years of public service to south Texas residents.

□ 1915

U.S. MONEY TO PAKISTAN IS FOOLISH

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, Pakistan is a disloyal, deceptive, and devious ally of the United States. Pakistan harbors Taliban terrorists that are at war with our troops in Afghanistan. Pakistan hid out Obama bin Laden. Pakistan put the Pakistani doctor that helped the United States take out ''the devil of the desert'' in prison for 30 years.

Pakistan is playing the United States for a nation of fools. Otherwise, why would our Government just send $1.2 billion to Pakistan? Haven't we learned that Pakistan takes our money and slyly and seditiously uses it for purposes counter to U.S. interests?

Pakistan has become the Benedict Arnold ally of America. Why do we pay Pakistan to hate us? Madam Speaker, they will do it for free.

No American taxpayer money to Pakistan. Use that American money in America. Freedom-loving nations that give Pakistan money in the delusive hope of fighting terrorism are sailing the ships of the foolish—and the United States has become the admiral of the fleet.

And that's just the way it is.

SAFE CLIMATE CAUCUS

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

Mr. TONKO. Madam Speaker, oceans cover 70 percent of our Earth's surface. They are home to a vast number of organisms that form an intricate food web—one that the world has relied on for high-quality protein and steady employment for generations. If we continue on our current path, we will face a serious decline in these essential resources.

The oceans have been absorbing nearly one-fourth of the carbon emissions we release every day. We think of the oceans as too big to fail, but we are altering their physical, chemical, and biological characteristics at an increasing pace. Our oceans are warming, current patterns are changing, and salinity and acidity are changing. Sea levels are rising, and many fisheries are being overexploited.

It is long past time for us to address climate change—to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and manage our coastal waters and the oceans in a more sustainable way. Oceans have sustained life on this planet for thousands of years. We should act now to ensure that they continue to do so for thousands more.

REDUCING EMPLOYER BURDENS, UNLEASHING INNOVATION, AND LABOR DEVELOPMENT

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

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss the importance of manufacturing to our economy.

Today, I introduced the Reducing Employer Burdens, Unleashing Innovation, and Labor Development, or the REBUILD Act of 2013.

The REBUILD Act is aimed at stimulating domestic production and increasing our global competitiveness. Provisions included in the bill seek to redesign workforce training, achieve comprehensive tax reform, increase access to energy and decrease costly regulations, reform health care, reform trade policy, and open up more spectrum for technological innovation.

Pieced together, these policies will allow us to ensure the United States of America remains the best place in the world to do business. I come from a small business and manufacturing background and understand how Federal policies can encourage or stifle innovation and job creation. I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in this effort to restore American innovation and boost our global competitiveness.

IN TRIBUTE TO MAJOR OWENS

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

Mr. WATT. Madam Speaker, I simply wanted to rise and pay tribute to the memory of my dear friend and colleague, Major Owens, who passed last week. I express my condolences to his family.

As new Members, we take for granted sometimes that there is a system in place to provide support and mentorship to new Members. It is not just the way things operate.

When I came to Congress in 1993, Major Owens was already here. He became one of the monitors and advisers who taught me the rules of how this institution operates—the rules of civility, respect, and honor—and the rules by which we operate the floor of the House. I learned so much from him, and over the years became a good, close friend of Major Owens and the members of his family, all of whom we join in grieving with on this occasion.

I simply wanted to say how much I respected him and how much appreciation I had for the advice and mentorship he provided to me.

CONGRATULATING MARY GIBSON SCOTT

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

Mrs. LUMMIS. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Mary Gibson Scott, the superintendent of Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway. She announced her retirement from the National Park Service this week after 33 years of public service.

Mary is one of just 10 top-level park managers in the United States and is also the only woman among them. Before taking her current position in Wyoming in 2004, Mary held park management positions across the U.S., including at fabulous Carlsbad Caverns, the Golden Gate Park, the Santa Monica Mountains, and the Channel Islands in the West, and in the East, the Gateway in New York and the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia.

Over the course of her career, Mary has earned a variety of awards, including the Department of the Interior Superior Service Award and the Intermountain Region's Superintendent of the Year for Natural Resources, just to name two.

To many of us in Wyoming, Madam Speaker, Mary Gibson Scott is a neighbor and a friend, immersed in the Wyoming community; a valued and treasured public servant; and the epitome of a leader in stewardship of both natural resources and human relationships. I am proud and pleased to call Mary Gibson Scott my friend.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mary Gibson Scott on her illustrious career and in wishing her the very best for a happy and well-earned retirement.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on Ms. CLARKE's 1-minute speech.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. WAGNER). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR R. OWENS

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues in celebrating ''the people's Congressman.'' I am so delighted that we have the opportunity to share our friendship toward the late Congressman Major Owens, who loved his Brooklyn district and loved his family. My deepest sympathy goes to his wife Maria, and all of his family members.

Major Owens was truly someone who served the people.

I am reminded of a story that he told of when his family heard that FDR was providing opportunities for work in the 1940s. No one in his community was getting jobs, but his parents wrote to FDR, and all of a sudden things

changed. That is the kind of man Congressman Owens was.

He was a change-maker, educator, and librarian. He was always there to say that his district and America's poor people needed to be represented. He was, in fact, the people's Congressperson because he extended his hand. He loved the people. He provided resources and he fought the good fight.

I want to thank you, Congressman Major Owens, for being my friend and a friend of those in Congress, Republicans and Democrats. Most of all, I want to thank Congressman Major Owens for being the friend of poor people around the Nation who could not speak for themselves.

I am glad that his giant footsteps had a great impact on the congressional district he represented. More importantly, he had a great impact on America. He was a soldier on the battlefield for those who could not speak for themselves.

May he rest in peace. God bless him and his family.

Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a great American, a fighter for justice and equality, one of the most passionate advocates for educational opportunity, and a man who served in this body with distinction, Major R. Owens of New York. Congressman Owens died Monday, October 21, in Manhattan at the age of 77.

Major Owens was born June 28, 1936, in Collierville, Tennessee. He was educated at Morehouse College, from which he received his baccalaureate degree, and Atlanta University, from which he earned a Master of Science degree. Major Owens later moved to New York where he worked as a librarian before accepting an appointment from Mayor John V. Lindsay to serve as Director of the New York City Community Development Agency. He also served as a faculty member in the Department of Public Administration at Medgar Evers College.

In 1974, Major Owens was elected to the New York State Senate and was reelected to serve a second term in 1978. In 1982, Major Owens won a competitive primary to fill the seat of retiring Congresswoman Shirley Chisolm, the first African American woman elected to the House of Representatives and the first woman ever to seek the Democratic nomination for President of the United States.

As the Member of Congress for the 11th Congressional District of New York, Major Owens represented a diverse district and eclectic district centered in Brooklyn, and including low income areas of Brownsville and parts of Bedford-Stuyvesant, the large Hasidic community of Crown Heights, the heavily Caribbean areas of Flatbush and East Flatbush, and the more affluent neighborhoods Park Slope and Prospect Park.

Affectionately known as the ''Education Congressman'' by his constituents, Major Owens fought tirelessly throughout his twelve terms in Congress to protect and expand educational opportunity for all Americans, especially those from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds. As he often reminded his colleagues in the House, education was ''the kingpin issue.'' In an article he published in Black Issues in Higher Education, he wrote: ''We have to believe that all power and progress really begins with education.''

Major Owens served on the House Committee on Government Reform and the Committee on Education and the Workforce. As the Ranking Member on the Education and Workforce Subcommittee for Workforce Protections, Congressman Owens helped lead the fight for minimum wage increases, blocked the attempt to eliminate cash payments for overtime, fought against efforts to roll back or repeal Davis-Bacon and to weaken the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

As Chairman of the Education Subcommittee on Select Education and Civil Rights (1988–94), Congresswoman Owens was one of the earliest and strongest supporters of the Americans With Disabilities Act, which was enacted into law in 1991. In recognition for his yeoman work to pass the ADA, Major Owens was awarded an honorary degree by Galludet University, the world's premier higher education institution serving deaf and hard of hearing people.

Major Owens loved serving in this body and he was a valued member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus. As Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus Task Force on Haiti, he led the successful three-year fight which restored the democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Madam Speaker, Congressman Owens was a legislator's legislator. Our prayers and condolences go out to his wife Maria, his sons Chris, Geoff, and Milard; his grandchildren; and to all his friends and loved ones. Major Owens touched so many lives in so many helpful ways that he will always be remembered by people he served so ably and selflessly for more than thirty years.

Madam Speaker, a dear colleague has fallen. We are all saddened at the loss but overjoyed to have had the honor of serving with the distinguished gentleman from Brooklyn, New York, the honorable Major R. Owens.

FIGHTING AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and bring attention to the recent candlelight vigil held in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, honoring the 38 deaths from domestic violence this year.

The vigil, which was organized as part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month by the local domestic abuse prevention nonprofit, Cornerstone, was held at Purgatory Creek Park earlier this month. There was an incredible showing of support by members of our community and local police departments and law enforcement for those that are affected by domestic violence.

Madam Speaker, this is an issue which affects families and communities all across our country, and we must do more to put an end to these horrible acts.

Earlier this year, I was proud to author a provision in the Violence Against Women Act to assist domestic abuse victims in locating safe housing, which is a critical step on the path to recovery, but more work needs to be done to bring attention and an end to domestic violence in our neighborhoods.

REMEMBERING CONGRESSMAN MAJOR ROBERT ODELL OWENS

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, like my colleagues, I mourn the death of Major Owens, but I also want to celebrate his life. My purpose for rising tonight is to do just this: celebrate his life.

Major Owens was a person of character who had a great reputation. I had the honor of knowing him through my chief of staff, who was his chief of staff for 16 years. In working with her, she explained to me all of the many things that he was a party to over the course of the years, not only here in Congress, where he worked on legislation to help persons who had disabilities, but also back in his home district, where he was a person who championed the causes of people who were in need.

It means something to me to know that he has this great reputation, but it is equally as important for me to share with people that he did have character.

When I met with him to discuss the hiring of Jackie Ellis, my chief of staff, because she was working with him, and he was contemplating some other things and moving, he explained to me how important it was in this body to keep your word. He explained that, among your friends and your colleagues, your word is the thing that will give you the opportunity to continue to have support in the Congress of the United States of America. His words about character and integrity are still with me.

I suspect that because he was a teacher—and as you know, teachers impact eternity—I will pass on to others what he has done because he passed it on to me, and what his chief of staff caused me to learn vicariously from him will impact my office eternally.

I am grateful to him. I pay tribute to him. I want his family to know that he has been a blessing to me and to my staff and to the people I serve.

God bless you, and thank you, Major.

CONGRESSMAN MAJOR ROBERT ODELL OWENS

Born—June 28, 1936 (Collierville, TN).

Elected to Congress representing Brooklyn's 12th Congressional District from 1983–1992 (98th–102nd Congress).

After redistricting—Represented Brooklyn's 11th Congressional District from 1993–2006 (103rd–109th Congress).

Transitioned to Eternity—October 21, 2013 (Brooklyn, NY).

Father of five children.

First librarian elected to Congress.

Chaired the Brooklyn chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

Past Commissioner of New York City's Community Development Agency.

Served on the Education and Labor Committee throughout his tenure in Congress (From 1987–1993 chaired the Education and Labor Subcommittee on Select Education and Civil Rights).

Served on the Government Reform Committee throughout his tenure in Congress.

Chaired the Congressional Black Caucus Higher Education Braintrust.

Floor manager and original co-sponsor of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Sponsor of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Authored legislation that prevented the Immigration and Naturalization Service from deporting the parents of American-born children under age 18 and legislation that extended citizenship to immigrant children under 12 who were in the U.S. without their parents.

Founder and organizer of the National Commission for African American Education.

Strong Organized Labor advocate—Championed the need for maintaining the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Lead sponsor of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act—Providing for major reforms in the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) Program (Programs designed to aid community agencies in combating urban and rural poverty).

Past chair of the CBC's Haitian Task Force.

Has written several books including: "Roots and Wings", a semi-autobiographical book about his life.

In 2006 was named a distinguished visiting scholar at the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress, where he completed a case study of the CBC and its impact on national politics.

Prior to his death, Congressman Owens taught at Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, NY.

OBAMACARE CHOICE ACT OF 2013

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

Mr. BARTON. Madam Speaker, I rise to announce to my colleagues in the House that I just introduced H.R. 3348, the ObamaCare Choice Act of 2013.

This is a simple 1½-page bill. It simply lets the American people choose for the next year whether they want to participate in what we commonly call ObamaCare. If it is as good as the President says it is, people will join and get the benefits from it. If, on the other hand, they can't get the software fixed, the policy mandates are unsustainable, and the costs are too high, the American people will choose not to participate. It is a simple bill that makes participation voluntary by suspending the tax for nonparticipation.

So I would encourage all of my colleagues to join as a cosponsor of H.R. 3348, the ObamaCare Choice Act of 2013.

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REMEMBERING THE HON. C.W. BILL YOUNG

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

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased tonight to lead a Special Order in memory of the life and service of our dear friend, our colleague from Florida, Mr. Bill Young. We will hear from members of the Florida delegation and also from leaders from the committee on which he was a leader, himself.

To lead off tonight in our Special Order in that vein, I am very pleased to yield first to the chair of the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives, on which Mr. Young served so distinguishably, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS).

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Let me thank my colleague from Florida for yielding me this time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today with a very heavy heart to honor the memory and service of our dear friend and colleague, Bill Young.

Bill served in this House and he served this country for decades with compassion and distinction. I have not known this institution without him—most of us are in that same situation—and I believe it will take a long time to fill the hole that his absence has left. As an appropriator, he was a role model for all of us. When I became chairman of the committee, I knew I had some very large shoes to fill in following in the footsteps of Chairman Young, among others. He fought with determination and enthusiasm to make this country a better place.

Bill was a champion for our troops and veterans especially, both in the Halls of the Congress and outside. His fierce determination and dedication to our troops and veterans never wavered. As we all know, he and his dear wife, Beverly, were to be found very frequently at Bethesda or at Walter Reed in the city or at a hospital overseas where troops were sick, and they spent hours and hours helping those who were injured.

He was, of course, the chairman of the Defense Subcommittee on the Appropriations Committee for many years. He also served on the Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee, and his thumbprint is very visible in the improved medical care and in the quality of life of our troops, among the many other issues that he held dear to his heart.

Bill was a leader in this House who was able to make his mark with grace and fortitude. He was a lion about the things that he cared about; but he was a gentle lion, and he did things with grace and with a quiet voice until you crossed him on the betterment of our troops. Then Bill Young would let you know where to get off.

I will miss Bill Young greatly as I know all of us will. My prayers are with his family, with Beverly, with his many friends, and with all of those who had the privilege of knowing and working with Bill Young. He will be greatly missed.

Mr. MICA. I thank the gentleman.

We are also pleased to have with us tonight a distinguished leader of the Florida delegation and now the dean of the Florida delegation—our senior member—to pay tribute to Bill Young. I yield to the gentlelady from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the time.

A good man, a warm friend and a true patriot, Bill Young was an example for all of us here in Congress, and it was an honor and a privilege to serve with him. Madam Speaker, the loss of Bill's experience and knowledge will be felt by everyone in this Chamber.

The consummate gentleman from Florida, Bill was always ready to listen to his colleagues on both sides of the aisle, greeting everyone with a smile. Both principled and honest while maintaining civility with his colleagues, Bill never allowed differences of opinion to devolve into partisan bickering, and he worked with Republicans and Democrats to balance our budget as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

A tenacious public servant, Bill dedicated his life to his constituents. His number one priority was ensuring those who serve our country get the help and the services they need to be successful. Improving the quality of life for veterans and for all Active Duty personnel, including those in the Reserve and the National Guard, was Bill's mission. Bill was always there for those returning from combat, visiting and helping our wounded warriors with his wife, Beverly, and providing for our veterans at the medical facility in Bay Pines, which now bears his name.

As chairman of the Appropriations National Defense Subcommittee, Bill oversaw spending by the Pentagon and worked to ensure the readiness of our military in combat. His efforts helped not just those in his district but Americans across the Nation. His legacy will be seen around every corner, from the beaches of Pinellas County to our fighting forces around the world.

A genuine statesman, Bill's accomplishments are as varied as they are numerous. He fought to protect Florida's environment by blocking drilling close to our gulf coast and in helping to restore eroding beaches. With Beverly, Bill helped create a national bone marrow registry with almost 10 million donors registered thus far. Just as he fought for his own district, he could always be counted upon to help us with our constituent needs.

In 1991, in his district, he saved MacDill Air Force Base from closure; and a year later, he helped rebuild and protect Homestead Air Reserve Base in

my congressional district after the devastation of Hurricane Andrew. Through his vital efforts in my district, the Miami River dredging project was completed—a project that continues to generate billions for the shipping industry, to create jobs and to spur economic growth in south Florida. It couldn't have happened without Bill Young. Bill was instrumental in assisting Tampa Bay residents and those in my south Florida community and, indeed, across our country.

A true gentleman, a public servant and a friend, Bill Young deserves all of our thanks, Madam Speaker. He will be forever remembered as a champion not just for Florida but, indeed, for our entire great Nation.

I thank the gentleman for arranging this Special Order.

Mr. MICA. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Young was respected not only by his Republican peers and colleagues but by peers on both sides of the aisle. So I am pleased now to yield to a senior member of the Florida delegation on the other side of the aisle, the cochair, Mr. HASTINGS.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Thank you very much. I appreciate you, Mr. MICA, my colleague, for arranging this Special Order, and it is special that we come here to speak about a gentleman who was special to us all.

Madam Speaker, obviously, we are here with heavy hearts and with great sadness tonight in our honoring of a friend and a colleague, Congressman Bill Young.

Bill was an assiduous public servant and a tireless advocate for all Floridians; but above all, he was a man of integrity and a true statesman. The House of Representatives will not be the same without him. He served in Congress for 42 years; and I, as well as others, am deeply honored to have had the opportunity to serve alongside him for the past two decades. He dedicated himself to providing for our Nation's servicemen and servicewomen and was a powerful voice for America's best interests at home and abroad. His distinguished career has left its mark on the lives of countless Americans.

When I first came to Congress in 1992, I met with Bill Young and Sam Gibbons. They were on opposite sides of the aisle, but were dear friends, dedicated to Florida and to making the Florida delegation strong. I remember vividly learning from both of them through the years. In addition, throughout all of the travails of hurricanes and disasters, Bill Young stood with all of us who suffered during those periods, and he did everything he could to bring resources to Florida and to this Nation during disasters.

My first experience with an earmark was when Bill became chairman of the Appropriations Committee. I didn't know much about the process, but I knew that I wanted to get money in the budget to contribute to the African American Research Center in Fort Lauderdale in my congressional district. When I went to him, I was nervous because I wasn't sure how it would be handled, and he calmed me very easily by saying, It is done. For sure, he had had a hand in the development of that particular research center, which stands, and I honor him for having assisted in bringing resources there.

Last week, Speaker BOEHNER said:

> It has only been a week since we began trying to imagine the House without Bill Young—an impossible task in its own right—and now he is gone. In our sorrow, we recall how not a day went by without a colleague seeking Bill's counsel as he sat on his perch in the corner of the House floor.

I certainly had the distinction of going to that corner and consulting with him.

President Obama said in his statement:

> Congressman Young will be remembered for his advocacy and support for the armed services, servicemembers and their families, as well as for his statesmanship and his long history of working across the aisle to keep our country moving forward.

Defense Secretary Hagel said:

> He will be remembered as a passionate advocate for the welfare of America's servicemembers and military veterans. Though his loss will be felt by many, his legacy and commitment to a strong national defense will always inspire us.

It is the height of irony that our friend would pass at Walter Reed Hospital. No one in this body spent as much time with our military at Walter Reed and around this country as did Bill Young. He, of course, has a legacy that is far excellent in that arena and also in bringing resources to the area that he served as well as to other areas around this Nation.

Tonight, I join with the people of Florida in keeping Beverly, Bill's sons, grandchildren, family, friends, and staff in my thoughts and prayers during this time of enormous sadness and loss.

Once again, I thank you, Chairman MICA, for arranging for us to have the privilege of honoring this great American.

Mr. MICA. Thank you.

Now, in continuing hearing from the leadership of our delegation, I am pleased to yield to the chairman of the Florida delegation, the gentleman whose district is adjacent to Mr. Young's, to the south, Mr. VERN BUCHANAN.

Mr. BUCHANAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of the memory of my dear friend, colleague and mentor, Congressman Bill Young.

For over four decades, there has not been a stronger voice in this Chamber for our brave men and women in uniform other than Bill Young. My district was just south of Bill Young's district, and we have almost 90,000 veterans. There is nobody who has benefited, I think, in terms of a district more than our veterans have in terms of Bill Young's leadership and in what he has brought to Pinellas County and to the State of Florida. He was an inspiration to so many because he personified the most important virtue of public service—he did it for others.

As dean of the Florida delegation, Bill provided wisdom and counsel to Members on both sides of the aisle. He served this great institution with devotion, civility, and distinction. I am honored personally to have served with this extraordinary man. With his passing, the State of Florida and the Nation have lost an outstanding lawmaker, statesman, and public servant. My thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time.

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Mr. MICA. I am pleased now to recognize another colleague across the aisle. Again, Bill Young's friendships and his service included everyone in the House of Representatives and in the Congress, so I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentlelady from Ohio, MARCY KAPTUR.

Ms. KAPTUR. I want to thank Chairman MICA so very much for the privilege of extending the deepest condolences of the people of Ohio to the Young family, to the constituents of Congressman Bill Young's district in Florida.

It was such a privilege to know him. Truly, he was not just a vigilant patriot, though that surely would have been enough, but he really was a man of the House. He belonged here, and his people knew that for over four decades.

When I think of Bill Young, I think of words like ''courage,'' ''perseverance,'' ''insight,'' and ''fair play.'' He had a gentlemanly demeanor at any time that I ever encountered him. He had a respect for regular order, for the gavel, and for seniority, which I share. He had a fortitude about him that people in my part of the country call real ''spunk,'' and he had a sparkle in his eye and an easy smile and an understanding. He was such a real human being.

Part of that is the fact that he grew up very poor in Pennsylvania in a coal town in an old shack. He really knew what poverty was. He didn't have an easy childhood and he never forgot that. Yet he rose to be a master appropriator. In that capacity, he was not imperious but collegial, and he handled the gavel with fair play.

He loved his wife, Beverly, so much. I can still see her sitting in the gallery or coming unannounced into a committee meeting. He loved his family and he loved Florida.

He worked so hard for the men and women in our armed services and our veterans, certainly in his own State where right near him is the Bay Pines Veterans Medical Center, the fourth largest veterans facility in the country, but also all the operations of SOUTHCOM, as in his last decade of service dealing with all that we have to on the Defense Subcommittee in terms of the wars being conducted in Afghanistan and, of course, Iraq. He was engaged in all the intelligence at the

highest levels and kept his good measure. His endurance and his heroic battles in these years that all of us witnessed showed the true measure of the man.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would just like to say I will be seeing Bill Young in all the old familiar places, not just here on the floor, but as we travel in codels to some of the most godforsaken places on Earth, as we visit some of the highest level research facilities in our country and our men and women in uniform. I shall always remember Bill Young and be grateful for having been able to serve with him.

Mr. MICA. I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Miami, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART, another Florida colleague, who is also a gentleman who served with Mr. Young distinguishably on the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Chairman MICA, thank you for bringing us together today.

Madam Speaker, you have heard of Bill Young, the statesman, and that he was. We all know how he was, perhaps, the best friend and strongest ally of our troops, men and women in uniform, those in battle, those currently in uniform, and those who are veterans.

But those of us who worked with him and got to know him here know him, frankly, almost as like a godfather to all of us. There is not one time that we didn't go to him that he would not be helpful.

I remember after those storms in Florida, when we had a bunch of hurricanes, going to see Bill Young about getting help for the folks who had been hurt by the storms. His wisdom and his desire to help was always so present. He was always helpful, whether it was Everglades restoration, because he was also such a champion for the environment. Again, always with a smile.

Then I got to know him better when I, again, served with him in Appropriations and was able to see how he mastered that appropriations process like, frankly, potentially nobody before him and I think potentially nobody after him will again.

But I will tell you, Madam Speaker, the part that to me was a real privilege was that he was one of the people that I whipped. He was on my whip card. So I would go on different issues and talk to him about the issue and find out if he was leaning one way or another. Every time I went there, what I got from Bill Young was, frankly, a lesson. He instructed. I was never able to inform him about what the issues were; he informed me. He instructed me like he always instructed all of us. And always, Madam Speaker, with that incredible, warm smile, with that warm, firm handshake, which he had until the very end.

He never complained. We all know that for a long time he was in pain and yet never complained. He always wanted to make sure that you were feeling good, and he always wanted to know what he could do for you, never asking for himself.

I said recently—and I have got to find out who said this—but I heard or read someplace that ''to be a great man you first have to be a good man.'' Madam Speaker, Bill Young was a great man for so many reasons: for all that he did for this country, for all that he did for the State of Florida, for all that he did for our troops and the environment, the way he helped his colleagues, or how generous and how humble and how caring and loving he was. He was an incredibly, an incredibly good man. And yes, if there is anybody that applies to, that before you can become a great man you have to be a good man, if there is anybody that that describes, it is our chairman, Bill Young.

To his family, to his constituents, to the troops, and the veterans who are, in essence, his family as well, our deepest condolences. Bill Young is irreplaceable. There will never be somebody like him again.

What a privilege and what an honor. One of the privileges and honors, the greatest privileges and honors of my life, was to be able to work with him, to get to know him, to be his friend.

So again, to his constituents and to his family, our condolences. We will miss him, and he will never be forgotten.

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I am now pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), again, reaching across the aisle with the respect and esteem in which Mr. Young was held.

Mr. FARR. Thank you, Congressman MICA, for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I feel it is a very special privilege to be able to pay honor to our colleagues here. I think of Bill Young as being one of the lions, one of the giants of this institution, because he really used the institution for what we all get elected to do.

First of all, he loved public service. He was in an elective office for 52 years between State and Federal Government. He also served in the National Guard Active Duty and reservist for 15 years. His life was about service. He used his service here in Congress to be what I think this institution is all about: it is about leadership; it is about friendship; and it is also about accomplishment. I don't think anybody has had a better record of accomplishment in so many different fields.

I came here in 1993, and I had the largest military base in the United States close—Fort Ord, California. I got to know the people on the Defense Appropriations Committee. On my side of the aisle was Jack Murtha. It seems like Jack's best friend was a Republican on the other side of the aisle, Bill Young. Jack said, You better go tell Bill everything you have told me about needing some help.

We were trying to convert swords to plowshares by building a brand-new university to serve the underserved population in Fort Ord, and we needed appropriations for it. Bill just jumped on it. He knew the purpose. Even though he was a strong warrior, he really realized that this was the future after a base was closed.

I invited him out to the district. He came to Monterey, California, where we still had the Defense Language Institute. Bill went in there and saw that all the languages we were teaching were the old tape recorders where you had to wind and rewind. He said, My God, you need some modern equipment, and put in appropriations to get that equipment. He visited the Naval Postgraduate School and got a lot of really interesting feedback from soldiers who had just come out of theater.

But his and Jack's friendship—Jack Murtha, who predeceased him—was just remarkable in this House. If there is a legacy here, it is their legacy. It is how two people being on Appropriations Committee should—and we all need to go back to what we have been calling regular order, where we come here to accomplish things, to fix things that are broken. Bill Young was probably the first, if any, who would talk about needing to bring back the ability to help areas that just don't get formula money—earmarks. If you disclose of them and go through a process so that you don't have the client-assigned stuff, these things are good, particularly for rural Americans, and particularly for areas where people are really poor.

I think my favorite story is that when he came out to the Defense Language Institute, came on military air, Beverly, his wife, insisted, since I represent Carmel, that I get our former mayor, Clint Eastwood, to have lunch with them. So we arranged that at Clint's Mission Ranch.

On the way from Monterey over to Carmel, we passed by the beach, and there is a stranded sea lion there. Beverly gets out and says, We've got to take care of the sea lion before anything else, and had the entire crew of the airplane—because she insisted they had to come to lunch with her, they had to help get the sea lion. Well, we had marine mammal rescue, and they eventually showed up.

But when we got to the restaurant, I don't think anybody thought that the whole crew was going to come. Bill was insistent, no, everybody is equal here. It didn't matter whether you were a Congress member or just a crew member; you were going to get a chance to have lunch with Clint Eastwood.

We had a lot of laughs, a lot of discussion about things. Then that led to—and I hadn't realized it. Bill was a big animal rights supporter. He and I authored a bill with his friend, Bob Barker, who was here. I met Bob Barker through him. Bob Barker, ''The Price is Right,'' had dedicated a lot of his life to banning elephants in circuses. Bill said, I am going to author that bill. So we did a bipartisan author, and Bob Barker came. In fact, we

linked up with Kim Basinger, the movie star, who was very interested in that issue. We went on, and we didn't win that bill, but we won the puppy mill bill, and we won some other humane treatment of animals. He was really interested in that.

But best of all, I think he left a legacy that we need to get back to: a legacy of production, a legacy of comradery where we really like each other, and a legacy that takes care of not only all the soldiers—because they didn't care what rank you had; if you were a person in uniform, you were all equal and being treated in the most respectful way—but he also did that for people of less fortune and for animals who need a voice in Congress as well. What a wonderful man.

Beverly and your sons, I really am going to miss going to Appropriations Committee and seeing Bill there. So Beverly and your three adult sons, Rob, Billy, and Patrick, we all share your grief, and Congress will certainly miss Bill Young, a great man in this institution.

Mr. MICA. I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida, the Honorable GUS BILIRAKIS, another Florida colleague, and he also has a district that is adjacent to Mr. Young's.

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Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember the life and service of someone I admire greatly for his wisdom and humility, by dear friend and mentor, Chairman Bill Young.

While I always referred to him as ''Chairman'' because of the respect he commanded, he used to beg me not to use that term, insisting, in his typical humble fashion, as Mr. FARR alluded to, that we were all equal in this Chamber.

Over the past five decades, the Chairman graciously served Florida and the Tampa Bay area, leading many projects and initiatives to promote economic growth and create jobs back at home. His contributions to his district, the entire Tampa Bay area, and to the military in particular, are immeasurable.

He was instrumental in saving MacDill Air Force Base and helped grow Tampa Bay into a hub for our defense industry. In addition, he played a significant role in winning critical funding for Bay Pines Veterans Administration Medical Center, which supports a large number of veterans in our area. For his efforts, my colleague and I have joined together in support of renaming this valuable medical facility in his honor.

His contributions also extend to higher education with his role in developing centers of excellence in technology and marine science at the University of South Florida.

Finally, we will all remember his work on behalf of sick children in creating a national registry for bone marrow donors.

While the Chairman came from humble beginnings, he has left behind a rich legacy that we, as Members of Congress and Americans, must all aspire to achieve. The Chairman was never afraid to reach across the aisle and always worked for the greater good.

I am extremely thankful that I was able to express my gratitude and admiration to him last week when I visited him at his bedside. I told him how much his colleagues and constituents loved him and appreciated all he did for them.

In closing, I wanted to share a few words from a final letter my father, former Congressman Mike Bilirakis, sent to his former colleague:

Dear Bill: Since we are roughly the same age (remember, I am 5 months older so we've joked about ''respecting your elders''), we have expected that this day would come for both of us but first for me and not so soon. We grew up in the same Pittsburgh area at the same time—tough depression poverty, which made us tough. We didn't know each other then, but I guess our Lord decreed we would meet in Pinellas County, Florida, years later. We worked hard, climbed out of poverty and became successful—the good old American way.

Bill, you have earned eternal rest, but our world will certainly miss you. The Florida corner in the House Chambers will miss you as well. Thanks for being my friend and, in many ways, a younger mentor. Thanks for being a great American patriot. Thanks for the good you have done for all of us. Yours has been a life well lived. May your memory be eternal.

We will certainly miss you, Mr. Chairman.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, at this time I will yield back my time with the intent of relinquishing the balance of the time to one of the leaders from Florida and also a member of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. CRENSHAW.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I join my colleagues in paying tribute to my good friend and fellow Member of Congress, C.W. Bill Young.

More than four decades ago, I first met Bill when I served as a campaign aide to the late Congressman Bill Cramer. Bill Young was a Florida State Senator at the time who was seeking the St. Petersburg, West Florida Coast Congressional seat being vacated by my boss who was running in 1970 for the U.S. Senate.

Bill Young had already served as a Congressional aide to Bill Cramer and then was elected as Florida's first Republican State Senator since the Civil War. Bill Cramer when elected was the first GOP U.S. House Member since that era.

As fate would unfold, Bill Cramer lost and Bill Young took his seat in Congress.

I had aligned myself with Florida's West Coast GOP political operatives called the ICY Machine. Those were initials for Jack Insco, a top Cramer aide and political strategist, Bill Cramer and Bill Young, a Florida political powerhouse at that time.

While my boss lost his election, I gained great experience and wonderful friends. Among them, Bill Young, rising GOP star, and his two young aides, George Cretekos and Doug Gregory. Both George and Doug served with Bill Young for over three decades, during which I was privileged to count all among my friends and political allies.

As an aide to U.S. Senator Paula Hawkins from 1980 to 1985, I had the honor of working with two GOP leaders who worked tirelessly for Florida and our Nation.

I must say, two legends with two very different styles. Paula had a flair for the media and attention and Bill quietly pursued his legislative agenda. Both were highly effective in their own way. Paula championed missing children and Bill rose as a champion of our military. Now both have joined the ages and are part of the history of Congress and the State of Florida.

Having worked with Bill Young on military issues important to our State and Nation as recently as the past few weeks, I can tell you no one could be more effective. No one could be more respected or trusted.

While fond memories of Bill Young continue, his real legacy will transcend generations for our military and long benefit our national defense.

For his tireless work on behalf of all Americans and all citizens of the Sunshine State, I join my colleagues in this special tribute to C.W. Bill Young.

What a great privilege it has been to share part of my life and grow memories with Bill Young. I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife, Beverly, to the Young family and to his devoted staff and constituents.

REMEMBERING THE HON. C.W. BILL YOUNG

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW) will control the remainder of the hour.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Madam Speaker, before I introduce and call on a couple of my colleagues, I would like to say a brief word about my longtime friend and mentor, C.W. Bill Young. I first met Bill when he was in the Florida Senate. He was the Republican leader in the Florida Senate. He was the minority leader. I think my colleagues might be interested to know that he was the Republican leader, minority leader, not because he gathered all the votes of the other minority members, the Republicans; he was the Republican leader because he was the only Republican in the Florida Senate.

You might say maybe that diminishes that leadership role, and I would say just the reverse is true because Bill Young was such a great leader, such a man of courage and conviction that he would stand up for whatever he believed, even if there was no one there

to stand up with. I think it is because of that conviction, because of that commitment, that we are here tonight to honor his legacy.

I found it interesting that about 25 years later I found myself in the Florida Senate, and I became the first Republican to be elected president of that body, and I got a note from Bill Young. He said, ''We've come a long way.''

Of course when I came to Congress, he was there to help me become a member of the Armed Services Committee because he knew that I cared about the military. He was there to help me become a member of the Appropriations Committee and the Defense Subcommittee which he loved so very much. He taught me and he taught all of us that everyone has value. Everyone has worth, whether it is a private first class or four star general, and he lived and died by the belief that if we are to be the land of the free, it is because we take care of our brave.

So that is the way he lived his life, and we will hear tributes tonight—we heard tributes last Thursday in Largo at his funeral, but I believe that the lasting legacy that Bill Young leaves will be seen for generations to come in the greatness of our military, and in the compassion that we have for those who serve and those who are wounded.

So, Madam Speaker, I simply want to say tonight that America lost a great leader, and I lost a great friend.

Godspeed, Bill Young.

Now I would like to yield to one of my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, the chairman of the State, Foreign Operations Subcommittee and a member of the Defense Subcommittee which Bill Young chaired, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER).

Ms. GRANGER. I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to and celebrate the life of an outstanding public servant, Bill Young. It is a true honor to have been able to know a man like Chairman Young and to be able to call him both a friend and a role model for all of us. There is no one who was more respected, decent, gracious, dedicated and humble. Everyone who crossed his path is richer for the experience. That is evident through the hundreds of people who attended his memorial service last week. His service was attended by over 30 Members of Congress. During a time of such partisanship, the respect for Chairman Young was illustrated through the attendance from both sides of the aisle, including leadership.

The respect the military has for his lifelong advocacy for our national security and for our servicemembers was evident through the attendance and heartfelt eulogies of former Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James Amos.

It was clear that the Department of Defense depended on him. Immediately before the service began, General Amos bestowed a very rare and appropriate honor by naming Chairman Young an honorary marine.

I will never forget when I was first appointed to the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. As one of the first women ever to serve on the subcommittee, I wasn't sure how I would be treated, but Bill immediately brought me in and treated me with respect and kindness, as he did to everyone. Gender didn't matter to him; he only cared about my commitment to the military and to our Nation.

When John Wooden wrote ''the true test of a man's character is what he does when no one is watching,'' he clearly was talking about Chairman Young. Over the years, we have all heard many, many stories about the personal interest and assistance that he and Beverly provided for our wounded soldiers, but we never heard these stories from him. He never talked about what he did. He was motivated by doing what was right for someone else's health and well-being.

When Marine Lance Corporal Josh Callihan spoke at the memorial service, it was the first time that most of us had ever heard about the extraordinary efforts the Chairman and Beverly took to help this wounded warrior.

Lance Corporal Callihan had been shot in the back and sustained significant damage to his spinal cord. With no family support system, he was in Bethesda injured both physically and emotionally. Then he met Bill and Beverly Young, and his life changed forever. They stepped in and became his family, helping him to recover. Today, Josh calls the Chairman and Beverly ''mom'' and ''dad.'' After many years of hard work, he is now married and expecting his first child. According to Josh, none of this would be possible without Bill Young.

As I was thinking about what I wanted to say about Chairman Young, I realized it was impossible to do justice to such an extraordinary man merely through words. He was truly one of a kind. The best way we can honor this man is to redouble our efforts to our national security and to the treatment of our servicemembers and their families. I ask that all of my colleagues join me to make sure that we carry on his legacy.

In closing, I want to let Beverly, their children, his friends and his staff, who were part of his family, know that you all remain in our thoughts and our prayers.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER), another member of the Homeland Security Subcommittee.

Mr. CARTER. I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding.

We can talk about Bill Young all night, a man who came from nothing and grew to be head and shoulders above, champion for America's military. But I think the thing that struck everybody who ever met Bill Young was his humanity. He was just such a kind, gentle, fine man. He cared about every soul he met. He took the time when I was a freshman to meet me and talk to me. I told him I had some interest in appropriations and learning how it worked, and he sat down and talked to me about it. Whenever I had any questions I needed to ask him, he was always very, very informative and very, very kind in explaining things to people, to me and others.

Bill Young was a very special man because he came from very, very meager means and he rose up to a position of power, but you would have never known by his interaction with humanity that he was a man of power in this government because everybody who draws a breath was important to Bill Young. But the most important people were those who served in our armed services.

I wanted to share something which I think is a perfect description of the kind of man Bill Young was. I had the privilege to go on a trip with him to Normandy for an anniversary of that landing on D-day, and on the way we landed in Shannon, Ireland. When we arrived, it just so happened that at least one or two brigades from Fort Hood, Texas, which is in my district, were there, ordinary soldiers and their officers in transit to Afghanistan.

When Bill Young came into the room, ordinary soldiers, as if he were some kind of star that you would see in a rock concert, started moving over to have their picture taken with Chairman Young. Chairman Young at that time was in a wheelchair most of the time. But as he did when he presented his bill on this floor, he stood with every soldier and took a picture. I stood on the periphery of that and listened. He asked about their parents and where were they from and about their deployments and their needs. Just a gentle, kind, friendly man with hundreds of soldiers gathered around him.

I heard one soldier ask another soldier:

Who is that guy? It looks like everybody here wants to have their picture taken.

The other guy said:

I don't know for sure, but the way I understand it, he is the guy who makes sure when we go to battle, we have everything that we need to be victorious.

That is a great statement about a human being and a great statement about the man. He cared about all who serve our Nation, but in particular those who risk their lives on our behalf. In honor of Bill Young, I will always remember that day where soldiers flocked to him just to be seen with Mr. Young.

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Mr. CRENSHAW. I now yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT), another member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee that Bill Young chaired.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, tonight I join my colleagues in honoring the life and legacy of a great man and an American patriot, Bill Young.

I keep looking to my right and expect to see him with that great smile, but I am sure tonight he is sitting at the right hand of God.

The death of Congressman Bill Young was a great loss for this Chamber, for our country, and for the millions of men and women in uniform who were Bill Young's priority for more than 40 years. Anyone who has served with Bill knew of his unwavering dedication to our Active Duty military, our veterans, and their families.

As chairman of both the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and the full Appropriations Committee, he was both firm and fair. When it came to our troops, he was uncompromising and insisted on nothing but the best for the U.S. servicemembers.

Chairman Young was motivated by his genuine and deep concern for the well-being of the individual soldier, sailor, airman, marine, and guardsman. His concern went far beyond politics and policies. As many of you know, Bill and his wonderful wife, Beverly, took special interest in our wounded veterans, visiting the wounded regularly at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Whether in a committee hearing or in the military hospitals around the world, he was tireless in visiting, speaking with, and listening to these incredible servicemembers.

While we can't hope to replace Bill Young, perhaps we can follow his example and let his integrity, his gracious manner, his firm commitment to the men and women who protect this country serve as an inspiration to this Chamber as we continue to wrestle with the same issues to which he devoted his life.

On a personal note, I was honored to work with Chairman Young on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. I was continually impressed by his depth of knowledge. I think it is safe to say that no one understood the Department of Defense quite like Bill Young. His knowledge, expertise, and compassion will be sorely missed on the subcommittee.

On my own behalf and on behalf of so many former Members who served with Bill, like our mutual friend and former chairman, Jerry Lewis, I extend my condolences to his wife, Beverly, his sons, and his entire family.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Thank you.

I now yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE), another member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

Mr. COLE. I thank my friend for yielding.

Madam Speaker, like every Republican in this Chamber, until 10 days ago, every day I served in the House of Representatives I served with Bill Young.

It has been noted here that he was a lion and a legend. At the time I was fortunate enough to come to this Chamber in 2003, he was probably at the zenith of his influence. He was chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and he was the confidant of the President, our military leaders, and leaders around the world at a time when the United States was at war.

No one cared more about the defense of the United States of America than Bill Young, and no one cared and did more for the people who actually bear the burden, the men and women that wear the uniform of this country—past, present, and future—than Chairman Young.

He was also a role model for many of us, a mentor, and a friend. He was somebody who would reach out and help you, take care of you, look after you, and give you the wisdom and advice that only he, with all his years of experience, can give. I remember on one occasion, not too long ago, when the chairman was obviously ill in the last several years of his life and still very active chairing our committee, a pretty busy man, a man dealing with his own problems; and I had tornados that hit my town in Moore, Oklahoma. Two days after those tornados hit, Bill Young was on the phone to tell me that I would be getting a telephone call from representatives of a New York investment bank called Cantor Fitzgerald, which had suffered grievous damage during 9/11, where they had lost 650 of their 950 employees at the World Trade Center. That company made a commitment that it would look after all of its people and all of their families and would reconstitute itself, and it did. Then they built on that commitment and said, We are going to help other people that are in tragedy by devoting all of our revenues earned on 9/11 of every year—not just profits, everything we earn—to help people in need. They have kept that commitment.

Bill Young had forged a relationship with them because of all they had done to help men and women in uniform and the victims of disaster. He said they will be calling you and they want to help. They did. They helped literally hundreds of families with millions of dollars' worth of personal and directed relief. That probably never would have happened if Bill and Beverly Young had not reached out to me at that point, and I and the people in my community will be forever grateful to them.

So we have lost arguably, I think, the greatest Republican Member of this body in the last two generations. We have not seen his like before, and it will be a long time again before we see anyone that rivals his compassion, his character, his civility, his decency, and his absolute devotion and commitment to our country and to the men and women who defend it.

Mr. CRENSHAW. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT), another member of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. DENT. I too want to the take a moment to reflect upon the life and service and dedication of Bill Young. Much has been said about him already this evening, and I too, like many, look back at that corner and want to see Bill Young there, but obviously he is not with us.

Before calling Florida his home, Chairman Young was actually born in Harmarville, Pennsylvania, in Allegheny County in western Pennsylvania, that area best known for steel and coal. A lot of tough people came out of that area, and certainly Bill Young, I think, really had a lot of the character traits I associate with people there. He could be very tough when he needed to be, very firm. He was just like steel.

Also, we should not forget about his compassion. He was a kind man, a gentle man, a patient man. I would often ask him questions or make a request of him from time to time, and he always listened to me very patiently. He had served here for 22 terms. He didn't have to spend a whole lot of time with me, but he did, and I always appreciated that. He was a great mentor to me and to many other Members here. It was a pleasure to serve with him.

There are so many other things about Chairman Young, too. It has been mentioned his support of our troops, particularly our wounded warriors, and the impact they had on him and the impact he had on those wounded warriors.

When you get beyond the defense and veterans policy, though, Chairman Young played an integral role in creating a national registry for bone marrow donors back in 1986, and that registry helped save more than 50,000 lives over the years.

Again, not having known Bill Young as long as some of my colleagues, I just wanted to say what an extraordinary privilege it was for me to serve with him, to know him, to call him a friend, and really to be one of my mentors here in the House.

My deepest thoughts and prayer go out to Beverly and the entire Young family during a difficult time.

Mr. CRENSHAW. I now yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. POSEY), one of Mr. Young's colleagues.

Mr. POSEY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I first met the man, the legend, really, known as Bill Young, in 1974; but it wasn't until I got elected to Congress in 2008 that I realized what a larger-than-life true leader this man was and what a wonderful and great mentor he was not just to me and everybody in my freshman class, but we find out everybody that has ever served in this place. He was wise, gentle, kind, honest, thoughtful, and helpful to anyone just for the asking.

I called him a hero; and until his last days, he would blush, as he was so humble, that anybody would address him like that. What a wonderful man. Never, ever before and probably never

again will every man and woman serving us in uniform have as great an advocate as they had in Congressman Young.

My thoughts and prayers remain with Beverly, his family, and his staff.

Rest in peace, Bill.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Thank you.

Now I yield time to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. NUGENT), another colleague and a member of the Rules Committee.

Mr. NUGENT. Madam Speaker, it is with great humility that I stand here tonight, and I think you have heard from a lot of Members tonight talk about Bill Young.

I think he has made the same impression on so many Members on this side of the aisle and on the other side about his humility, about his true caring about people, about the caring that he has for the members of the military.

As a father and a parent of three sons who serve in the United States Army, what struck me so much about Bill and his wife, Beverly, was their true compassion, particularly his compassion as it relates to those who serve us. Beverly was really the fire behind Bill with regards to a lot of these issues as it relates to our veterans. Bill led the way, but Beverly was right there carrying the flag along side of Bill.

Madam Speaker, they were a team together. They worked together for the betterment of all, and that is why Bill is such a great American. While you have heard tonight in this House talk about his legacy, you can't replace Bill Young.

When I first met Bill Young here in this Chamber 3 years ago, he was on that side sitting over there, and he had had a fall and he was injured and he had been at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and his health continued to decline over the last few years. But I came in every day in these Chambers to go see Bill Young because Bill was such a good, kindhearted person. He had a great grip when he shook your hand, but he always had a smile. When you asked him, Mr. Chairman, how are you feeling today? It was never about him. You heard that from other Members today. It was always about, How are your sons? How are your boys? He knew that they were serving in harm's way in Iraq and had been in Afghanistan. He was more worried about them than himself.

I saw him and his wife, Beverly, on the airplane ride back to Tampa almost every week, and without fail they would offer their better seats to a serviceman or servicewoman who was in uniform walking down the aisle. They would get up and say, Would you sit here?

That is just the way they were built.

Bill and Beverly were a perfect match, and Bill has gone on to a place that we can only aspire to go. I truly believe that Bill is at the right hand of God. Maybe he is talking about appropriations, talking about what is right with America.

Mr. Chairman, I do appreciate the time you have given all of us to be down here to talk about our good friend, C.W. Bill Young, who will be missed by all.

God bless America.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Thank you, Mr. NUGENT.

Our hour is just about over. We could go on for hours, but I think you have all heard tonight that Bill Young was a man that loved his Lord, he loved his wife, he loved his family, he loved his country. You might say it just seems like they don't make them like that any more, but the truth is that they never did.

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

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Madam Speaker, I was honored to be asked by the Young family to be among those who delivered eulogies for my departed friend and mentor last week in Largo, Florida. I ask unanimous consent that my statement be included in the record:

''From the back row of the House Chamber, Congressman C.W. ''Bill'' Young was able to see across the House Floor. And, for over forty years, through the terms of eight Presidents and 16 Secretaries of Defense, he watched members of both parties meet and greet each other as both Democratic and Republican Speakers presided.

''From that prized vantage point, he could also keep tabs on his longtime Defense Appropriations Committee counterpart and partner, Jack Murtha, sitting opposite him in the back row of the Democratic side of the aisle known as the 'Pennsylvania section.'

''Jack Murtha left us a few years ago, but Bill soldiered on. In recent months he used a walker or sat in a wheelchair taking greetings from colleagues from both sides of the aisle. He was beloved—engaging everyone with a smile and handshake, however he might have felt on that particular day. He was always gracious, well-humored and accommodating to freshmen and old-timers alike.

''It is well known that Bill Young chaired the House Appropriations Committee, and twice, its Defense Subcommittee. He also served as Ranking Member when the majority changed hands. He loved our committee, constantly saluted our members for their dedication and fully expected each one to support the process, limit debate, support open rules and with a minimum of partisanship and 'do the nation's business.'

''A copy of the Constitution was ever-present in his pocket, to remind all of Article 1, Section Nine, Clause 7. For those of you unfamiliar with this provision, I suggest you look it up!

''On the Defense Subcommittee, he always spoke of the dedication of members of our Armed Forces and the sacrifice of their families and our committee's obligation to serve them!

''He would say at every meeting: our soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen and women are the ones doing the work of freedom—the ones who work every day to make the world safer for Americans and our friends and more dangerous for those who would do us harm.

''That's why Bill Young would often state on the House Floor, 'there is no room for politics in our bill'—we must always be there for all those who serve and sacrifice.

''As you know, Bill and Beverly visited the old Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the old Bethesda Naval and the newly-expanded Bethesda National Military Medical Center just about every week.

''They were quiet visits, executed without fanfare or press release.

''Each time, they met with our wounded warriors and their families, adopting their hardships and often underwriting their expenses—helping them meet every type of crisis: food, travel, rent, inattention from medical personnel or hospital administrators.

''The Youngs confronted military brass whenever necessary in order to get those with physical and mental wounds the best care and support possible. They were fierce in their determination!

''And wherever they were with the troops, the Youngs took names, called their families and carried grievances to 'the top' to be resolved. This was their SOP, their passion, and woe to those who underestimated their dedication and resolve!

''You might say from time to time they 'rang a few chimes' to get a tough situation resolved! In fact, I am confident that there are many officers with us here today who would vouch for that. I won't ask for a show of hands, but you know who you are!

''Typical was the story Bill told us once—about a Saturday lunch at a small restaurant in Alexandria, Virginia—an area teeming with military personnel on-duty and off-duty. As Beverly left the table to greet another soldier or Marine, Bill was presented with the meal check and was stunned! '$171 for a tuna fish sandwich and a burger and two cokes?!?!' The waitress calmly replied that 'It's not just a sandwich and a burger, sir. Your wife volunteered you to pay for that soldier at that table and that Marine family over there and the sailor in the corner and a couple that have already left.'

''I also know that, over the years, many military families were pleasantly surprised when their grocery tab was covered by Bill or Beverly Young standing behind them in the supermarket check-out line.

''Bill and my late father served together for a few years before my father retired from Congress in 1974. With that early tie, he has been a friend and mentor to me since my arrival.

''I know these personal connections may not count for much these days, but were it not for Bill, it is likely that I would not be serving on the Defense Appropriations Committee or honored to be speaking here today.

''Nor would I have had the opportunity to occupy the back row of the House chamber—from which Bill Young had an expansive view of American history as few others ever did or as few others ever will.

''He personally made much of that history, directing an appropriations process that actually worked, despite its procedural flaws and partisan challenges.

''It is well-documented that his strong support for our national security made America the envy of the world and improved the lives of our servicemembers and their families in more ways than they will ever know and assured that their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

''A reverent hush has now fallen over that back row of the House chamber.

''The Congress has lost a leader.

''The nation has lost an experienced authority on national security.

''Our Armed Forces have lost a valuable partner.

''And whether they know it or not, the troops and their families have lost one of the best friends they ever had.

''We all have lost a great, principled man who lived a life from which we all could learn.

''May the tributes and prayers that have flowed in recent days be a source of comfort and strength to you, Beverly, and to Billy, Patrick and Rob and the rest of the Young family and his loyal, long-serving staff—past and present—both in his personal offices in Washington and Florida and the Defense Committee's staff—the unsung majority and minority professionals who make the Committee work.

''Ladies and gentlemen, the sun is setting on an American life of service. Bill Young, now an Honorary Marine, may be gone, but he will never be forgotten!

''From the back row of the House chamber, Bill Young had a front row seat to history—a history he helped shape. And for that, our nation is a stronger and a better place.''

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to our late colleague, Congressman Bill Young.

Congressman Young was an extraordinary public servant whose legacy of caring for his constituents and veterans will not soon be forgotten. I am truly honored to have served alongside him in Congress.

For more than four decades, Congressman Young championed legislation to improve the lives of Floridians and all Americans and never hesitated to reach across the aisle to find common ground.

A veteran of the Army National Guard, Congressman Young used his expertise on defense and security issues to advocate for our men and women in uniform. Throughout his legislative career, Congressman Young worked diligently to ensure that our military had access to the training and equipment necessary to be successful in their missions. He also stood by our brave soldiers and their families at home—making sure military retirees had access to health care, defending benefits for military spouses, supporting our wounded veterans, and honoring our fallen heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Congressman Young was a tireless advocate for Florida. In the 1980's, he established the first moratorium on drilling off the West Coast of Florida, and fought subsequent efforts to repeal this moratorium. Mr. Young also championed landmark legislation to protect the Everglades, raising his voice to break a deadlock amongst his colleagues.

His work to establish the National Marrow Donor program and support for biomedical research is another example of how Congressman Young's efforts will touch lives many years after his public service.

I remember shortly after I was first elected to Congress, Mr. Young made it a point to reach out and share his insights with me. During our time together on the Appropriations Committee, I was so fortunate to learn from this experienced Floridian and great statesman.

Congressman Young's leadership and service to all Floridians will be truly cherished and forever missed. He never stopped working for a better nation and a better Florida, and for that, we should all be thankful. Our nation has lost a true champion whose legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Chairman Bill Young, whose passing we mourn and whose dedication to America's servicemembers is well known to his fellow Floridians, as well as to all who serve in this House.

Taking care of our nation's men and women in uniform was his passion. He often called them, ''kids'' because he cared for them as deeply as if they were family.

Chairman Young was an officer and a Gentleman. He served for nine years in the Army National Guard. During his decades in Congress, he and his wife, Beverly, regularly visited with hospitalized combat troops in Florida, and here at Bethesda. They helped arranging travel for military family members, or those who were having trouble paying the bills. Here in the House, at the Appropriations Committee, and in any other way he could find, he was tireless in his work on behalf of servicemembers, veterans and their families.

I worked with him when we were trying to finish the new courthouse in Orlando. This was just after the Oklahoma City Bombing, and all the new security requirements that were added to protect the buildings and the people in them.

The project was $19 million over budget, but the Chairman came to what must have been the longest town hall meeting ever. Everyone had something to say. The Chairman was a gentleman as always and wanted what was best for the people of Florida, regardless of party. This was the case also when it came to funding for research. Chairman Young knew how important cutting edge research is and made it a priority to find the funding to help future generations of Americans.

Madam Speaker, as we say goodbye to our friend and colleague, Chairman Bill Young, I want to thank him for being a reasonable person to work with. All of our encounters were pleasant and I will miss working with him.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, C.W. Bill Young was a truly great American who served the people of the State of Florida with the utmost degree of professionalism, excellence, and dedication for more than 50 years in both the Florida State Senate and the United States House of Representatives.

It was truly an honor and a privilege for me to serve with Bill, and it would be impossible to list all the things that I have learned from Bill in the few short minutes that I have today. Anyone who was fortunate enough to get to know Bill can tell you that there was perhaps no greater advocate for our Nation's veterans and no greater friend to our military than Bill Young.

Last week, I was here on this floor to offer legislation to rename the Bay Pines VA Medical Center after Bill. The enormous outpouring of support, with 378 original cosponsors, was a testament to Bill's tireless work on behalf of veterans and the boundless respect that his colleagues had for him. But, what many may not know is that the current medical center in Bay Pines may not have existed at all if not for Bill's work back in 1976. As President Ford travelled through Florida, Bill joined him aboard Air Force One. Despite opposition from high ranking senior officials in the Administration, Bill convinced President Ford that the veterans of Central Florida needed a new facility to make sure that our Nation upheld our solemn promise ''to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan.'' Thanks to Bill that facility was built.

Madam Speaker, Bill's distinguished service to our Nation, as a veteran and a lawmaker, stands as a shining example for every public servant, and indeed every American, of what can be achieved through hard-work, patriotism, and an abiding faith in God. My wife Vicki and I extend our deepest condolences to Bill's wife, Beverly, children, Rob, Billy and Patrick and the entire Young family. We will all miss Bill dearly, but we know that his legacy will never be forgotten and that our Nation is that much stronger thanks to his service.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JEFFRIES. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

□ 2030

Mr. JEFFRIES. Madam Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege to rise this evening and once again stand as an anchor for the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order, this hour of power, where, for the next 60 minutes, members of the Congressional Black Caucus will have an opportunity to speak to the American people about building a budget to create progress and prosperity for all Americans in this great country of ours.

Now, earlier today, myself and several other Members of Congress, including the distinguished Representative from the Ninth Congressional District of New York, YVETTE CLARKE, and the legendary Congressman JOHN LEWIS, had an opportunity to attend the homegoing service of Congressman Major Owens, who so proudly served in this institution for 24 years, first elected in 1982, having retired in 2006.

As I listened to speaker after speaker reflect on Congressman Owens' time in this great institution, it seemed to me that one of the things that became increasingly clear was his steadfast commitment to making sure that the funding priorities that emanated from this Congress were decent, were humane, were humanitarian, and were designed to stand up for and protect the least of those in American society.

Congressman Owens, during his 24 years in this Congress, consistently stood up for funding as it relates to early childhood education. He consistently stood up for funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. He consistently stood up for social safety net programs. He consistently stood up to open up the doors of the American Dream for the greatest number of people possible.

And so, in that regard, on the day of his homegoing service, I think it appropriate that we just dedicate the pathway toward prosperity that we are endeavoring to put forth today in the great spirit of Congressman Major Owens, who, for more than two decades labored in the vineyards of this Congress, fighting for budgets that stood up for the least of those amongst us.

I want to yield first to the distinguished chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus, who so ably and passionately and intelligently led the CBC forward in this 113th Congress. Let me now yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from Ohio, Chairwoman MARCIA FUDGE.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank my friend for yielding, and I would like to thank my colleagues, Congressmen JEFFRIES and HORSFORD, for once again leading the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order Hour.

Mr. Speaker, this week, the House and Senate conferees will begin deliberations to produce a budget for the first time in 4 years. Mr. Speaker, these deliberations, which are long overdue, are critical because they may provide a long-term plan that will continue to move our country forward out of our economic recession and towards a stronger America. There is a long overdue discussion needed.

For so many around this country, the barriers to economic opportunity and mobility have become insurmountable. The American people are looking to Congress to provide leadership and to turn our economy around. Unfortunately, some in Congress have put austerity before economic recovery, draining resources that might otherwise have improved our economic outlook.

While many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are focused on shrinking the government at any cost, the CBC is focused on making our government smarter and its programs more efficient. It is time to prioritize projects that will not only turn our country's economy around, but that will also open the doors of opportunity for future generations.

No longer can we ignore high levels of unemployment among those living in poverty and the disproportionately high unemployment rates among people of color.

We cannot pretend that our current investments in education are sufficient, while report after report details our country's academic shortcomings and our declining international standing.

We must acknowledge the fact that one in five children are hungry, and nearly 50 million Americans live in households suffering from food insecurity.

We must face the reality of a crumbling transportation infrastructure and the fact that improvement costs rise every year we delay investments.

Congress can spend the next month-and-a-half hiding from these truths and hoping for an improved economy that will magically fix these problems, or we can directly address our issues through bipartisan cooperation and with a common goal to make our country better.

Congress can place a renewed focus on investing in the American people through quality programs that promote access, equality, and accountability. All this can be done while we cut wasteful spending, preserve the Affordable Care Act, and set the stage for meaningful tax reform.

Admittedly, that may seem like a lot of priorities to tackle for one Congress, much less this one, but we can. We can do this if we move past the usual partisan bickering and do what is most important for the Nation.

Of course, as they say, the devil is in the details. A very smart, ambitious, and detailed plan is necessary to make it work. Luckily, the Congressional Black Caucus has just the plan to make this work: the CBC budget.

The CBC budget cuts wasteful spending, invests in education, preserves the ACA, provides the resources to rebuild our transportation infrastructure, addresses crippling poverty, creates jobs now, and ensures America is a leader in the high-growth industries of the future.

I want to thank Congressman BOBBY SCOTT for all of his work on the CBC budget.

By considering ideas and proposals from the CBC budget, Congress can stimulate the economy while expanding the middle class. From the dark days of the government shutdown, this opportunity is now a bright spot for Congress and this country. We can rebuild America using the principles on which our Nation was founded: that everyone, no matter their background, should have the opportunity to achieve their dreams.

To my colleagues in the House and Senate, we have the opportunity and a blueprint. Let's build a better America together.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished chair of the Congressional Black Caucus for her always thoughtful and eloquent remarks.

I now want to yield some time to the architect of the CBC budget, the distinguished gentleman from Virginia, Representative BOBBY SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding, and I join in your remarks for praising Congressman Major Owens, because he, as you pointed out, led the Congressional Black Caucus budget for many years. He showed how you can be fiscally responsible and still address the critical needs of our Nation with a particular emphasis on the least of these and the need to invest in education. So I appreciate your comments.

Mr. Speaker, as the conferees begin to negotiate a budget agreement to fund the Federal Government for the remainder of fiscal year 2014, they should look at the Congressional Black Caucus budget. The CBC budget makes tough choices, but not at the expense of our most vulnerable communities.

The CBC budget cancels the economically disastrous sequester. It protects and enhances Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, and other vital safety net programs that protect millions of families from poverty. It also reduces our Nation's budget deficit by approximately $2.8 trillion over the next decade.

Mr. Speaker, most of the ideas that have been presented over the past to either cancel the sequester or reduce the deficit almost always involve proposals that cut Social Security and Medicare. These ideas have included changing the way the Social Security benefits are calculated, the so-called chained CPI that cuts the cost of living increases or raises the age of eligibility for Medicare from 65 to 67. These are cuts in those programs.

The CBC budget shows how you can be fiscally responsible without attacking those critical programs that people have paid for during their working years. The CBC budget is able to pay for the cancellation of the sequester and reduce the budget deficit without harmful cuts to Social Security and Medicare. It calls for revenue enhancements totaling $2.7 trillion over the next decade.

Our budget outlines how the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee can reach this number by highlighting several options that total $4.2 trillion that could be used to reach the $2.7 trillion revenue target. Some of these options include $1.1 trillion by limiting the deductibility of corporate interest payments.

Now, when corporations want to raise money, they can sell stocks or they can sell bonds. If they sell stocks, they make a profit and pay dividends to their stockholders, but they pay tax on the income before they pay the dividends. With corporate debt financing, with bonds, when you pay the interest on the bonds, that is tax deductible.

Why should there be a tax preference for debt financing instead of equity financing? If it was the same and you deny the deductibility of corporate debt interest payments, you could raise $1.2 trillion over 10 years.

You could close special tax breaks and corporate loopholes by limiting deductions for upper-income individuals, closing some of the corporate loopholes, like the gas and oil advantages that they enjoy.

You can raise almost $1 trillion, over $800 billion, by taxing capital gains and dividends as ordinary income. Traditionally, 30, 40, 50 years ago, they were taxed at, actually, above ordinary income for dividends. If you tax them just the same, $880 billion could be achieved.

A surcharge, 5.4 percent surcharge on income over $1 million gets you almost a half a trillion dollars.

A trading speculation tax.

You could also limit the Bush-era tax cuts to that portion of your income,

cancel those tax cuts on that portion of your income over $250,000. Only a privileged few make more than $250,000, so that $200 billion could be achieved without being disadvantageous to very many individuals.

Almost another $135 billion can be raised by returning the estate tax exemption to what it was in 2009. You could raise over $300 billion if you reduce it to what the rate was when President Clinton left office.

These are just some of the ideas, and we have listed them specifically, showing over $4 trillion of possibilities for only $2.7 trillion to make our budget add up.

Now, that is a lot of money, but it is in stark contrast to the budget that we actually passed in this House, because that budget calls for closing a gap of $4 trillion. Unspecified, I don't know how in the world they are going to close a $4 trillion deficit because they would have to raise $4 trillion in taxes, or if they are not raising any taxes, spending cuts in the area, in discretionary spending in the area of one-third across the board. Now, we are having trouble dealing with a sequester of about a 10 percent cut across the board. You can imagine how unlikely it would be to achieve one-third across-the-board cuts.

So this budget is real. They are real numbers. The revenue enhancements provided in the CBC budget would allow Congress to totally cancel the sequester, actually pass a jobs bill totaling about half a trillion dollars, which would end the recession by putting millions of Americans back to work, and provide billions more for long-term investments in our economy through education, job training, health care, and advanced science and research.

As I said earlier, these reforms contained in the CBC budget would reduce the deficit by about approximately $2.8 trillion over the next decade when compared to the CBO's baseline. This would put our Nation on a strong and sustainable fiscal path, all without jeopardizing programs that support our seniors and programs that educate our next generation of leaders in business, science, and technology.

The CBC budget would be a wise starting point for the House and Senate conferees, much better than the budget that we passed, because there is that $4 trillion gap that is unexplained. These numbers add up.

It is an imperative that the Congress pass a budget that expands economic opportunity, invests in the American people, and reduces the deficit. The CBC budget presents a concrete plan, in stark contrast to the budget that we passed in the House, because it is backed up by actual numbers; and it adds up, and it shows how we can reduce the deficit while not being forced to make further cuts to vital programs that support our Nation's safety net.

Most importantly, the CBC budget presents a clear path both to economic and fiscal prosperity for our Nation.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

□ 2045

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Virginia for his very thoughtful and comprehensive remarks.

It is now my privilege to yield the floor to the distinguished gentlelady from California, Representative BARBARA LEE, a very distinguished member of the House Budget Committee, someone who has consistently been a voice for the voiceless and an advocate for the poor, for the disenfranchised, for all those that are aspiring to the American Dream.

Ms. LEE of California. First of all, let me thank you, Congressman JEFFRIES, for your tremendous leadership, for your vigilance, and for your dedication. Every week, you have brought forth these discussions to really inform and educate the public about the very important work of the Congressional Black Caucus, which, of course, is part of our work to strengthen our Nation with policies and a budget that will reignite the American Dream for all. So I just have to thank you for the time that you have put into this because this is so important, and your voice and leadership is tremendously needed at this moment in our history.

Also, I just have to salute our phenomenal chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentlewoman from Ohio, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE, for her very bold and her brilliant leadership, ensuring that the entire Congressional Black Caucus continues to be the conscience of the Congress.

As a member of both the Appropriations Committee and the Budget Committee, I have seen firsthand the Tea Party Republican vision for our country's future, and believe you me, it is not a vision of shared prosperity or economic growth. This was reaffirmed earlier this month when the Tea Party Republicans held the government hostage in a failed attempt to take away health care from millions of Americans across the country.

This week, as House and Senate conferees meet to develop a broader budget plan, I am pleased to join my CBC colleagues calling on Congress to adopt a fair and equitable budget, such as the budget the Congressional Black Caucus proposed earlier this year.

And I, too, must thank the gentleman from Virginia, Congressman BOBBY SCOTT, for his stellar and dedicated leadership in leading the Congressional Black Caucus' task force in the development of this. It is a pro-growth, pro-people, and pro-American budget.

Now we have already seen through the Republican Ryan budget, which was released earlier this year, what the Tea Party's priorities are. Their budget would shortchange 99 percent of the American people in order to give even more tax breaks to millionaires and to billionaires. It protects tax loopholes for special interests and Big Oil, and at a time when we need job creation the most, the Tea Party Republican budget would kill more than 2 million American jobs in 2014 alone.

The Republican budget would take away food from hungry children and families, take thousands of children off of Head Start, and close the door to college for thousands of students next year. In fact, Mr. Speaker, two-thirds of all of the Tea Party Republican budget cuts target programs for people who are poor or low income. Communities of color, once again, would be hardest hit, communities that have already borne the brunt of the last economic recession. And all this is taking place as income inequality only continues to grow.

The Tea Party's vision of America is very clear. Their budget would shred the safety net, shatter our economic recovery, and push millions of struggling families over the edge.

Now, in stark contrast, the Congressional Black Caucus budget is a different way forward. This is a document that shows our Nation's priorities and values.

A budget is a moral document. How we spend our money reflects our values, and the CBC budget spends money where we value it the most. It protects and enhances Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, better known as TANF, and all of our vital safety net programs that keep millions out of poverty. The CBC budget also protects all of our safety net programs, including SNAP.

While protecting these and other important antipoverty programs, the CBC budget also makes sound investments in critical areas like infrastructure, education, innovation, and poverty reduction in order to create ladders of opportunity for all.

Finally, we must ensure that the Pentagon will not be exempt from any budget deals. The Pentagon should be audited and their bloated spending kept in check. Billions and billions are spent and wasted every year, and the American people deserve to know where their taxpayer dollars are going. Not only will it bring accountability to the Defense Department, but those wasted funds could be used for programs like Head Start or Meals on Wheels.

So, in closing, Mr. Speaker, let me remind all of my colleagues that a budget, once again, as I said earlier, is a moral document. How we spend our money reflects who we are as a Nation. We must recognize that the choices we make impact real people and especially the most vulnerable: people of color, women, and children.

I hope that tonight in honor and in memory of our beloved, the late Congressman Major Owens, who worked so hard—and I had the privilege and honor to work with him and Congressman SCOTT each and every year for a fair and balanced budget. I hope that we

will remember his legacy by recommitting ourselves to his values and his ideals by putting people first in every budget that we put forward.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentlelady from California for her very eloquent and thoughtful comprehensive remarks, as well as the remarks of Representative BOBBY SCOTT as well, and noting, of course, the role that the late Congressman Major Owens played in the context of the CBC budget during the years that he served in this Congress with such distinction.

I want to now yield the floor to the distinguished gentlelady from Texas, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE, whom I have the honor and the privilege of serving with on the House Judiciary Committee, who represents her district in Houston so ably, but of equal significance has stood on the floor of the House of Representatives as a Member of Congress standing up for those who might not otherwise be able to stand up for themselves in the context of making sure they get a fair shake in their pursuit of the American Dream.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the gentleman from New York. It is a pleasure to be able to join you and my colleagues today, and I thank you for beginning your remarks today, continuing the tribute that we have given to Congressman Major Owens. He would be proud that we were here tonight speaking for the voiceless, speaking for the poor, speaking for those who need educational dollars, speaking for those who, with a little investment, would, again, be able to reach for and grab the American Dream.

I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for again bringing us together. We all have different responsibilities, Judiciary, Homeland Security. We are all concerned about comprehensive immigration reform, border security. It is important, however, that we give a challenge and a charge to those individuals who will be gathering to reform the budget, and I cannot thank you enough for your timeliness and your leadership on these issues.

So I rise today, joining my colleagues, and adding, again, my appreciation to the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congresswoman FUDGE, who, in a day or two, will be joining the Ag conference and will be raising her voice for individuals who simply want a good and decent meal. I want to thank her for her leadership of the Congressional Black Caucus.

I will repeat the words of my colleagues, and those words are that we remain, I believe, the heart and conscience for the American people whose voices, again, and whose issues may be lost in the conflicts of partisanship. The Congressional Black Caucus speaks clearly and loudly to the issue of pain suffered by so many that are poor in this country.

So tonight I want to give a sense of urgency, and I want to raise the siren. I want to have a clanging bell, a loud noise, a banging of the drums, a call to the town by the town crier that we just can't live, we cannot suffer anymore in budgetless, fundingless government that we are now in.

The President of the United States has called on Congress to do its job. The President provided great wisdom and leadership in the first beginning stages of his administration in 2009 when he wisely, through great sacrifice and criticism, presented the stimulus package to the Congress and infused needed and important dollars to create growth and jobs, some 3 million-plus jobs, closing the gap on some of the bleeding that was going on. Having built on the restoration of the auto industry, President Obama continued to build on the restoration of Wall Street. All of the prime industries that were crying out to this Nation, our President, along with the Democrats, sacrificed to do what is right for this Nation.

And, of course, as many know, it was a sacrifice for the Congressional Black Caucus, because at the same time, we knew that there were people who were suffering, but we looked to the greater good. And now we have come to ask, Is there anyone listening to the greater good?

We don't have to go very far to look and see that the size of the middle class that my friends on the other side of the aisle—Republicans—keep talking that they are for the middle class, and all we need do is to look and to be able to see its decline. The percent of households with an annual income within 50 percent of the median, they don't need any more cuts. They need dollars into education. They need dollars into R and D, research and development. They need to be able to ensure that the transportation and infrastructure of America is funded. That creates jobs. They don't need any more sequesters.

So the budget that we are about to engage in, the conference, should be a serious conference about ensuring that there is investment, because what we are suffering in the backdrop of mindless sequester continues on and on because we cannot get our friends to come to the table.

The Nation has been operating on a shrunken budget, slashed $80 billion in forced spending cuts since March 1. And in the course of that, and while the middle class is gone, 57,000 children have been taken off the rolls of Head Start, and the numbers are growing. Poor families and working families that fall into the middle class are trying strive to the middle class.

The cuts have also cut into public defenders and have cut into the justice system. The cuts have caused layoffs of lawyers. It has caused, in essence, an overturning of liberty justice.

And so in those ways, we can see pointedly the loss of the growth of the middle class.

Sequester is an across-the-board cut that does not allow the dream of Major Owens and the Congressional Black Caucus, the infusion of dollars into higher education, Head Start, pre-K, primary, and secondary, title I funding. All of these fundings that are considered discretionary are slashed and burned. I want to see the growth of the American public—training for nurses, more training for medical professionals. All of that gets slashed in the sequester.

So, Mr. Speaker, you would wonder, what has America become? And I want to thank Mr. GARAMENDI from California for sharing this poster. What has America become?

Like the ''Tale Two of Cities,'' they have not listened to the thoughtfulness of the Congressional Black Caucus budget that actually focuses on getting rid of the sequester so that we can not have a tale of two Americas. It hurts my heart to know that there are people in this country that are not benefiting from the greatness of the Nation.

Let me pause for a moment to make a simple statement: America is not broke. I am tired of people talking about how America is broke; a $4 trillion economy, a larger economy than the European Union that includes many countries.

The ability to service our debt, let me just say to you: I don't like debt. I don't like the deficit. But, in actuality, in a capitalistic system, part of what churns the economy is the servicing of the debt. How do you have the money to service the debt? You infuse more capital, more dollars into the economy. You begin to sensibly talk about tax reform. You raise the revenue. You pay your bills. You build new roads. You help higher education. You pay for the military. You create opportunities for people to invent and build businesses. You create access to credit. You build more homes. That is how you turn the economy.

And so, tragically, from 2009 to 2012, the fraction of economic growth for the top 1 percent—not the 99ers, but the top 1 percent—according to this resource from the University of California, 95 percent went to the top 1 percent. They were growing beyond imagination.

□ 2100

Let me defend the top 1 percent to say that there are people in the top 1 percent that want to give back to the Nation. Warren Buffett wants to invest back into this country. Yet the economic structure of 2009–2012, when my Republican friends were in charge, was 95 percent going to the top 1 percent.

The preceding President, President Clinton, had an economy that included a sacrificial budget, that actually had a budget that did tax reform and revisions and had revenue. Thank goodness it was at least fair. The 1 percent were getting 45 percent and the bottom 99 percent were getting 55 percent.

What is the configuration now? I might venture to say, Mr. JEFFRIES, that the 99 percent are getting zero and

the top 1 percent may be right now at 100 percent.

So I am asking for the conference to go and work for America, not this configuration; to grow the 99 percent investment in America to be able to take the CBC budget and look at some of the tax reforms that could be utilized, to look at our job creation, which would include the maintenance and repair of public transit, highways, airports, ports, railroads, and bridges.

The Houston Metro would appreciate having the opportunity to expand and create jobs, from those who had worked on the rail lines to those who would build the railcars to those who would run it, and the opportunity for people going to work to ride on it.

Workforce development programs such as the Workforce Investment Act, programs and legislation that I have introduced in times of high unemployment to actually give those unemployed a stipend while they retrain and retrofit themselves into new jobs; veterans programs, which provide for investment in our veterans. One of the greatest gifts we could have given to the second generation of veterans was a second GI Bill that Democrats passed for the returning Iraqi and Afghan veterans. They provided opportunity.

So I simply come today with a number that, as I close, I wanted to leave. Maybe my friends in Texas will understand why this is so drastic. Because we are losing out of the gross domestic product in Texas some $15.2 billion. We are losing 153,541 jobs in the State of Texas alone, someplace where they are celebrating that they are creating jobs and the economy is growing, but the sequester is causing the loss of jobs across America.

Tomorrow, we will be standing against the SNAP cuts that will be coming on November 1. Through Mr. Obama's and the Democratic Caucus' support, we passed stimulus that gave more food money to those who are in need. Why couldn't we simply keep that going? On November 1, because we have not acted, this Congress will shut down the food for those who have gotten just a little bit to feed their families.

So I am hoping that when they go to conference, what will be on their minds as they are pledging allegiance to the flag of the United States of America is not the 1 percent, but the 99 percent, and that we will come back out of this economy and there will not be a tale of two Americas, but one America, where everyone has an opportunity, and that the model of America—united—is an investment into more than just a few people, but to a lot of people, giving them the opportunity to build this economy.

I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank my constituents in Houston for understanding and recognizing that we must work together to build a better Houston, a better Texas, and a better America.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentlelady from Texas for her very powerful, strong, thoughtful, and comprehensive remarks.

Hopefully, as we move forward in this Congress with the conference committee that Representative LEE just discussed, they will take heed to her plea that you keep in mind those in America and the middle class and working families, those who aspire to be part of the middle class, and be compassionate as we move forward to address the issues that confront this Nation.

Earlier this month, as a result of the reckless behavior of some in this House of Representatives, we experienced 16 days of a government shutdown. It was a legislative joyride that was doomed to end in a crash-and-burn scenario, as it did. Unfortunately, as a result, the American people have been left with the damage of a $24 billion hit to the economy in terms of lost economic productivity.

Thankfully, as a result of the agreement that reopened the government, both sides agreed to finally move forward with the appointment of negotiators to try and resolve differences in the House Republican budget and the Senate Democratic budget and move forward with a plan for America that both re-energizes our economy and deals with the long-term deficit problems that we will have to confront.

We believe the CBC budget that has been discussed here on the floor of the House of Representatives provides insight into the type of things that should be considered by the negotiators in the House and the Senate as they move forward.

I would note, parenthetically, that though the conference committee is just at the early stages of beginning, at this point in time, this process really should have occurred months and months ago. This House passed its budget in March. The Senate passed its budget shortly thereafter, and Democrats in the House and the Senate have been calling for the appointment of conferees since the early spring.

For some reason, there was a refusal amongst our friends on the other side of the aisle to move forward, but we are thankful that at this point there is an agreement finally to sit down. The American people have demanded that we attempt to find common ground to resolve the issues of concern for this great Nation.

Now there are two different approaches that have been put forth. Our approach is designed to deal with the deficit problems that we have in a balanced fashion. The other approach, I believe, is designed to balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable people in other society: children, working families, the poor, the disabled, middle class folks, senior citizens.

Now some may say that is just hyperbole. Well, what does the budget on the other side of the aisle actually do? It cuts assistance pursuant to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, by $135 billion. That is not hyperbole. That is in the budget. In a country, at this moment, where 50 million people are hungry, 18 million of them are children.

The budget put forth by the other side of the aisle also cuts spending on higher education by $168 billion. That is not hyperbole. That is in the budget. It makes it more difficult for young people in this great country to access the American Dream—young people who are already in a debt crisis. Student loan debt in this country exceeds $1 trillion. We should be doing more to help people get a higher education, not less, in this country.

The document that was presented by the other side that will be subject to negotiation at the conference committee also cuts assistance and spending on Medicaid by the amount of $810 billion. That is not hyperbole. That is in the House Republican budget. That is notwithstanding the fact that the majority of people who benefit from Medicaid assistance in this country are actually children and the disabled and senior citizens.

So we have got very different priorities, blueprints, road maps as it relates to dealing with the problems that we confront here in America.

The balanced approach that we advocate for essentially has four different elements.

First, we believe it is important to invest in the American economy. It is time to invest in America, invest in job training and education, transportation and infrastructure, research and development, and technology and innovation.

Let's invest in America so we can create increased economic activity. We are in the midst of a very schizophrenic economic recovery. It is a recovery that has disproportionately benefited the wealthy in America.

Let's just look at the facts that have been laid before us.

We have got corporate profits that are way up. The stock market is way up. CEO compensation is way up. Productivity of the American worker is way up. Yet wages have remained stagnant, and unemployment is still stubbornly high.

Working families and middle class folks have been left behind in the context of this recovery. That is why we believe the first element of any budget has to invest in America. Because if you invest in America, you increase economic activity. If you increase economic activity, you raise consumer demand. If you raise consumer demand, the economy grows. If the economy grows, by definition, the deficit will be reduced.

Parenthetically, let me also note that despite all the rhetoric from some of my friends on the other side of the aisle, under this administration, Barack Obama, the deficit has actually been reduced by half during his 5 years in office. In fact, I think as a percentage of GDP, the deficit has been reduced to a degree that has not been

seen since the drawdown in the aftermath of World War II. So we hear a lot about fiscal irresponsibility directed at the White House, notwithstanding the fact that this White House has presided over a near historic level of deficit reduction.

Invest in the economy.

The second thing that is important is that we should get rid of some wasteful corporate loopholes that have outlived their usefulness. We can just close or change or modify some of the benefits that oil and gas companies have received. They are making record profits. There is no reason for the loopholes and the benefits and the subsidies that exist right now. If we just were to address them, we could save the American people $25 billion over the next 10 years. If we were to change some of the loopholes that actually incentivize companies to move jobs overseas, we could save the American people $168 billion over the next 10 years.

If there is such a moral imperative not to saddle our children with the debt burden that we have in America, if that is such a moral imperative, can't we not agree upon a single loophole that can be closed in the name of the children and the grandchildren of America? Not one?

That is what we believe is the right thing to do here in the CBC.

□ 2115

The third thing that, I think, is part of a balanced approach to dealing with the budget and a reduction in the deficit has to do with making some spending cuts where appropriate, but we have got to do it in a manner that is sensitive to the fragile nature of the economy. I think all of us on this side of the aisle are willing to concede that there are probably some areas in which efficiencies can be found in the name of fiscal responsibility for the American people. Spending reduction sensitive to the fragile nature of our recovery should be part of any balanced approach in dealing with the problems that we face in America.

Lastly, we in the CBC certainly believe that any budget agreement has to stand up for important social safety net programs in America, like Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid—programs that have been phenomenally successful, particularly in reducing poverty amongst older Americans. It is unfortunate because there are times when these programs—Social Security and Medicare—are unfairly demonized and are made part of deficit reduction talks even if the facts suggest they don't necessarily have a place in that regard. Social Security, for instance, remains a solvent program at this moment and into the foreseeable future. Social Security has nothing to do with the deficit. That, in fact, was a statement that Ronald Reagan made in 1984 in a debate with Walter Mondale. It was true then, and it is true almost 30 years later.

Now, when you think about the attack on our social safety net programs and on the obsessive desire to change—decimate—so-called entitlement programs, often this discussion is raised in the context of the enormous debt problem that we have in America—$16.7 trillion. Certainly it is a problem that we have got to confront in this country, but what also is often not clear is the fact that spending on so-called entitlement programs really does not account for the debt problem that we confront in America. This is what this poster board and the chart so clearly illustrate.

In fact, much of the debt that we currently confront in this America can be tied directly to policies emanating from the 8 years that George W. Bush was at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. More than half of our debt can be traced to the failed war in Iraq—totally unjustified in search of weapons of mass destruction that still haven't been found and never will be found. The debt can be tied to the war in Afghanistan and to the fact that it was mis-prosecuted as a result of being distracted by the joyride that took place in Iraq, costing lives and American treasure. The debt problem can be traced to the Bush tax cuts passed in this Congress in 2001 and 2003 without being paid for.

Then, of course, was the laissez-faire attitude toward Wall Street, resulting in reckless behavior by some that collapsed the economy, robbed millions and millions of Americans of the little wealth that they had tied into homeownership, and the resulting bailout that took place and the need for an economic stimulus package through the Recovery Act. All of that accounts for a significant amount of the debt that we now confront.

So when both sides sit down at the negotiating table in the context of the Budget Committee, we should do so with the facts objectively established as opposed to putting a bull's-eye on the back of important social safety net programs like Social Security and Medicare just because some folks in this Capitol don't like those programs from their very inceptions.

The last observation that I will make is that the budget that has been set forth by the CBC and by Democrats in the House and the Senate, as compared to the budget that has been put forth by the House GOP, is very different in the context of how we review and evaluate tax fairness in America.

I think some would be surprised to know that, in the House GOP budget, it cuts taxes by lowering the top tax rate for high-income Americans from 39.6 percent to 25 percent. This is not the Reagan budget, supply-side economics. This is not George Herbert Walker Bush or George W. Bush in 2001 and 2003. This is the current budget on which we are going to have to negotiate and find common ground. It cuts the tax rate from 39.6 percent to 25 percent in order to slash all of the social safety net programs that we reviewed earlier.

Why is that a wrong-headed policy?

As I close, and as this chart illustrates, the top tax rate was at 39.6 percent notwithstanding the fact that so many people on the other side of the aisle, in good faith, constantly say, that type of tax rate is the type of rate that hurts the economy. Under the 8 years of the Clinton administration, with a 39.6 percent top tax rate, 20-plus million jobs were created; 8 years later, when the top tax rate was cut by this Congress from 39.6 percent to 35 percent, we lost 580,000 jobs. That is an apples-to-apples comparison that discredits the notion that lowering the tax rate somehow stimulates growth in the economy when the 8 years of the Clinton administration as compared to the 8 years of the Bush administration clearly discredit that theory in the manner that a former President referred to as voodoo economics.

So I am just hopeful that, as we move forward with this conference committee—we have got big differences—we can sit down and endeavor to find common ground and do the business of the American people: keep government open, invest in our economy, protect our social safety net programs, and help create prosperity for the greatest number of Americans possible.

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

THE SECRET OF AMERICA'S SUCCESS—TECHNOLOGY AND FREEDOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) for 30 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, in the words of my former boss, President Reagan, Well, here we go again.

Over the last 25 years, I and a small band of ''just refuse to go along and get along'' types here in Congress have engaged in a constant fight to maintain the intellectual property of American inventors.

The intellectual property rights of our inventors is something that has been a great treasure to our country. Our Founding Fathers felt so strongly about technology and freedom—and, yes, with the profit motive—that that was the formula that would uplift human kind, and they believed in it so much that they wrote that into our Constitution.

Article I, section 8, clause 8 of the Constitution:

> The Congress shall have power to promote the progress of science and useful arts by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.

I might add that this is the only place in the body of the Constitution in which the word ''right'' is used.

The Bill of Rights comes in during the amendment process of the Constitution, but our Founding Fathers thought so highly of technology and technology advancement that the right

of inventors was included in the body of the Constitution.

This provision has served America well. It has led to general prosperity that we would not have had otherwise. It has led to national security where we have faced foes that have outnumbered us so heavily, but what were heavily relied upon were the technologies that were developed to help our Armed Forces defend themselves and, thus, defend the country. Of course, this has served us well because the technology and the freedom we have has created a society in which ordinary people—decent people—can live very fruitful lives and can enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Americans work hard, but this wasn't just created by hard work. That is the important thing to remember. Without hardworking Americans, it wouldn't have worked; but it was the technology that they used that made the difference. People work hard all over the world. They work long hours, and they live in poverty and deprivation, but we coupled the hard work of our people with technology; and, thus, what we have had is a success that has uplifted the common man and has served as a light of hope for all human beings in that we can produce the wealth needed for regular people to lead decent lives. So that is the secret of America's success—technology and freedom—and, yes, perhaps we could include the right values.

It was our strong patent system and a respect for law that made the difference in that technology and freedom. Yet, today, multinational corporations run by Americans want to diminish patent protection in the United States. We have had the strongest patent protection of any country in the world; yet we have had for these last 25 years major, major efforts to diminish the patent protection that we have and to harmonize it with the rest of the world. It just happens that the European and Japanese patent systems are much weaker and offer less protection for the inventors. Over the years, we have had to fight back and have had to turn back efforts to weaken the patent system a number of times, and I have been part of that effort and part of that struggle.

I remember when, for example, they had a bill—it was so blatant that we defeated it—called the Patent Publication Act. They said, after 18 months, if someone hasn't filed for a patent, even if he were not going to get his patent, they were going to publish his patent application, meaning all the secrets would be out in the world. They tried to push that over on us. We just barely defeated that, but we defeated it in a bipartisan effort that was led by MARCY KAPTUR and me, Chris Cox, Tom Campbell, and others at that time.

Then there was the effort, of course, to say that, as soon as one files for a patent application, after 20 months, the ticking of the clock starts, and you could end up then with maybe 5 years of patent protection by the time it was issued.

□ 2130

Here we had always said 17 years after you are given the patent you then lose control, but you have 17 years where you own your patent. They tried to change that and could have changed it in a way that somebody, if it took the Patent Office 15 years or 10 years to develop a concept of a new idea and to figure out how to patent it, well, then that person would only have 2 years left.

These were the ways that they were trying to destroy the patent rights that our people have enjoyed. Sometimes we turned those efforts back, other times we had to compromise, and other times, like last time around, we lost. For example, over our objection this body changed the fundamental principle that patents were to be given to the first to invent. If someone has invented it, they should be given the patent. That has been the fundamental guiding post ever since our country was founded. We changed that last year. We changed that to say, not first to invent, but the first person who files for the patent.

Of course, at an age when you have people who are able to sneak in on your computers and there are hackers around, that could turn out to be a catastrophe. Already we could hear rumblings of that from China where patents are being churned out and patent applications are being put in. And, yes, if they can prove they were the first one, and even if they found out about it some other way and can't explain it, no, they get the patent over the people who have done the work.

Well, once again I find myself fighting for the small inventors and struggling to defend the patent rights of these people to own and control their own invention. What we have got now is a bill that has been introduced and that is just making its way. There will be a hearing on it tomorrow in the Judiciary Committee.

There has always been an excuse to change the fundamentals of the way our system works, because we have had the strongest patent system in the world and they have always tried to find some excuse of changing it and there is some sinister force at play that demands that we change the fundamentals of our patent system. Well, we have heard it before.

For example, they claimed there were ''submarine patents.'' That is a derogatory term. A submarine patent, that must be undercover or something suspicious about that. They used that as an excuse to try to limit the time people owned their patent. They used that as an excuse to publish everybody's patent application even before it was issued.

This time, the new word, the new bugaboo that they are talking about and the scary word for the day is ''patent troll.'' ''Patent troll'' is being used as a word—and they probably hired a very sophisticated public relations company to come up with that ''patent troll'' term—they have been used to fundamentally change our patent system, again, in order to diminish and damage the rights of small inventors. They can't say that that is their purpose, so they have to come up with a scary word like ''patent troll.''

These so-called patent trolls are patent holders or they are companies which represent patent holders, meaning people who own patents. They are engaged in defending the rights of those patents that they own. They purchased these patents or their companies purchased these patents basically from small inventors who didn't have the resources to defend and to enforce their own patent rights. These small inventors are now the partners of some of these companies or some of these individual investors. But it comes down to this: the inventor or the investor owns those patents. If you buy a piece of land or a patent from someone, you have that right. These patents that they own are just like any other patent granted by the Patent Office.

But huge corporate infringers would have us believe that these patents are in some way unfair or evil. So what makes these patents different than the good patents that these very same corporations own? There are no differences. They are the same patents, the same kind of patents. Some of these multinational corporations have bought patents from small inventors. They own that and they enforce them through a type of legal action when they are infringed upon. The multinational corporations have coined the scare terms ''patent assertion entity,'' or PAE; they have coined ''nonpracticing entity,'' NPE; and, of course, all of that means ''patent troll.''

The PR blitz, as I say, which was obviously created by a public relations company who made a lot of money coming up with that boogeyman, is used to change the basic legal protection of American inventors and, yes, change the legal protection of people who have bought the legal rights and own the intellectual property rights that they bought from the inventor.

I suppose Halloween is the proper time to talk about scary trolls. How frightening. The so-called patent troll has been identified as being out for a profit from technology that he did not invent. My, my, someone who is trying to receive a profit by making an investment into something that they didn't build themselves. Huh? Doesn't that describe banks and insurance companies and everybody else who puts investments down and hopes that they are going to have a return from those investments? But they, themselves, aren't making anything. They are using money and paper and contracts and helping people who need help.

I have consulted with a number of outside individual inventors and groups, and they have reaffirmed that

the legislation being proposed by the Judiciary Committee further disadvantages the little guy against the deep-pocketed, multinational corporations. This is achieved in the guise of targeting the so-called patent trolls. Pay attention to the patent trolls, but don't pay attention to how this weakens the small inventor.

This means that persons or companies who have contracted with inventors who really need the help to see that his or her patent rights are respected are going to be undercut. How horrible it is of making business out of helping small inventors see to it that their patent rights are enforced.

Proponents of this legislation are covering up the fact that they have stolen someone else's patent rights and now want to change the system so they can get away with it so that someone whose patent rights they don't own, that they have blatantly just arrogantly grabbed and put into their own technology projects, that they don't have to pay for it. When they are challenged in court, they complain, Oh, this is a patent troll. No. What we have here is large companies who are willing to take from the little guy which will in the end, yes, maybe be of short-term help to those companies, but it will undermine the progress of the United States of America, undermine our ability to create a wealth in our society that will make sure that our people can out-compete foreigners. Most of the corporations who are complaining about this are multinational corporations run, of course, by Americans, sometimes not.

Often the only way that a small business inventor can enforce his patent rights is by hiring a patent assertion entity as an advocate, meaning a patent troll. Sometimes the big guys want to simply steal the idea and say, sue me, because these little guys, these small inventors, the mainspring of so many ideas, they don't have the money to fight the big corporations. Now the big corporations want to make it impossible for them by changing the very law that protects them and protects what they have created in their invention.

One of the biggest alleged crimes of these nonpracticing entities is that they don't actually make anything, but just shift money around. Like I say, how horrible that is that some people make money in our society although you can't really see what they actually make with their hands. Banks, lawyers, investment companies, insurance companies, well, they make money, but they don't necessarily make things, but they are important to our economy. Even more important to our economy are those inventors. If we change the rules so that big companies can steal from them, those inventors will not be there in the next generation to come with the creations that uplift our people and defend our country and permit us to have security and prosperity.

We are told that trolls are different. Well, let's put it this way: the trolls are different. They are trying to make money off something they didn't actually make themselves. They aren't trying, as our multinational corporations are trying to do, to infringe on other people's property rights. Look who is pointing the fingers. The arrogance of these megacompanies warning us against small investors having the help of some investor is nauseating.

These attacks on the rights of patent holders are seen as valid and virtuous, but if they happened against any other rights, they would be identified as the problem they are.

Remember the big groups that are angry because they used patented technology without paying the owners, justifying it on the idea of the lack of the owner's enforcement. These companies say, Well, the patent wasn't being enforced, so we can use it. Now they are really upset when someone wants to enforce that patent. Now the rights for the patent are being enforced by someone who paid the inventor to sell him that property right.

A landowner who chooses not to develop a farm or land could be described as a nonpracticing entity. Should we make it simpler and easier for others to take or steal the land because that owner isn't using it? Should we make it harder for him to continue to own his land simply because he doesn't use it or isn't using it like others would want him to? How about a music lover who purchases the rights to a song or an entire catalog of an artist's songs, should we make it hard for him to defend his ownership rights because he wasn't the musician, he didn't make the music himself?

This campaign by multinational corporations and some of the world's richest men is an attack on the little guy's right to sell his intellectual property or to partner with someone else who can help him defend what is rightfully his.

While I don't have time to go through all of the problems of this legislation point by point, I will refer to several problems brought up in this bill.

The claim that this legislation is designed to go after patent trolls, to make these patent trolls more accountable, that is what they claim, but how are they doing it? They are doing it by making it harder for every patent holder to defend his patent rights, every ordinary American. They claim they are making it easier and less costly to defend baseless claims of patent infringement. Well, they claim these are bad patents that should never have been issued. They claim many things.

Section 3 of this bill, for example, makes it easier to defend against false charges of patent infringement, but it also adds significant new burdens onto a patent holder who seeks to defend, rightfully seeks to defend, his patent rights. In addition, this section increases the potential downside risk of suing to defend one's own patent rights.

We should be doing everything we can to make the system quick, cheap, and simple to defend, both to defend patent rights and to defend against baseless charges of infringement. But this legislation is primarily geared toward making it harder, more costly, and more time intensive to file claims of infringement. That is exactly the wrong direction to take.

The added pleading requirements will also require a very thorough and expensive prefiling discovery processes, again, discouraging underfunded patent holders from defending their patents. While there are limitations on a fishing trip type of discovery that may hold costs down and also protect patent holders from discovery IP, those protections don't overcome the provisions which make it more difficult to defend perfectly respectable patents.

In addition, by moving to what is essentially a ''loser pays'' system, which is what this legislation is attempting, the little guy is once again put at great risk when suing a big corporation for infringement. So now the inventor who is being victimized may have to risk everything that he owns to pay the legal fees of his much better financed corporate infringers.

This concept of fee shifting is alien to this country's history but very common in Europe. It has been demonstrated to have a chilling effect on litigation at the expense of the rights of those who can't afford to sue because they can't afford to lose.

The corporations, they can afford to lose. They are not personally having to pay anything; but the small inventor, he will lose everything in his life if he loses. He will owe them that much money. The big corporations, of course, are very capable of handling their own legal fees.

□ 2145

Section 4 requires a patent holder who believes they are being infringed upon to disclose all of his partners, assignees, and other information to court and to the Patent Office as well, and to the accused infringers. Well, what we have then, if you sue somebody because they are stealing your intellectual property, you have to give up all of your privacy rights and from that point on, you are an open book to anyone who is your competition, anyone who is your adversary, and they will probably, as we see happen with large corporations, you now are wide open to victimization by the corporates.

Section 5 seems to repeal a current provision that guarantees a patent holder's right to sue a State, for example. If a State or the government infringes on your patent, there seems to be a provision in the bill that could say that you can't sue to get paid for what the government has stolen from you. That, of course, has to be looked at, and looked at by the court.

Section 9 claims to make technical corrections to the bill, but they make

sweeping, wholesale changes to the way patent applicants and patent holders are allowed to pursue their rights. One of these so-called minor corrections entirely removes section 145 from the law, which allows patent applicants to bring suit in civil court if they are not getting due consideration at the Patent Office. In other words, if the government employees at the Patent Office are blatantly not doing their job for some reason, whether it is corruption or incompetency, the patent applicant now by this rule, by this bill, will not be able to seek justice in the court system. This is totally inconsistent with what our national tradition is all about.

Removing section 145 concentrates all decisional power within the Patent Office, with the exception of an appeal to the circuit, which is required to give deference to the Patent Office through that process. That is exactly the opposite of what we want to do. We want to make sure that people have a legal right, if our government is off base, to appeal it to another branch of government. That's why we have the judicial and the legislative and the executive branches of government. Here again, part of the bill is going in exactly the wrong direction.

A review of this legislation titled ''A Small Business and Startup Perspective on the Goodlatte Patent Bill,'' this is an analysis of the patent bill that we are talking about:

> would gratuitously repeal 35 U.S.C. section 145, which has long protected patent applicants' fundamental right of de novo judicial review of adverse patentability determinations by the Patent Office.

They note here that since 1836, anybody could repeal a decision within the Patent Office, but now they want to take that away, diminish the rights of our inventors, which will mean that we will not have the same type of innovation and creativity that we have enjoyed in this country.

All of this is being done on the notion that these evil trolls are driving up the number of patent litigations. An independent report from the World Intellectual Property Organization, as well as a study from the U.S. Government Accountability Office, says that is not true. So-called trolls may be backing up the little guys, but that is not a major cause of litigation.

So we have the experts telling us that their excuse is wrong, and the GAO suggests that there are many things we can do, but what is being suggested in this bill and others is going exactly the wrong way.

The bottom line is these provisions make it more difficult for the patent holder to defend his rights and raises the stakes so that the downside of pursuing an infringement in cases becomes more costly. We are hurting the little guy. We are making it difficult for the mainspring of human progress. The ideas, the creativity of our country and our countrymen can be brought to play to uplift the lives of our people, to create more energy, to create higher quality goods, to make sure that we compete with the hordes of people in Africa and China and India.

Instead, if we are going to do that, we have to have the best technology, and we are taking our great national asset of a Patent Office that has helped our country over the years, has helped us keep our country safe by producing the best defense technology, to keep ourselves competitive so that the average American can outproduce their counterparts overseas—we are now going to take what has given us that ability, which is the genius of our inventors, and we are going to squash it by giving in to corporate interests of multinational corporations that are not owing their allegiance to us, but instead owe their allegiance to their company, which they see now as an international company, not even an American company.

I ask my colleagues to pay close attention to this legislation and to join me in rejecting this attempt to diminish the fundamental property rights, intellectual property rights of the American people in the name of some troll or some scary title that would get us away from the basic fundamentals of what is being proposed. I would ask my colleagues to join me in opposing this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ADERHOLT (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today and the balance of the week on account of an illness in the family.

Mr. COOPER (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and October 29 and 30 on account of the death of a family member.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 51 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, October 29, 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:

3399. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Methyl Parathion; Removal of Expired Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2009-0332; FRL-9401-3] received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3400. A letter from the Chief Counsel, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Suspension of Community Eligibility; Connecticut: Ansonia, City of, New Haven County; [Docket ID: FEMA-2013-0002] [Internal Agency Docket No.: FEMA-8301] received October 7, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3401. A letter from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Extension of Temporary Registration of Municipal Advisors [Release No.: 34-70468; File No. S7-19-10] (RIN: 3235-AK69) received September 26, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3402. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Quality: Revision to Definition of Volatile Organic Compounds — Exclusion of 2,3,3,3-tetrafluoropropene [EPA-HQ-OAR-2010-0605; FRL-9900-53-OAR] (RIN: 2060-AR70) received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3403. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Pennsylvania; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule for the Update of the Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets for the Lancaster 1997 8-Hour Ozone Maintenance Area [EPA-R03-OAR-2013-0058; FRL-9901-21-Region 3] received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3404. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; West Virginia; West Virginia's Redesignation Request for the Wheeling, WV-OH 1997 Annual Fine Particulate Matter Nonattainment Area to Attainment and Approval of the Associated Maintenance Plan [EPA-R03-OAR-2012-0368; FRL-9901-41-Region 3] received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3405. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Washington: Thurston County Second 10-Year PM10 Limited Maintenance Plan [EPA-R10-OAR-2013-0088; FRL-9901-34-Region 10] received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3406. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — FD&C Blue No. 1; Exemptions from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0568; FRL-9396-1] received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3407. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — FD&C Yellow No. 5; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0945; FRL-9400-6] received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3408. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Maintenance, Testing, and Replacement of Vented Lead-Acid Storage Batteries for Nuclear Power Plants Regulatory Guide 1.129 Revision received September 27, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3409. A letter from the Director, International Cooperation, Department of Defense, transmitting Pursuant to Section 27(f)

of the Arms Export Control Act and Section 1(f) of Executive Order 11958, Transmittal No. 11-13 informing of an intent to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Defense of Australia; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3410. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting consistent with the provisions of 22 U.S.C. Section 2291-4, as amended, a copy of Presidential Determination No. 2014-02 determining that Brazil meets the statutory requirements relating to the interdiction of aircraft reasonably suspected to be engaged in illicit drug trafficking; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3411. 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.

3412. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3413. A letter from the Director, Office of Human Resources, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting five reports pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3414. A letter from the Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel, transmitting the Office's annual report for FY 2012; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3415. A letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting information and documents related to the Department's Civil Rights Division's efforts to ensure that the State of Louisiana complies with the longstanding court orders requiring it to desegregate its public schools; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3416. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting a letter notifying the Congress that the Department will no longer enforce section 101(3) and 101(31) of title 38; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

3417. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's report entitled, ''Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Activities, Progress, and Plans''; jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Science, Space, and Technology.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. SESSIONS: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 391. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 992) to amend provisions in section 716 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act relating to Federal assistance for swaps entities, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2374) to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide protections for retail customers, and for other purposes (Rept. 113–253). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Ms. NORTON (for herself and Mr. ISSA):

H.R. 3343. A bill to amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to clarify the rules regarding the determination of the compensation of the Chief Financial Officer of the District of Columbia; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. ROYCE:

H.R. 3344. A bill to ensure that the provision of foreign assistance does not contribute to human trafficking and to combat human trafficking by requiring greater transparency in the recruitment of foreign workers; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ISSA (for himself, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. MICA, Mr. CHAFFETZ, and Ms. SPEIER):

H.R. 3345. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to consolidate suspension and debarment offices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. LIPINSKI (for himself, Mr. ADERHOLT, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER):

H.R. 3346. A bill to amend chapter 83 of title 41, United States Code, to increase the requirement for American-made content, to strengthen the waiver provisions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. ROTHFUS:

H.R. 3347. A bill to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to report on the disaster assistance obligations of the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. BARTON (for himself, Mr. GOHMERT, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. FLORES, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. PERRY, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. BARR, Mr. SCALISE, and Mr. FLEMING):

H.R. 3348. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make the individual health insurance mandate voluntary in 2014, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Mr. WATT, and Mr. COLLINS of Georgia):

H.R. 3349. A bill to provide for the permanent funding of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. UPTON (for himself, Mr. HALL, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. OLSON, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HARPER, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. CASSIDY, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. WALDEN, Mrs. ELLMERS, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. LONG, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. LANCE, Mr. SCALISE, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. PITTS, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. BARTON, Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. LATTA, Mr. TERRY, Mr. MCKINLEY, and Mr. SHIMKUS):

H.R. 3350. A bill to authorize health insurance issuers to continue to offer for sale current individual health insurance coverage in satisfaction of the minimum essential health insurance coverage requirement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. BEATTY (for herself, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. CLARKE):

H.R. 3351. A bill to assist survivors of stroke and other debilitating health occurrences in returning to work; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CONNOLLY (for himself and Mr. ROONEY):

H.R. 3352. A bill to amend the Honoring the Families of Fallen Soldiers Act to provide a permanent appropriation of funds for the payment of death gratuities and related benefits for survivors of deceased military service members in event of any future period of lapsed appropriations; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. WATERS, Ms. CLARKE, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. HOLT, Mr. POCAN, Mr. TIERNEY, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. TONKO, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. MOORE, Mr. HONDA, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mr. MCDERMOTT):

H.R. 3353. A bill to amend the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to extend the period during which supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits are temporarily increased; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself and Mrs. LOWEY):

H.R. 3354. A bill to require that spent nuclear fuel be stored in certified dry cask storage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GUTHRIE:

H.R. 3355. A bill to increase the competitiveness of American manufacturing by reducing regulatory and other burdens, encouraging greater innovation and investment, and developing a stronger workforce for the twenty-first century, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Armed Services, Education and the Workforce, Natural Resources, House Administration, the Judiciary, Rules, Appropriations, Science, Space, and Technology, 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 Mr. HARRIS:

H.R. 3356. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to apply the prohibition against the conversion of contributions to personal use to contributions to political committees, to clarify that contributions accepted by political committees may be used for authorized expenditures in connection with their political activities and for other lawful purposes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Ms. MENG (for herself and Mr. POLIS):

H.R. 3357. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to States to improve the knowledge, credentials, compensation, and professional development of early childhood educators working with children in early childhood education programs; to

the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. MESSER:

H.R. 3358. A bill to provide for an exemption from the individual mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act for individuals residing in States in which the Exchange Websites are not fully functional, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. RADEL (for himself, Mr. COOK, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. MESSER, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. JONES, Mr. ROKITA, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Mr. GARRETT):

H.R. 3359. A bill to provide for a delay of the individual mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act until the American Health Benefit Exchanges are functioning properly; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TURNER:

H.R. 3360. A bill to reform Article 32 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice to specify the burden of proof applicable at the investigative hearing, the required qualifications for the investigating officer, the permitted scope of the investigation to assist the convening authority, and the protection of witnesses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. YOUNG of Indiana:

H.J. Res. 99. A joint resolution relating to the disapproval of the President's exercise of authority to suspend the debt limit, as submitted under section 1002(b) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2014 on October 17, 2013; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. AL GREEN of Texas (for himself, Mr. POE of Texas, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. HAHN, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. CLAY, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. FUDGE, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. MOORE, Mr. WATT, Ms. WATERS, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. CLYBURN, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. DELBENE, Mrs. BUSTOS, Ms. BASS, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RUSH, Mr. LEWIS, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, and Ms. TITUS):

H. Res. 392. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of October as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month and expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should continue to raise awareness of domestic violence and its devastating effects on individuals, families, and communities, and support programs designed to end domestic violence in the United States; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

150. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, relative to House Resolution No. 30 urging the Congress to enact amendments to the federal Electronic Communications Privacy Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 3343.

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

Clause 17 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. ROYCE:

H.R. 3344.

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

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. ISSA:

H.R. 3345.

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

Article One of the United States Constitution, section 8, clause 18: the Necessary and Proper Clause.

By Mr. LIPINSKI:

H.R. 3346.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3: The Congress shall have Power * * * To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

Article 1, 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. ROTHFUS:

H.R. 3347.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution, ''[t]o pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States . . . .''

By Mr. BARTON:

H.R. 3348.

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 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CONYERS:

H.R. 3349.

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

U.S. Constitution, Article 1, section 8, clause 8

By Mr. UPTON:

H.R. 3350.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mrs. BEATTY:

H.R. 3351.

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 of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. CONNOLLY:

H.R. 3352.

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

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

By Mr. CONYERS:

H.R. 3353.

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

Article I. Section 8. 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;

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 3354.

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

Article 1, Section 1 of the Constitution.

By Mr. GUTHRIE:

H.R. 3355.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1—The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excise, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States;

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3—To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes;

By Mr. HARRIS:

H.R. 3356.

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

Article 1, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution, which grants Congress the authority to make laws governing the time, places and manner of holding federal elections.

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 3357.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. MESSER:

H.R. 3358.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1, which empowers Congress, in part, to ''lay and collect Taxes'' and ''provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States . . .'' The bill will exempt certain individuals, who through no fault of their own, will be subject to taxes imposed by Public Law 111–148, as amended. Congress has the power to delay such taxes and provide for the general welfare of those who have been and will be harmed by their imposition.

By Mr. RADEL:

H.R. 3359.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. TURNER:

H.R. 3360.

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

ARTICLE I, SECTION 8

By Mr. YOUNG of Indiana:

H.J. Res. 99.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 relating to the power to pay the debts of the United States.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 15: Mr. DENHAM and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 29: Mr. JEFFRIES.
H.R. 164: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 184: Mr. DINGELL.
H.R. 272: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. BARBER, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. ENYART, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Ms. DUCKWORTH.
H.R. 320: Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 351: Mr. LANKFORD.
H.R. 375: Mr. DEUTCH and Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 411: Mr. YODER.
H.R. 460: Mr. GIBSON.
H.R. 485: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 541: Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 556: Mr. REED.
H.R. 666: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.
H.R. 669: Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.
H.R. 685: Mr. HARPER, Mr. HIMES, Mr. GARAMENDI, and Mr. GALLEGO.
H.R. 715: Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. JORDAN, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. HONDA, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. DELAURO , and Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 721: Mr. BARROW of Georgia and Mr. HUNTER.
H.R. 851: Mr. DEUTCH.
H.R. 855: Mr. PASCRELL.
H.R. 920: Mrs. BUSTOS.
H.R. 924: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 962: Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. TONKO, Ms. WATERS, and Ms. MCCOLLUM.
H.R. 1009: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 1015: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 1024: Ms. SINEMA.
H.R. 1041: Mr. MAFFEI.
H.R. 1077: Mr. NUNNELEE.
H.R. 1091: Mr. MULVANEY and Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 1094: Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 1095: Mr. BARBER, Mr. CONAWAY, and Mr. HINOJOSA.
H.R. 1098: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 1148: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.
H.R. 1175: Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 1176: Mr. STEWART.
H.R. 1199: Mr. VEASEY and Mr. MURPHY of Florida.
H.R. 1240: Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. LOEBSACK, and Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 1313: Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 1317: Mr. COHEN and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.
H.R. 1354: Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. ANDREWS, and Mr. SALMON.
H.R. 1473: Mr. THOMPSON of California and Mr. HECK of Nevada.
H.R. 1528: Mr. ROKITA.
H.R. 1563: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER and Mr. CUMMINGS.
H.R. 1634: Mr. TERRY.
H.R. 1652: Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. FATTAH, and Mr. NEAL.
H.R. 1666: Mr. GUTHRIE.
H.R. 1726: Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. BENTIVOLIO, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. PERRY, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DAINES, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 1731: Mr. MURPHY of Florida and Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 1732: Mr. DOGGETT.
H.R. 1744: Mr. HECK of Nevada.
H.R. 1750: Mr. HARRIS.
H.R. 1755: Mr. RUNYAN.
H.R. 1761: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona and Mr. TONKO.
H.R. 1779: Mr. PETERS of Michigan and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 1795: Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 1803: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 1805: Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 1843: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 1953: Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 1984: Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 1985: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H.R. 1992: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 1998: Ms. SLAUGHTER and Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 2026: Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 2027: Mr. HUELSKAMP.
H.R. 2028: Mr. BERA of California, Mr. TONKO, Mr. SMITH of Washington, and Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 2037: Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. MORAN, and Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 2041: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 2043: Mr. WAXMAN.
H.R. 2046: Mr. GOSAR, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas.
H.R. 2066: Mr. AMODEI and Mr. PETRI.
H.R. 2144: Mr. LATHAM.
H.R. 2159: Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 2223: Mr. BENTIVOLIO.
H.R. 2248: Ms. MENG.
H.R. 2274: Mr. MCHENRY.
H.R. 2278: Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. BARTON, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. LUMMIS, and Mr. LAMALFA.
H.R. 2300: Mr. WITTMAN.
H.R. 2328: Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. HENSARLING, and Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 2358: Mr. O'ROURKE and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.
H.R. 2368: Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 2369: Ms. BASS.
H.R. 2426: Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 2429: Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 2452: Mr. MORAN.
H.R. 2510: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 2590: Mr. REED.
H.R. 2591: Mr. DOGGETT and Mr. SCHOCK.
H.R. 2632: Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 2656: Mr. HANNA.
H.R. 2663: Ms. SCHWARTZ.
H.R. 2697: Ms. FUDGE, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 2725: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. ISSA, Mr. POLIS, Mr. YOUNG of Indiana, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 2805: Mr. GOSAR.
H.R. 2810: Mr. COFFMAN.
H.R. 2822: Mr. LEWIS and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 2825: Mr. HOLT, Mr. HONDA, and Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 2839: Mr. ENYART and Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
H.R. 2866: Ms. Frankel of Florida, Mr. GOSAR, and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.
H.R. 2870: Mr. PAULSEN.
H.R. 2907: Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. WITTMAN, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 2941: Mr. ENYART, Mr. RUIZ, and Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H.R. 2959: Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. JONES, and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 2981: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. ESTY, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. HANNA, Mr. HALL, Mr. PETERS of California, and Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 2992: Mr. JONES.
H.R. 3035: Mr. COLLINS of Georgia.
H.R. 3040: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 3043: Mr. YODER.
H.R. 3077: Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, and Mr. ROSKAM.
H.R. 3083: Mr. LABRADOR.
H.R. 3097: Ms. WATERS.
H.R. 3111: Mr. MCCARTHY of California, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. PAULSEN, Mrs. ELLMERS, Ms. FOXX, and Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 3112: Mr. ROSKAM.
H.R. 3118: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 3121: Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. WOODALL, and Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 3143: Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York.
H.R. 3163: Mr. DOGGETT.
H.R. 3179: Mr. GARDNER.
H.R. 3206: Mr. KEATING, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, and Mr. MCDERMOTT.
H.R. 3211: Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. OLSON, and Mr. BARR.
H.R. 3279: Mr. LABRADOR and Mr. MULLIN.
H.R. 3297: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3304: Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. VEASEY, and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.
H.R. 3308: Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. BARLETTA, Mrs. BLACK, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. COBLE, Mr. COLE, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. COOK, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. FORBES, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. GERLACH, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas, Mr. HALL, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LUCAS, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. PERRY, Mr. PETRI, Mr. PITTS, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. ROONEY, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. STOCKMAN, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. TERRY, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. TURNER, Mr. UPTON, Mr. WALBERG, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. WOODALL, Mr. YOHO, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. DUFFY, and Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.
H.R. 3310: Mr. KIND, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 3316: Mr. MEEHAN.
H.R. 3323: Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. RICHMOND, and Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 3325: Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 3329: Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 3336: Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. KEATING, and Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 3337: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.J. Res. 34: Mr. TONKO.
H.J. Res. 98: Mr. BENTIVOLIO.
H. Con. Res. 34: Mr. COHEN.
H. Con. Res. 61: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Ms. LOFGREN.
H. Res. 36: Mr. SANFORD.
H. Res. 97: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.
H. Res. 109: Mr. FATTAH and Mr. KING of Iowa.
H. Res. 147: Mr. CAMPBELL.
H. Res. 227: Mr. HONDA.
H. Res. 276: Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. HANNA, Mr. MAFFEI, Mr. NEAL, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Ms. NORTON.
H. Res. 302: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD and Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H. Res. 326: Mr. STOCKMAN and Mr. BARLETTA.
H. Res. 345: Mr. MORAN.
H. Res. 356: Mr. VALADAO, Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas, Mr. ENYART, and Mr. ROE of Tennessee.
H. Res. 387: Mr. POE of Texas.
H. Res. 388: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, and Mr. RANGEL.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MR. CAMP.

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.J. Res. 99, relating to the disapproval of the President's exercise of authority to suspend the debt limit, as submitted under section 1002(b) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2014 and October 17, 2013, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The amendment to be offered by Representative GEORGE MILLER of California, or a designee to H.R. 2374, the Retail Investor Protection Act, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 159 WASHINGTON, MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2013 No. 151

Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.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 God, we have heard with our own ears and seen with our own eyes Your great power on our behalf. Lord, our ancestors told us about You, how You kept them from disgrace, drove out evil, delivered them from shackles, rescued them from trouble, protected them from hardships, and kept this Nation free. We praise You for using our lawmakers for Your glory. Accept our thanksgiving as we press toward the future, eager to serve Your purposes for our lives in this generation.

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.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 4:30 this afternoon, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

At 4:30 p.m. the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Richard F. Griffin, Jr., to be general counsel for the National Labor Relations Board for a term of 4 years. At 5:30 p.m. there will be a cloture vote.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

I ask unanimous consent the time until 4 p.m. be for debate only.

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

UPCOMING WORK PERIOD

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I welcome back the President pro tempore. I hope he had a productive week in Vermont, and that all my colleagues enjoyed visiting with constituents at home.

This work period is going to be 4 weeks long. We have a great deal to accomplish during this 4-week period and it will go by quickly. We are attempting to work things out so we don't have to work during the holidays for a change. The last several years we have been stuck up to Thanksgiving and right through Christmas on a couple of occasions.

It is obvious Senators aren't making these Monday votes a priority. We have a lot of people not showing up. So everyone should understand, this vote tonight is a very important vote. I am disappointed some Senators aren't going to be here. But in the future the next Mondays we can be expecting a vote or series of votes. I think we have become very complacent and not worrying about the Monday night votes. We will have some votes that may be more meaningful, as this one is.

During this next work period, the only time we will have off will be November 11 for the celebration of Veterans Day. Therefore, if we are going to finish our work in this 4-week period, that means we are going to have to work on Mondays and Fridays. I hope we don't have to work weekends, but we have to get this work done.

(Mr. KAINE assumed the Chair.)

SENATOR-ELECT CORY BOOKER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this week we are going to say goodbye to our colleague who was appointed to represent the State of New Jersey after the untimely death of Frank Lautenberg, but we also will welcome a new Member to the Senate, Senator-elect from the State of New Jersey CORY BOOKER. What a remarkable young man he is.

He was a student at Stanford, and to get into Stanford you have to be a very good student. I am impressed with his academic skills, but he was also a tight end for the football team at Stanford, No. 5 in the Nation. They have a great football program. Everyone will meet CORY BOOKER and find that he is a very big man physically.

After graduating with a degree from Stanford in political science, he got his master's degree in sociology from Stanford. He then became a Rhodes Scholar and studied U.S. history at Oxford. He received his law degree from Yale. What an outstanding record: Stanford, a couple of degrees; Rhodes Scholar, Oxford; Yale Law School. That is quite impressive. Then he served on the Newark City Council and was mayor for 2 years, a job that has been noticed all over the country, recognizing the great work he has done.

THE WORK AHEAD

Mr. REID. Mr. President, during this 4-week period we are going to do a number of things, not necessarily in this order, but we are going to consider ENDA, known as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would provide basic protections against workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. We haven't taken this up for a number of years. We tried and failed in the House of Representatives before, but we are going to take it up here again.

We are going to consider a bipartisan bill to make compounding drugs safer. As we will recall, there was a terrible tragedy in the Northeast, where a number of people died as a result of not compounding these products properly. This bipartisan legislation will allow

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

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us to have safer compounding drugs and track prescription medicines from factory to the drug store.

We are going to consider job creation legislation that will build on the economic recovery and strengthen middle-class families, and we are going to take up the Defense authorization bill which supports our troops and ensures this Nation does everything in its power to keep America safe from those who would do us harm.

Before we debate any of these matters, we must consider a number of vital Presidential nominations, including several that have been stalled for more than 1 year. One of those is somebody who has been wanting to work in the Defense Department, something vitally important for the Pentagon, and has been held up for 1 year on an unrelated matter. It is too bad, but this has been held up by one Republican Senator. So we are going to move forward and do it very quickly.

It is no secret the Republicans have systemically slow-walked and blocked scores of President Obama's judicial and executive branch nominations. Pending executive nominations wait an average of 5 months. Democrats have broken filibusters of 66 of the President's nominations. Republicans have blocked or delayed more than that with secret holds and procedural holds.

As a Senate, we reached an agreement the first of the year to consider a number of important nominations that have been stalled for months and, in far too many cases, for years. But obstructionism once again has reared its ugly head and we have a backlog now. It is time to move forward without delay and fill those crucial roles.

In the wake of a Republican government shutdown, the Nation is watching for a sign the Senate can function efficiently and normally. It is time to show the American people how well and how quickly the Senate can work when cooperation is present. Likewise, our colleagues in the House of Representatives owe the American people to stop wasting time on political show votes and start legislating.

I have enough trouble with my schedule, but I just have to briefly comment on the House schedule. They are going to work until noon on Wednesday and then they are taking off the next 10 days. From now until the first of the year, they have scheduled 18 working days. That is all I will say on that.

Our colleagues in the House owe it to the American people to move forward on legislation. On many of the most important issues of the day, the Republican leaders have refused to allow the House of Representatives to be heard. Some are allowed to be heard, but Speaker BOEHNER has a rule that Democrats don't get to participate unless he can first prove there is a majority of the majority to vote on an issue. That is not the way it needs to be.

We are going to have a celebration here tomorrow on the life of Tom Foley. I had the good fortune of serving with him in the House. He came from a real conservative district in the State of Washington. He served for many years. He was the majority leader, he was the Speaker and a fine man. He, similar to the other leaders I served with, O'Neill and Wright, tried to get 218 votes to pass a measure. They didn't try to get 218 from the Democrats. They had plenty of Democrats and could have done that. But everyone was allowed to vote. That is the way it should be now. It is too bad it isn't. What has happened over there is the Republican leadership has refused to allow the whole House of Representatives to work its will.

Immigration reform is one of the most glaring examples of their not allowing the body to run as it used to. Last June the Senate passed a commonsense bipartisan bill to fix the broken illegal immigration system. It would have strengthened our borders, required undocumented people to get right with the law, and put them on a path to citizenship. There are about 11 million people. But for 4 months—120-plus days—the House of Representatives has failed to act on immigration legislation. If we brought up a bill, the Senate bill would pass overwhelmingly. Even many mainstream Republicans believe House Republican leadership should allow a vote on the comprehensive plan to amend the broken immigration system. I repeat, if the whole House were allowed to vote, it would pass.

The House also failed to take up the Senate's bipartisan agricultural jobs bill—the farm bill, as we call it—a bill that cuts the debt by $23 billion and supports 16 million American jobs. They have also refused to bring up something so common sense.

The Presiding Officer, before coming here, was Governor of the State of Virginia. I am sure the Presiding Officer, as I have, has gone through towns and neighborhoods and seen those little strip malls with all these places for lease. If we passed in Congress, as we have done in the Senate, the so-called Workplace Fairness Act, it would allow these small businesses to get back and rent space allowing it to survive. Think of the advantages online retailers have. They don't have to pay 5 percent, 7 percent of what the others pay. So it is very unfair for these brick-and-mortar places to be left to the mercy of these big online folks.

When we brought up this bill, I got a call from one of the major online organizations. They said: We will support your legislation if you will put a ceiling that we don't have to do anything until there is $5 million in sales. They want $5 million in sales and then pay no sales tax—a pretty good deal. We passed—rightfully so—a bipartisan bill. The House will not take this up. It is too bad.

So on these and other issues, it is time for reasonable Republicans to raise their voice in the Senate and of course in the House of Representatives.

There has been a troubling trend over the last 3 years. I have been troubled to watch these so-called mainstream Republicans be marginalized by Members of their own party. It is not the marginal people who are being marginalized. It is the mainstream Republicans. Even more troubling, moderate Republicans have been complicit in allowing this disturbing trend to continue. It is no surprise when tea party extremists force our economy to the brink of disaster when they shut down the government for the sake of ideological stunts. We saw what happened. We weren't surprised that the tea party did this, but I was surprised that the sensible mainstream Republicans didn't speak up—and speak up sooner—and many didn't speak up at all in defense of reason and responsibility.

Think about that. There are 232 Republicans in the House of Representatives. On a vote to open the government after 16 days of being closed and defaulting on the debt, only 85 of the 232 voted to reopen the government and keep us from defaulting on our debt. That is a scary number. So the vast majority of the Republicans in the House wanted to keep the government closed and to default on the debt.

Wow, that is spooky.

As their more radical colleagues drove the nation and the world to the brink of economic collapse, most middle-of-the-road Republicans said nothing and did nothing to stop it, which was certainly a surprise to me. Although I deplore the behavior of the extremists who sparked this month's manufactured crisis—and many of the crises over the past 3 years—I do not blame only them for holding the United States Government's full faith and credit hostage. I also blame the so-called main stream Republican colleagues who remained silent even as these anarchists among us committed political malpractice. They knew better. They should have known better. They know the consequence of default, and they know the cost of a government shutdown. Yet they allowed members of their own party to take the country down a dangerous road, doing irreparable harm to the country and, I believe, to the Republican Party.

As a conference committee sits down to negotiate a long-term budget agreement and sets a course for fiscal responsibility, reasonable and moderate Republicans, main stream Republicans, must not absent themselves from these discussions. A significant number of radical Republicans have said they would rather risk default than cooperate or compromise with Democrats. Sensible Republicans must not allow these radicals to rule the day.

We, the Democrats, are ready to do the difficult work of finding common ground for the good of our country. We don't expect radical tea party Republicans to join us, but we do hope our mainstream Republican colleagues will find their voices, reclaim their party,

and work with Democrats to govern once again.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. REID. Would the Chair announce the business of the day?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 4:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each and with debate only until 4 p.m.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF ALAN F. ESTEVEZ TO BE A PRINCIPAL DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 53.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Alan F. Estevez, of the District of Columbia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the clerk will report the motion.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Alan F. Estevez, of the District of Columbia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

Harry Reid, Carl Levin, Robert Menendez, Charles E. Schumer, Jack Reed, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard Blumenthal, Jeff Merkley, Christopher A. Coons, Debbie Stabenow, Christopher Murphy, Patty Murray, Tom Harkin, John D. Rockefeller IV, Bill Nelson, Benjamin L. Cardin.

Mr. REID. I ask consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF KATHERINE ARCHULETA TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 307.

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

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Katherine Archuleta, of Colorado, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the clerk will report the motion.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Katherine Archuleta, of Colorado, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

Harry Reid, Bill Nelson, Barbara A. Mikulski, Patty Murray, Barbara Boxer, Bernard Sanders, Amy Klobuchar, Carl Levin, Thomas R. Carper, Jr., Tim Johnson, Patrick J. Leahy, Max Baucus, Robert Menendez, Richard J. Durbin, John D. Rockefeller IV, Tim Kaine, Mazie K. Hirono.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF THOMAS EDGAR WHEELER TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 242.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Thomas Edgar Wheeler, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the clerk will report the motion.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Thomas Edgar Wheeler, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Debbie Stabenow, 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, Richard Blumenthal.

Mr. REID. I ask consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF JACOB J. LEW TO BE UNITED STATES GOVERNOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND; UNITED STATES GOVERNOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT; UNITED STATES GOVERNOR OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK; UNITED STATES GOVERNOR OF THE EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 63.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Jacob J. Lew, of New York, to be United States Governor of the International Monetary Fund; United States Governor of the International

Bank for Reconstruction and Development; United States Governor of the Inter-American Development Bank; United States Governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the clerk will report the motion.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Jacob J. Lew, of New York, to be United States Governor of the International Monetary Fund; United States Governor of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; United States Governor of the Inter-American Development Bank; and United States Governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Harry Reid, Robert Menendez, Charles E. Schumer, Jack Reed, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard Blumenthal, Jeff Merkley, Christopher A. Coons, Debbie Stabenow, Christopher Murphy, Patty Murray, Tom Harkin, Carl Levin, John D. Rockefeller IV, Bill Nelson, Benjamin L. Cardin.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, with your permission I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 209.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Melvin L. Watt, of North Carolina, to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the clerk will report the motion.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, 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.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 327.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the clerk will report the motion.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Patricia Ann Millett, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia.

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.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the cloture vote scheduled 5:30 p.m. today occur on Tuesday at a time to be determined by me in consultation with Senator MCCONNELL.

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, so that everyone knows, we have a number of Senators who are not going to be here tonight, five that I know of—Democrats and Republicans. We have a lot of people who went through a lot of trouble to be here for this vote. I want everyone to know that if we continue having votes on Monday—and obviously people think they are not very important so they wind up not coming—they are going to start missing really important votes. I will schedule more than one vote, and it is not right that we have a few people who make it very difficult for everyone.

I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each and that the time be for debate only until 7 p.m. There will be no roll call votes tonight. I announced that earlier. There will be no roll call votes tonight.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is so noted.

The Senator from Tennessee.

(The remarks of Mr. ALEXANDER pertaining to the introduction of S. 1590 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. ALEXANDER. I yield the floor.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I note the absence of a quorum.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

GRIFFIN NOMINATION

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, tomorrow, according to the statement made by the majority leader, we will be voting on the nomination of Richard Griffin, Jr. for General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board.

I will be voting against Mr. Griffin's nomination for general counsel because I am concerned about the direction of the NLRB as an advocate more than an umpire, and I do not believe his presence as the general counsel will improve that situation.

As the senior Republican on the Labor Committee, working with my friend, the chairman, Senator HARKIN, and with others, what I hope we can do over the next several years is look for a long-term solution for the restructuring of the National Labor Relations Board—one that will ensure that it will operate more as an umpire than as an advocate, whether the President is a Democrat or a Republican.

The Board has become far too politicized under recent administrations. This did not start with the Obama administration, but it has gotten worse with this administration, and it has moved more and more toward the side of union advocacy with such major shifts as ambush elections, micro-unions, and undermining State right-to-work laws.

Swinging back and forth on important labor policy issues does the American working man and woman no good in this time of underemployment and unemployment.

So, later this fall, I will join other Senators in introducing legislation that will restore balance to the National Labor Relations Board—a proposal that will retain the rights of workers and employees, but reduce the swing that occurs from administration to administration based upon who is in power. What we should be striving for is fairness and consistency.

There are exceptions, of course, but as a general proposition, I believe a President should have an up-or-down vote on his nominee, so I intend to vote for cloture. But Mr. Griffin's nomination does not do enough for me to show the promise of moving the Board from advocacy toward umpire and, therefore, I do not intend to vote to confirm his nomination.

I thank the Presiding Officer and I thank Senator HARKIN for his courtesy in allowing me to go first.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, again, I want to thank my colleague and good friend Senator ALEXANDER for a great working relationship on our committee. Obviously, we have differences of views and opinions on matters—that is the nature of legislation and this body—but we have always worked together in a very conciliatory fashion, and open, and working things out. So I appreciate his approach and the fact that the Senator is willing to give us cloture so we can get an up-or-down vote. I understand he has certain reservations about the nominee. I understand that. But, again, I thank my colleague for being willing to get us to the point where we can have an up-or-down vote on Mr. Griffin.

Madam President, tomorrow—we were going to vote today, but the leader came out and announced there was an agreement on both sides to put the vote off until tomorrow to consider the nomination of Mr. Richard Griffin to serve as General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board, a very important role as the top prosecutor for violations of this country's labor laws.

Given his depth of experience and knowledge of the act, Mr. Griffin is exceptionally well qualified for this position, and I have no doubt he will do an outstanding job of enforcing our Nation's labor laws for workers, unions, and employers.

In July, we confirmed five new NLRB members, preventing the agency from shutting down, giving it a full slate of members for the first time in a decade. With a fully functional five-member Board and a new Senate-confirmed General Counsel, it is my hope we can provide this important agency with some much-needed certainty, mark a new positive chapter for the NLRB, and finally put an end to the delay and obstruction that has recently become all too familiar every time a new NLRB nominee is appointed. Without relitigating the previous controversies, I think it is fair to say that over the past few years the NLRB has been the target of unnecessary political attacks and obstruction.

What most concerns me about this political game-playing is how it affects the everyday lives of working people across America. These attacks on the Board have had real consequences for real people.

Working Americans need and deserve a fully functioning agency to protect their rights and enforce our Nation's labor laws. That is why over 75 years ago Congress enacted the National Labor Relations Act, guaranteeing American workers the right to form and join a union and to bargain for a better life. For both union and non-union workers alike, the act provides essential protections. It gives workers a voice in the workplace. It allows them to join together and speak up for fair wages, good benefits, and safe working conditions. These rights ensure that the people who do the real work in this country see the benefits when our economy grows and are not mistreated or put at risk on the job.

The National Labor Relations Board is the guardian of these fundamental rights. Workers themselves cannot enforce the National Labor Relations Act. The Board is the only place workers can go if they have been treated unfairly and denied the basic protections the law provides. Thus, the Board plays a vital role in vindicating workers' rights. In the past 10 years, the NLRB has secured opportunities for reinstatement for 22,544 employees who were unjustly fired. It has also recovered more than $1 billion on behalf of workers whose rights were violated.

I know many times people think: Well, a lot of these old abuses of workers whom you read about in your history books—well, that is just history and we have gotten over that. Quite frankly, I wish that were the truth. But the fact that in 10 years 22,544 employees were reinstated because they were unjustly fired indicates there are still unfair labor practices being committed by businesses today. And $1 billion recovered on behalf of workers just in the last 10 years—that is $1 billion that unscrupulous companies took from their workers without the right to do so, and the NLRB got that money back for workers. Think about that: $1 billion.

The Board does not just protect the rights of workers and unions; it also provides relief and remedies to our Nation's employers, our businesses. The Board is an employer's only recourse if a union commences a wildcat strike, for example, or refuses to bargain in good faith during negotiations. By preventing labor disputes that could disrupt our economy, the work the Board does is vital to every worker and every business across the Nation.

Further, the NLRB, you have to understand, is divided into two independent sides. There is the Board side, which adjudicates and interprets the law; then there is the General Counsel side, which investigates filed charges, prosecutes violations, and generally supervises the processing of cases. The general counsel position is important because the NLRB receives about 20,000 to 30,000 charges per year from employees, unions, and employers, and it is the primary function of the general counsel to make sure these charges—each charge—are thoroughly investigated and prosecuted if they are determined to have merit.

The general counsel also serves an important role that some of my colleagues may not know about. The attorneys in the General Counsel's Office help facilitate settlements to resolve disputes efficiently. For example, when two unions picketed Walmart in 2012, Walmart filed a claim with the NLRB, and the agency negotiated a settlement. Indeed, settlements are not the

exception at the NLRB but the rule, and they are encouraged. In fact, over 90 percent of meritorious unfair labor practice cases are settled by agreement, either through a Board settlement or a private agreement by the two sides.

Now that I have discussed the importance of the NLRB in protecting rights and the role the General Counsel plays at that agency, I want to turn the page and talk about Mr. Griffin, the nominee who is before us now to be the General Counsel, and I want to again indicate why I strongly support his nomination.

Richard Griffin has a wealth of experience as a labor lawyer. He is deeply steeped in labor and employment law. He most recently served as an NLRB board member himself from January 2012 until this past August. Prior to that, Mr. Griffin was general counsel for the International Union of Operating Engineers for more than 17 years. Mr. Griffin actually began his legal career over 30 years ago at the NLRB as a counsel to Board members.

Some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have agreed that Dick Griffin is well qualified to serve as general counsel—indeed, I think his expertise in labor law is difficult to question—but some of my friends on the Republican side continue to oppose his nomination because of an outstanding legal issue that has nothing to do with Mr. Griffin's previous public service, his background, or his ability to function in this new position.

Here is what this is all about: Much has been made about the process by which Mr. Griffin was previously recess appointed to serve as a Board member. The controversy began when the District of Columbia Circuit Court issued a ruling in a case which is called the Noel Canning case that diverged from the decisions of three other courts of appeals—the Second Circuit, the Ninth Circuit, and the Eleventh Circuit—and my friends on the Republican side are questioning the validity of an appointment process that has been in place for over 220 years. And that was the decision in the Noel Canning case. Subsequently, two other appeals courts have addressed this issue. The Supreme Court is set to resolve the legal issue once and for all during this session of the Supreme Court.

Again, to sum it up, we have different circuit courts deciding differently on an appointment process that any President uses to fill recess appointments. This litigation is still pending. The legal question remains unresolved until the Supreme Court decides it. But a number of my colleagues during that period when we had different circuit courts deciding differently on this appointment issue called for Mr. Griffin to resign his position on the Board, even though he had done nothing personally wrong and he had taken an oath of office to fulfill his duties.

I believe that request from my Republican colleagues was unreasonable. There was clear precedent at the Board for Mr. Griffin to continue to serve until the final legal matter was ultimately resolved. When there is a split among the circuit courts of appeals, the NLRB has a longstanding history of waiting until the legal question is resolved by the Supreme Court before they take action, particularly when the issue involves the Board's operability.

The situation that was facing the Board after this Noel Canning case is directly parallel to a circumstance by the Board a few years ago when the Board only had two members—only had two members. The DC Circuit ruled in a case called the Laurel Baye case that the two-member Board lacked a quorum to do business. Even after the DC Circuit's decision, the two-member Board, one Republican, one Democrat, continued to hear and issue cases until the Supreme Court ruled on the question.

Not a single Republican Senator called on either one of those two Board members to resign simply because they refused to acquiesce to the decision of the DC Circuit. So here is what happened. Mr. Griffin and his fellow recess appointee Sharon Block acted appropriately in following this direct precedent and continuing to serve on the Board until the Supreme Court addressed the validity of their recess appointments.

To argue that Mr. Griffin's decision to uphold his oath of office and follow the Board's prior practice, that somehow that makes him unqualified to now serve as the Board's General Counsel is, quite frankly, a position I think is not only disappointing but I think without substance.

In addition to this questionable objection, Republicans also continue to claim that recent NLRB nominees, including Mr. Griffin, are unacceptable simply because they have worked on behalf of workers or unions and support our system of collective bargaining.

These nominees have been accused of being biased and unfit to serve. But now I want to point out what the law actually says. Keep in mind, when Board members, as well as general counsel, are appointed to the Board and we confirm them, they take an oath of office to uphold the law. So it is kind of interesting to note what the law actually says that they are sworn by oath to uphold.

I have often quoted from the National Labor Relations Act on this point. I will do so again. Here is what the law says, the National Labor Relations Act—the law that Board members and eventually Mr. Griffin, if he is confirmed—and I believe he will be—will take an oath of office to uphold. Here is the law. I will quote it exactly as it is written:

> It is declared to be the policy of the United States to eliminate the causes of certain substantial obstructions to the free flow of commerce and to mitigate and eliminate these obstructions when they have occurred by encouraging the practice and procedure of collective bargaining and by protecting the exercise by workers of full freedom of association, self-organization, and designation of representatives of their own choosing, for the purpose of negotiating the terms and conditions of their employment or other mutual aid or protection.

Those are the exact words. That is what the law says. The purpose and the policy is to promote collective bargaining, to promote collective bargaining and freedom of association, protecting workers and their rights of self-organization, the designation of representatives of their own choosing. That is what the law says.

I think the fact that Mr. Griffin takes that purpose seriously makes him more qualified, not less qualified, to serve as general counsel. His past career is not cause for concern. Most labor lawyers devote their careers either to representing workers and unions or the management. That is the nature of practicing labor and employment law.

We have confirmed NLRB nominees in the past, some of whom have been union side and some have been management side. We have done so without substantial controversy. The fact that Mr. Griffin happens to come from the union side practice does not make him inherently biased. For years, Republican and Democratic Presidents have appointed promanagement attorneys to fill positions at the NLRB.

There is even the one example of where a Board member came directly from an in-house position at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. But I do not hear anyone on the Republican side accusing those nominees of bias. I guess it is only when you represent labor unions that you are biased, not when you represent the Chamber of Commerce.

I would also like to point out that while I certainly have not agreed with the politics or ideology of every past NLRB nominee, I voted to supported Republican nominees, such as Phillip Miscimarra and Harry Johnson, who are on the Board now, not because I agreed with them but because, given their experience and their diverse backgrounds, they were qualified to serve. They were qualified, as is Mr. Griffin, eminently well qualified.

Board members can and do separate their past work as an advocate from their work as a neutral interpreter of the act once they are confirmed. I am absolutely sure Mr. Griffin will do the same if confirmed as General Counsel. I have every confidence that Mr. Griffin will be, in the words of one of the current Board members, not prounion, not proworker, not promanagement, but pro-act, pro-Labor Relations Act or put maybe more succinctly prolaw, prolaw enforcement.

With this in mind, and for all of the reasons I have mentioned, I urge all of my colleagues, my Republican colleagues, to consider voting for Mr. Griffin because he deserves a strong bipartisan vote.

As I stated earlier, I voted for Republican members. When we had Board members earlier this year, in July if I am not mistaken, in July of this year, Democrats voted for the two Republican nominees, again not because we agreed with them ideologically, maybe where they were coming from, but they were qualified to serve.

Yet when we have nominees with whom the Republicans are opposed ideologically, even though they are well qualified, Republicans vote no. Think about that. When we have nominees to the National Labor Relations Board, whom the Republicans support, to whom we may be opposed ideologically but they are qualified, we vote for them. Democrats vote for them. When we have nominees to the National Labor Relations Board who are well qualified but whom the Republicans disagree with ideologically, they vote against them—quite a difference.

Now is the time to start breaking that down. It did not used to be this way. It never was this way in the past. If they were qualified under a Republican President, we would support them; a Democratic President, we would support them. We wanted to know what were their qualifications, what were their backgrounds, were they vetted properly—no criminal activity, nothing in their background that would indicate they could not judiciously act openly and fairly.

I am sorry it has gotten to this position now where Republicans feel they have to vote against someone to the National Labor Relations Board simply because that person was a lawyer for a labor union. I voted for NLRB members who were lawyers for businesses. That is fine. I have no problem with that. Why do my Republican colleagues have such a problem voting for someone who was a lawyer for a labor union? Labor unions are legal entities protected by national law, the National Labor Relations Act.

So I hope again that my Republican colleagues will look at Mr. Griffin for who he is, for what he is, for his background, eminently well qualified, has always been fair, has always been judicious—a good lawyer.

Yes, he represents labor unions. But in all of the vetting we had in our committee on Mr. Griffin, we had people from the business side and others who all said he represented labor unions, but he did so fairly. He did that fairly, with competence and with the ability to work out agreements with the other side. What more can you ask?

I am hopeful this vote tomorrow will mark a new beginning for the National Labor Relations Board. We will have a vote on cloture and then we will have an up-or-down vote. So we have 60 votes for cloture to bring it to a close. Then there will be up to 8 hours of debate on the nominee. I do not think we need to take that long. I am hopeful some of my Republican colleagues will vote for Mr. Griffin and start to break this thing down, where if it is someone appointed by a Democratic President, Republicans vote no; if it is someone appointed by a Republican President, Democrats vote no. That should not be the way it should be, not the way it has been in my lifetime here, in all of my time in the Senate.

I have served with three Republican Presidents in the Senate. They have made nominations to the National Labor Relations Board. I have been on this committee since then. We always supported them. As long as they were qualified and they went through the vetting process and they were qualified, it was fine. The President should have his nominees. We would vote for them.

I am hopeful we will get back to that. I hope we will have a new era, where the agency is no longer haunted by political attacks, political games. It is time, long past time, to allow the NLRB to function as the law intends and let the dedicated public servants who work there do their jobs.

We will have this vote, I am told, tomorrow afternoon on cloture. As I said for the benefit of Senators, we will have up to 8 hours. I do not imagine we will take all of that. We will have up to 8 hours of debate on the nominee. Again, I hope we have a good strong vote on both cloture and on the nominee himself. Mr. Griffin, as I said, is eminently well qualified—eminently well qualified. Nothing in his background would ever indicate that he would be anything less than an outstanding counsel at the National Labor Relations Board.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DONNELLY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT M. GREELEY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the important work of Mr. Robert M. Greeley, who is retiring on November 15, 2013, after a long and distinguished career with the United States Capitol Police.

Mr. Greeley joined the Capitol Police in June, 1996, as director of the Security Services Bureau, the most senior civilian security position in the department. Mr. Greeley's team is responsible for the development, operation, and maintenance of the physical and technical security systems needed to counter the threat of terrorism. In this capacity, Mr. Greeley led the management of the multimillion dollar enhancements to the Capitol Complex following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. His expertise in the development and implementation of these security projects and systems was critical to the long- and short-term protection of the personnel and facilities of the legislative branch.

Prior to joining the Capitol Police, Mr. Greeley spent 14 years as a security engineering officer with the U.S. Department of State's Office of Diplomatic Security and Foreign Missions. In that capacity, Mr. Greeley served overseas with regional responsibilities in Athens, Mexico City, and Prague.

Mr. Greeley proudly served in the United States Air Force as a navigational aids equipment specialist from 1978–1982.

As a former Capitol Police Officer, I appreciate the hard work and dedication of our nation's law enforcement officers, and I still feel a special bond with those who honor the badge by protecting and serving our communities. I, along with my colleagues in the Senate, congratulate Mr. Greeley on his well-earned retirement and wish him well in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING BRIAN MONKS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to Mr. Brian Monks of Huntingtown, NY, who graciously donated his time and unique talent to help create the beautiful and historic pen set for the United States Senate.

In 2012, the Office of the Senate Sergeant at Arms began designing a new pen set for use at the Presiding Officer's desk when the Senate is in session. The pen set was to be constructed using historically significant materials, including marble removed from the West Brumidi Corridor of the Senate side of the Capitol during its expansion in 2001, and wood from a 120-year-old mahogany tree that was removed from the Capitol grounds in 2009. The Senate Cabinet Shop crafted the base and the pen holders using these historic materials. When the time came to construct the pens themselves from the same mahogany wood, the Cabinet Shop needed to look for outside assistance.

This is when Mr. Monks stepped forward. He volunteered to expertly hand turn pieces of the historic wood into unique writing instruments for the new Senate Chamber pen set.

Mr. Monks is the vice president of Underwriters Laboratories, and his home in Long Island has housed his wood working hobby for many years. He has earned a reputation as both an accomplished pen maker and a creator of fine hand crafted furnishings. His handiwork on the Presiding Officer's pen set debuted in the Senate in April 2012 and is now on display every time the Senate is in session.

Mr. Monks's fine craftsmanship not only resulted in high quality pens for use by Senators serving as the Presiding Officer, but also contributed to the overall beauty and historical significance of the Presiding Officer's desk in the Senate Chamber.

I join with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in saluting Mr. Brian

Monks for his artistic excellence, his spirit of volunteerism, and his generous contributions to the history and operations of the United States Senate.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN COLOMBIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to express my thanks to the governments of Colombia, Cuba and Norway, and to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Reverend Jessie Jackson, for their efforts to secure the release yesterday of American citizen, Kevin Scott Sutay, who was kidnapped by the FARC earlier this year. I hope this is another sign that negotiations to end Colombia's decades long armed conflict are progressing, and that a peace agreement is possible.

I also want to take this opportunity to call attention to the contributions of two courageous Colombian human rights activists, Islena Rey and Father Alejandro Angulo Novoa, and to the challenges they and other human rights defenders face.

On September 9, Colombia's Human Rights Day, both were awarded for their human rights work in a presentation organized by Di logo Inter-Agencial en Colombia, a consortium of international nongovernmental organizations working for human rights in Colombia. This is the second year of the awards, and they were presented during a time of increasing attacks against human rights defenders in that country. The awards are significant not only because they recognize the recipients' contributions, but also because they help to reduce the social stigma that surrounds human rights work in Colombia and many other countries.

Islena Rey, founder of the Meta Civic Committee for Human Rights, was named Defender of the Year for her efforts to bring together and organize community leaders in support of victims of human rights abuses. She works in one of Colombia's most dangerous regions, the Eastern Plains, which has long been plagued by violence spurred by the illegal narcotics trade.

Ms. Rey knows the risks. Four years ago this month, she was shot and seriously wounded while returning from a community meeting. She is also the sole survivor of the original Meta Committee members, who, throughout the 1990s, were systematically assassinated, leaving her to carry out her advocacy work alone. Four years after nearly losing her life, she presses on, conducting investigations, providing support to victims, and working to rebuild the Meta Committee.

In addition to recognizing Islena Rey, the organization presented Father Alejandro Angulo Novoa with the Life Long Defender award for his contributions to human rights in Colombia over the past 4 decades. Father Alejandro is one of the founders of the Center for Research and Popular Education in Bogotá. He is currently the coordinator of CINEP's human rights database which collects, records, and disseminates information on the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. He has dedicated his life to this work and to supporting the poor and excluded.

The courage and dedication displayed by these two individuals represents just a small fraction of the essential work being done by human rights defenders in Colombia. It is all the more remarkable because, despite some notable progress in investigating, prosecuting and punishing those responsible for heinous crimes, impunity is the norm and Colombia remains a very dangerous place for lawyers, social activists, and journalists who work and report on human rights.

Islena Rey, Father Alejandro, and countless other brave Colombians will continue tending to victims of human rights abuses. They are undeterred by the social stigma they face, or the threats and acts of violence against them and their colleagues. They deserve our respect and our thanks, because the protection of human rights, wherever they are threatened or denied, is everybody's responsibility.

ELECTRONIC COMMMUNICATIONS PRIVACY ACT 27TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Electronic Communications Privacy Act ECPA, one of the Nation's premiere digital privacy laws, was enacted 27 years ago on October 21. I join the many privacy advocates, technology organizations, legal scholars and other Americans who celebrate this milestone and all that ECPA has come to symbolize about the importance of safeguarding our privacy rights in cyberspace.

When I introduced ECPA with former Republican Senator Charles Mathias in 1986, I said that ''the privacy protections in ECPA are designed to protect legitimate law enforcement needs while minimizing intrusions on the privacy of system users as well as the business needs of electronic communications system providers.'' During the last three decades, ECPA has become the premier law for protecting Americans from unauthorized government intrusions into their private electronic communications.

When Congress enacted ECPA, email was a novelty and no one imagined how prevalent it would become in our daily communication let alone how long it might be stored. But after almost three decades, new technologies—such as the Internet, social networking sites and cloud computing—have changed how Americans use and store email. Storing documents and other information electronically has become much less expensive and mobile technologies permit users to access stored documents wherever and whenever they choose. As a result, the digital privacy protections put in place 27 years ago have not kept pace with new technologies.

That is why Congress must revitalize the digital privacy protections that were enacted in ECPA. That is also why I am working in a bipartisan manner to update this law to reflect the realities of our time.

In April, the Judiciary Committee favorably reported bipartisan legislation that I authored with Republican Senator MIKE LEE to update ECPA and to bring this law fully into the digital age. Our bipartisan bill updates ECPA to require that the government obtain a search warrant—based upon probable cause—before obtaining the content of our emails and other electronic communications. The commonsense reforms in our bill carefully balance the interests and needs of consumers, the law enforcement community, and our Nation's thriving technology sector. The bill enjoys the support of a diverse coalition of more than 100 privacy, civil liberties, civil rights and technology organizations from across the political spectrum, including the American Civil Liberties Union, the Heritage Foundation, the Center for Democracy and Technology and Americans for Tax Reform. The bill is also the product of careful consultation with many government and private sector stakeholders, including the Departments of Justice, Commerce and State, local law enforcement, and members of the technology and privacy communities. I remain disappointed that a single Republican Senator has objected to the unanimous consent request to pass this bipartisan bill, which overwhelmingly passed the Judiciary Committee.

The privacy reforms in this bill are too important to delay. Like Senator LEE and me, all of the bill's supporters understand that protecting our digital privacy rights is not a Democratic ideal, nor a Republican ideal, but an American ideal that all of us should embrace. As ECPA reaches another milestone, it is important to remember that Americans continue to face threats to their digital privacy. I hope that all Senators will join me in supporting the Electronic Communications Privacy Act Amendments Act and that the Senate will pass this bill without delay.

TRIBUTE TO HEDY RATNER AND CAROL DOUGAL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to thank two exceptional women who have been strong advocates for social justice and for the advancement of women's business ownership in the State of Illinois, across America, and beyond.

Hedy Ratner and Carol Dougal have recently stepped down after working 27 years as the founders and co-presidents of the Women's Business Development Center, WBDC. The WBDC is the first, and largest, nonprofit organization that provides services to encourage women's business ownership across the United States.

When the WBDC was founded in 1986, less than 10 percent of the businesses in the United States were owned and operated by women. Today, thanks in part to the leadership and encouragement provided by Hedy and Carol, there are over 8.6 million women-owned businesses throughout the country, generating over $1.3 trillion in revenues this year and employing nearly 7.8 million people.

As a champion for women's economic development, the WBDC has worked to assist tens of thousands of women in entrepreneurial efforts nationwide. From business certifications to financial assistance workshops, the WBDC provides women business owners with the training they need to establish and expand their businesses. By providing women with essential resources to become successful business owners, the WBDC has empowered women and helped them achieve economic independence through entrepreneurship.

Since its founding in 1986, the WBDC has expanded in size and scope from a two-person operation seeking to address the lack of representation of women in the business sector, to a staff of 24 full-time employees and contractors that now influence policies on the federal, State and local levels. The achievements of Hedy and Carol are significant, and the positive role of the WBDC in supporting women's entrepreneurship is evident.

On behalf of the people of Illinois, I thank Hedy and Carol for their 27 dedicated years with the WBDC and congratulate them on their many contributions for women in the business sector. I wish both of them the best as they continue to inspire and provide leadership for women's entrepreneurship in the years to come.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY INFORMATION ANNIVERSARY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the 25th anniversary of the National Center for Biotechnology Information—NCBI—part of the National Library of Medicine at the National Institutes of Health, America's world-renowned research institution in Bethesda, MD.

The late Senator Claude Pepper, for whom a major building on the NIH campus is named, authored six separate laws creating individual institutes at NIH. In 1987, while a Member of the House of Representatives and chairman of the Select Committee on Aging's Subcommittee on Health and Long-Term Care, Pepper introduced H.R. 393, the National Biotechnology Information Act, which established the NCBI. At a March 1987 hearing on H.R. 393, Pepper explained that ''we are dealing with nothing less than the mystery of human life and the unfolding scroll of knowledge, seeking to penetrate that mystery, which is life itself.'' He noted that his bill was intended ''to facilitate the development of advanced computer and communication systems that will make it possible for the vast expanding knowledge of the gene to be assimilated into a computer system and made available for distribution to researchers and to people generally all over the World.''

Soon thereafter, Congress embraced the importance of the biotechnology field, recognized the pressing need to harness the large volume of data emanating from the genetic revolution in science, and endorsed the establishment of NCBI to manage this valuable resource for the benefit of human health. With strong bipartisan support in Congress, Pepper's bill was enacted as part of Senator Ted Kennedy's comprehensive measure, the Health Omnibus Extension Programs of 1988, on November 4, 1988.

Today, biomedical research encompassing genomic and genetic knowledge is a major driver of medical progress. The foresight of Congress in establishing the NCBI, combined with the innovative leadership of Director Dr. David Lipman and the expertise of the agency's dedicated staff, has led to the emergence of an impressive national resource for molecular biology information. In June of this year, Dr. Lipman was honored by the White House with the ''Open Science'' Champions of Change Award for his work at NCBI. By organizing and integrating genomic data for developing diagnostic and clinical applications, the Center serves as a bridge from research to the medical community. Each day, more than 3 million users access NCBI's 40 interlinked genomic and bibliographic databases and download more than 30 terabytes of data.

I am proud that Congress has continued to support funding for the NCBI over the past 25 years. Recently, by requiring that the results of NIH-funded research be made public through the Center's PubMed Central Database, Congress has opened to everyone the full text of published journal articles that are essential to advancing scientific research and public health.

The biomedical research funded by the NIH provides knowledge essential to combat debilitating diseases, and continuing this research is dependent on the resources and tools that NCBI has developed so successfully for the benefit of the biomedical community. As NIH Director Francis Collins has noted, we are entering an era of precision medicine in which a patient's genetic makeup may determine the exact treatment that is provided. Surely, the NCBI databases and tools will be needed on the front lines of this new effort.

On the occasion of this 25th anniversary, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Lipman and the outstanding staff of NCBI, who through their skill and vision have built this unique biomedical resource.

TRIBUTE TO DR. CHARLES M. VEST

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, it is my great privilege to rise today to recognize the distinguished career of Dr. Charles M. Vest, a native West Virginian, on his retirement as president of the National Academy of Engineering, NAE. In his time at the NAE, Dr. Vest worked tirelessly to identify and address the most pressing and important challenges facing American engineering, including the declining interest in math and science among our Nation's students and the growing challenges of information flow among government, the private sector, and academia. As NAE president, Dr. Vest was instrumental in urging Congress to pass the America COMPETES Act, which provided a blueprint for investing in critically important scientific and technological pursuits. Dr. Vest also helped craft the Grand Challenges for Engineering, a global initiative that identifies the greatest challenges and opportunities facing engineers today. In this increasingly technology-based and globalized world, Dr. Vest recognized the need for a clear and strong national vision for our engineers and scientists. He provided the dynamic leadership that the NAE required to allow American engineers to compete and thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

A native of Morgantown, WV, Chuck displayed a clever and inquisitive mind from a young age. Growing up under the shadow of Sputnik, he developed a keen interest in electronics and he would constantly tinker with surplus World War II gadgets, such as microphones and resistors. This curiosity led him to West Virginia University where he received a degree in mechanical engineering. Chuck continued his education at the University of Michigan, earning a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering; he remained there for 22 years as a professor, a dean, and university provost.

Dr. Vest has since served as a director of DuPont and IBM. He has held positions on an array of Federal committees and commissions, including the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology and as vice chair of the U.S. Council on Competitiveness. Chuck has authored three books, received honorary doctoral degrees from 18 universities, and was awarded the 2006 National Medal of Technology and the 2011 Vannevar Bush Award.

Quite possibly, Dr. Vest's most important achievements occurred during his tenure as president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MIT. In his 14 years at the helm of MIT, Dr. Vest proved a worthy advocate of more robust communication and sharing within the science community. Under his extraordinary leadership, MIT launched its OpenCourseWare initiative and cofounded the Alliance for Global Sustainability. As he will readily attest, though, one of Dr. Vest's

proudest accomplishments at MIT was in improving the diversity of the university's student body and faculty. Chuck worked tirelessly to ensure that opportunities at MIT were available to anyone with the right mind and work ethic.

In all that he has done and stood for, Chuck has embodied what is best about being a West Virginian and an American. Chuck's passion for helping others—whether as a teacher, an engineer, or a leader—has impacted countless lives and ensured his place among our country's most respected and honored citizens. Dr. Charles M. Vest has long shone as one of West Virginia's brightest stars, and today it gives me great pleasure to commend him—and thank him—for his enormous contributions to the Nation's science, technology, engineering, and mathematics enterprise.

GREENE COUNTY COURTHOUSE CENTENNIAL

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I rise today to honor an important historical date in Greene County, MO, my home county. October 26 was the centennial of the historic Greene County Courthouse—the place where I worked for more than a decade as county clerk.

The current Greene County Courthouse is actually the third built in Greene County. The 20th century courthouse was intended to be a unifying structure for what had developed as two communities prior to the Civil War. Both communities came under one municipal government in 1887, and the new courthouse was to be a structure built between North Springfield and the central business district. Work to find a site was begun in 1904 and concluded with the purchase of a lot on Central Avenue in 1908.

Architect A.N. Torbitt, of Miller, Opel and Torbitt in Jefferson City, MO, was chosen to draft plans for the new structure, and the cornerstone ceremony for the new courthouse was held on July 16, 1910. The impressive new building, built of Greene County Phoenix stone, took nearly 2 years to complete. In March 1912, the courts moved into the new building. Even Springfield's city hall took up residence there, where it remained for more than 25 years until its move into the post office a block away.

The historic Greene County Courthouse was and remains important to the economic growth, development and prosperity of Springfield and Greene County. Over the years, the courts expanded to an additional judicial center nearby, but the old courthouse remains the center of Greene County administrative duties. Today, it is occupied by the Greene County commissioner, clerk, recorder of deeds, treasurer, assessor and collector of revenues.

Today, the interior of the 100-year-old courthouse is in great shape, and plans are underway to raise funds to replace the parapet. Past elected officials have worked to improve the building's energy efficiency and maintain its appearance. As a former Greene County clerk and one who has a deep appreciation for the history of Greene County and this grand building, I want to express my pride in the services that are provided in this structure and those county employees who work in it every day. My hope is that the historic Greene County Courthouse has many years of service ahead.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

WILLIAMS-CONE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

• Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am delighted to commend the Williams-Cone Elementary School of Topsham, ME, on being named a 2013 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. This year, Williams-Cone was one of only 236 public schools across the country to receive this prestigious recognition of high accomplishment by the U.S. Department of Education.

Created in 1982, the Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private schools that are either academically superior in their States or that demonstrate significant gains in student achievement. The schools singled out for this national recognition are models of high educational standards and accountability.

This award recognizes the remarkable improvements made in student achievement rates at Williams-Cone Elementary over the past several years. During the 2007–2008 academic year, students achieved 66 percent proficiency in reading and math. Four years later, Williams-Cone's approximately 200 students scored 81 percent proficiency in reading and 77 percent in math. These outstanding academic improvements can be attributed to the positive learning environment fostered at Williams-Cone School, where students are encouraged to pursue their interests, teachers instruct in innovative ways, and teachers and administrators engage with families to create a strong school community.

I am pleased that the U.S. Department of Education has selected Williams-Cone Elementary School for this well-deserved honor, and congratulate not only the students, but also the administrators, teachers, staff, and parents on this outstanding achievement. Together, they are making a difference in the lives of hundreds of students and helping them become responsible learners and engaged citizens in their community.•

REMEMBERING PETE CENARRUSA

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, my colleague Senator RISCH joins me today in honoring the life of former Idaho Secretary of State Pete Cenarrusa. The State of Idaho lost a dear friend with the passing of Pete Cenarrusa.

Pete had a unique capacity to lead people and institutions with good will, great humor and wise counsel. Pete was a personal friend and adviser to both of us, and we will forever remember the example he set for all public servants.

Throughout his distinguished career, Pete was widely respected for his integrity, fairness, determination and dependability. He dedicated more than 50 years to public service, serving nearly 36 years as Idaho's Secretary of State and nine terms in the Idaho House of Representatives, three of which he served as Speaker of the House. In addition to his public service, Pete ran a successful sheep operation with his wife of 66 years, Freda. He was also a private pilot for 59 years and was a high school teacher in Cambridge, Carey and Glenns Ferry, ID. Additionally, he served as a U.S. Marine Corps officer, aviator and instructor, which included his service as a pilot in World War II. Further, Pete was a strong advocate for the Basque community. Pete and Freda founded the Cenarrusa Foundation for Basque Culture that has provided resources for the promotion of the Basque culture.

Like the many people who greatly respected him, Pete's list of qualities and experiences is remarkably long. Pete lived life to the fullest. He developed skills in a variety of fields and utilized his talents and principles for the betterment of Idaho. We are truly blessed to have known Pete and to have learned from his example of committed service, honesty and resolve. Pete's long and dedicated service to the people of Idaho will last forever. He was a beloved public servant, rancher, pilot, veteran, teacher, son, brother, husband, father, uncle, grandfather, great-grandfather and friend. Our thoughts and prayers are with Freda, their family and all of Pete's friends.•

TRIBUTE TO SANDRA MATHESON

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and congratulate Director Sandra Matheson of the NH Attorney General's State Office of Victim/Witness Assistance, OVWA, for more than 30 years of dedicated service to the State of New Hampshire.

A former law enforcement officer and crisis center director, Ms. Matheson was on call to respond to homicides for over 12 years, where she learned first hand about the unique needs of victims. She coordinated New Hampshire's efforts to establish victim/witness services in all 10 counties and to establish the New Hampshire Victim Compensation Program in 1989.

During her long career, Ms. Matheson was responsible for founding and overseeing the OVWA homicide victim unit, which provides 24-hour statewide direct services in all of the State's homicide cases, from death notification throughout the judicial process. She has also developed and presented numerous trainings on traumatic grief and loss, homicide, and the extensive

impact these crimes have on the families left behind. She developed and presented the State's first death notification training curriculum and she is a regular instructor at the NH Police Standards and Training Academy. She is on the faculty of the ME/NH Victim Assistance Academy, where she teaches the sessions on homicide and drunk driving, among others.

Ms. Matheson was an instrumental part of numerous statewide initiatives aimed at standardizing the systemic response to crime victim issues, and has built a strong, effective, collaborative relationship with numerous State and community partners. She was a founder of the NH Domestic Violence, Child Fatality and Elder and Incapacitated Adult Fatality Review Committees, and served as chair of the Attorney General's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, the NH Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, SANE, Advisory Board, the Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Protocol Projects, the Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Conference Committee, and is a partner of the New Hampshire AmeriCorps Victim Assistance Program. She has been a key player in getting legislation passed to help victims of crime, including drafting the NH Crime Victim Bill of Rights in 1991.

A recipient of numerous awards for her work with victims and families, in April of 1994 Director Matheson received a National Victim Services Award from President Clinton and was honored at a Rose Garden ceremony for ''outstanding service on behalf of victims of crime.'' Most recently in 2013, the National Association of Attorneys General selected Sandra for the ''President's Award'' for her extraordinary work over the years.

On a personal note, as New Hampshire's Attorney General, I was honored to work with Sandra. She is smart, passionate, and tireless in serving victims of crime and in making NH safer. She represents the very best of what it means to be a public servant.

As Director Matheson celebrates her retirement, I commend her on a job well done, and ask my colleagues to join me in wishing her well in all future endeavors.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2013, the Secretary of the Senate, on October 17, 2013, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 24. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate and an adjournment of the House of Representatives.

The message further announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the text of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 58) expressing the sense of Congress regarding the need for the continued availability for religious services to members of the Armed Forces and their families during a lapse in appropriations, further, that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the preamble of the concurrent resolution.

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2013, the Secretary of the Senate, on October 23, 2013, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the House has agreed to the following resolutions:

H. Res. 383. Resolution relative to the death of the Honorable Thomas S. Foley, a former Representative from the State of Washington.

H. Res. 384. Resolution relative to the death of the Honorable C.W. Bill Young, a Representative from the State of Florida.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:02 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 bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 185. An act to designate the United States courthouse located at 101 East Pecan Street in Sherman, Texas, as the ''Paul Brown United States Courthouse''.

H.R. 2083. An act to require State educational agencies that receive funding under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to have in effect policies and procedures on background checks for school employees.

H.R. 3080. An act to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3205. An act to reauthorize and restructure the adoption incentives grant program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3302. An act to name the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Bay Pines, Florida, as the ''C.W. Bill Young Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center''.

The message also announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 3003, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Speaker appoints the following Members on the part of the House of Representatives to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Ms. SLAUGHTER of New York, Mr. McIntyre of North Carolina, and Mr. COHEN of Tennessee.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 2083. An act to require State educational agencies that receive funding under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to have in effect policies and procedures on background checks for school employees; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 3205. An act to reauthorize and restructure the adoption incentives grant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 3302. An act to name the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Bay Pines, Florida, as the ''C.W. Bill Young Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center''; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following joint resolution was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar pursuant to Sec. 1002 of Public Law 113–46:

S.J. Res. 26. Joint resolution relating to the disapproval of the President's exercise of authority to suspend the debt limit, as submitted under section 1002(b) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2014 on October 17, 2013.

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 3080. An act to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 1592. A bill to provide for a delay of the individual mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act until the American Health Benefit Exchanges are functioning properly.

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–3305. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, certification that absent suspension of the limit under 31 U.S.C. 3101(b) the Secretary of the Treasury would be unable to issue debt to meet existing commitments, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 17, 2013; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3306. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation of funding for Overseas Contingency

Operations/Global War on Terrorism funding, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 17, 2013; to the Committee on Finance.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–159. A petition from a citizen of the State of New Jersey relative to the election of a Senator; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. ROCKEFELLER, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 376. A bill to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–114).

By Mr. CARPER, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

Special Report entitled ''Activities of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs During the 112th Congress'' (Rept. No. 113–115).

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. NELSON (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 1576. A bill to redesignate the Department of Veterans Affairs Healthcare System located at 10000 Bay Pines Boulevard in Bay Pines, Florida, as the ''C.W. Bill Young Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center''; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. LEVIN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TOOMEY, and Mr. KIRK):

S. 1577. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to improve upon the definitions provided for points and fees in connection with a mortgage transaction; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1578. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to cover the costs associated with the care of veterans at medical foster homes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 1579. A bill to amend the Service members Civil Relief Act to improve the protections provided to members of the uniformed services and their families, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BEGICH:

S. 1580. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require recipients of per diem payments from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the provision of services for homeless veterans to comply with codes relevant to operations and level of care provided, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1581. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide counseling and treatment for sexual trauma to members of the Armed Forces, to require the Secretary to screen veterans for domestic abuse, to require the Secretary to submit reports on military sexual trauma and domestic abuse, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1582. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit reports on the provision of services by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans with hearing loss and other auditory system injuries and the measures that can be taken jointly by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense with respect to hearing loss and other auditory system injuries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1583. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct an education program and peer support program for the education and training of family members and caregivers of veterans with mental health disorders; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1584. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide replacement automobiles for certain disabled veterans and members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1585. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to update the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance program to base premium rates on the Commissioners 2001 Standard Ordinary Mortality Table instead of the Commissioners 1941 Standard Ordinary Table of Mortality; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1586. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve dental health care for veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 1587. A bill to posthumously award the Congressional Gold Medal to each of Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods in recognition of their contributions to the Nation; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. MORAN, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. BEGICH):

S. 1588. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for reimbursement for emergency medical treatment to certain veterans that were unable to receive care from the Department of Veterans Affairs in the 24-month period preceding the furnishing of such emergency treatment; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BURR:

S. 1589. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure the Department of Veterans Affairs has an up-to-date policy on reporting of cases of infectious diseases, to require an independent assessment of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks and medical centers of the Department, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. ALEXANDER:

S. 1590. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to require transparency in the operation of American Health Benefit Exchanges; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. HAGAN:

S. 1591. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the work opportunity credit to small businesses which hire individuals who are members of the Ready Reserve or National Guard, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. MORAN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. SESSIONS):

S. 1592. A bill to provide for a delay of the individual mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act until the American Health Benefit Exchanges are functioning properly; read the first time.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 1593. A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to enhance the protections accorded to servicemembers and their spouses with respect to mortgages, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S.J. Res. 26. A joint resolution relating to the disapproval of the President's exercise of authority to suspend the debt limit, as submitted under section 1002(b) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2014 on October 17, 2013; placed on the calendar.

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, Mr. KIRK, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. Res. 275. A resolution designating October 29, 2013, as ''National Technological Innovation Day'' to recognize that technological innovation is critical to the United States economy and commemorating the contributions of innovation to prosperity in the United States and abroad; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 15

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 15, a bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

S. 29

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 29, a bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for automatic continuing resolutions.

S. 116

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 116, a bill to revise and extend provisions under the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act.

S. 177

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 177, a bill to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the

Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 entirely.

S. 273

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 273, a bill to modify the definition of fiduciary under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to exclude appraisers of employee stock ownership plans.

S. 338

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 338, a bill to amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the land and water conservation fund to maximize the effectiveness of the fund for future generations, and for other purposes.

S. 403

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 403, a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to address and take action to prevent bullying and harassment of students.

S. 411

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) 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. 557

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 557, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to medication therapy management under part D of the Medicare program.

S. 569

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 569, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to count a period of receipt of outpatient observation services in a hospital toward satisfying the 3-day inpatient hospital requirement for coverage of skilled nursing facility services under Medicare.

S. 619

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 619, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prevent unjust and irrational criminal punishments.

S. 623

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 623, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure the continued access of Medicare beneficiaries to diagnostic imaging services.

S. 629

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 629, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to recognize the service in the reserve components of the Armed Forces of certain persons by honoring them with status as veterans under law, and for other purposes.

S. 635

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) were added as cosponsors of S. 635, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

S. 666

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 666, a bill to prohibit attendance of an animal fighting venture, and for other purposes.

S. 676

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 676, a bill to prevent tax-related identity theft and tax fraud.

S. 689

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 689, a bill to reauthorize and improve programs related to mental health and substance use disorders.

S. 699

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 699, a bill to reallocate Federal judgeships for the courts of appeals, and for other purposes.

S. 718

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 718, a bill to create jobs in the United States by increasing United States exports to Africa by at least 200 percent in real dollar value within 10 years, and for other purposes.

S. 734

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 734, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation.

S. 769

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 769, a bill to designate as wilderness certain Federal portions of the red rock canyons of the Colorado Plateau and the Great Basin Deserts in the State of Utah for the benefit of present and future generations of people in the United States.

S. 815

At the request of Mr. NELSON, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 815, a bill to prohibit the employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

S. 822

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 822, a bill to protect crime victims' rights, to eliminate the substantial backlog of DNA samples collected from crime scenes and convicted offenders, to improve and expand the DNA testing capacity of Federal, State, and local crime laboratories, to increase research and development of new DNA testing technologies, to develop new training programs regarding the collection and use of DNA evidence, to provide post conviction testing of DNA evidence to exonerate the innocent, to improve the performance of counsel in State capital cases, and for other purposes.

S. 842

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 842, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for an extension of the Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) program and the increased payments under the Medicare low-volume hospital program.

S. 865

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 865, a bill to provide for the establishment of a Commission to Accelerate the End of Breast Cancer.

S. 875

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 875, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the reporting of cases of infectious diseases at facilities of the Veterans Health Administration, and for other purposes.

S. 893

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 893, a bill to provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2013, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 893, supra.

S. 931

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 931, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to raise awareness of, and to educate breast cancer patients anticipating surgery, especially patients who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups, regarding the availability and coverage of breast reconstruction, prostheses, and other options.

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 931, supra.

S. 932

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 932, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for advance appropriations for certain discretionary accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

S. 981

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 981, a bill to direct the Federal Trade Commission to prescribe rules prohibiting deceptive advertising of abortion services, and for other purposes.

S. 1098

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1098, a bill to reform the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 to responsibly protect homeownership.

S. 1106

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1106, a bill to improve the accuracy of mortgage underwriting used by Federal mortgage agencies by ensuring that energy costs are included in the underwriting process, to reduce the amount of energy consumed by homes, to facilitate the creation of energy efficiency retrofit and construction jobs, and for other purposes.

S. 1116

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1116, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to equalize the exclusion from gross income of parking and transportation fringe benefits and to provide for a common cost-of-living adjustment, and for other purposes.

S. 1126

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1126, a bill to aid and support pediatric involvement in reading and education.

S. 1143

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1143, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act with respect to physician supervision of therapeutic hospital outpatient services.

S. 1158

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors 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. 1183

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1183, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the estate and generation-skipping transfer taxes, and for other purposes.

S. 1188

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1188, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the definition of full-time employee for purposes of the individual mandate in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 1212

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1212, a bill to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to facilitate the establishment of additional or expanded public target ranges in certain States.

S. 1240

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1240, a bill to establish a new organization to manage nuclear waste, provide a consensual process for siting nuclear waste facilities, ensure adequate funding for managing nuclear waste, and for other purposes.

S. 1267

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1267, a bill to cut taxes for innovative businesses that produce renewable chemicals.

S. 1302

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1302, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for cooperative and small employer charity pension plans.

S. 1320

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1320, a bill to establish a tiered hiring preference for members of the reserve components of the armed forces.

S. 1361

At the request of Mr. MURPHY, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1361, a bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to accept additional documentation when considering the application for veterans status of an individual who performed service as a coastwise merchant seaman during World War II, and for other purposes.

S. 1369

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1369, a bill to provide additional flexibility to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System to establish capital standards that are properly tailored to the unique characteristics of the business of insurance, and for other purposes.

S. 1381

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1381, a bill to amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to clarify provisions enacted by the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, to further the conservation of certain wildlife species, and for other purposes.

S. 1406

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1406, a bill to amend the Horse Protection Act to designate additional unlawful acts under the Act, strengthen penalties for violations of the Act,

improve Department of Agriculture enforcement of the Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1417

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 1417, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize programs under part A of title XI of such Act.

S. 1442

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1442, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the minimum low-income housing tax credit rate for unsubsidized buildings and to provide a minimum 4 percent credit rate for existing buildings.

S. 1456

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1456, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Shimon Peres.

S. 1497

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1497, a bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to apply the provisions of the Act to certain Congressional staff and members of the executive branch.

S. 1503

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1503, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the preference given, in awarding certain asthma-related grants, to certain States (those allowing trained school personnel to administer epinephrine and meeting other related requirements).

S. 1517

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1517, a bill to amend the Public Health Services Act and the Social Security Act to extend health information technology assistance eligibility to behavioral health, mental health, and substance abuse professionals and facilities, and for other purposes.

S. 1526

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1526, a bill to amend the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 to prohibit the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board from requiring public companies to use specific auditors or require the use of different auditors on a rotating basis.

S. 1565

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1565, a bill to require the Secretary of Labor to maintain a publicly available list of all employers that relocate a call center overseas, to make such companies ineligible for Federal grants or guaranteed loans, and to require disclosure of the physical location of business agents engaging in customer service communications, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 19

At the request of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 19, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.

S. RES. 75

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 75, a resolution condemning the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

S. RES. 254

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 254, a resolution designating November 2, 2013, as ''National Bison Day''.

S. RES. 269

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 269, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate on United States policy regarding possession of enrichment and reprocessing capabilities by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

S. RES. 270

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 270, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of World Polio Day and commending the international community and others for their efforts to prevent and eradicate polio.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. ALEXANDER:

S. 1590. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to require transparency in the operation of American Health Benefit Exchanges; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

OBAMACARE EXCHANGE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, before the Internet, RCA knew how many records Elvis sold every day. Before the Internet, Ford knew how many cars they were selling every day. Before the Internet, McDonald's could tell you how many hamburgers it was selling every day. Yet the Obama administration cannot tell us how many Americans have tried to sign up for ObamaCare. They can't tell us how many Americans did sign up for ObamaCare. They can't tell us what level of insurance they bought, nor can they tell us in what zip code they live.

They told us that 20 million Americans have visited the ObamaCare Web site. They have the basic information to shop, but how many have tried to sign up? How many did sign up? Where do they live? What kind of insurance did they buy? Not only have they not told us, they have done their best to keep us from finding out.

With WikiLeaks and Edward Snowden spilling our beans every day, what is happening on the ObamaCare exchanges is the biggest secret left in Washington, DC. The National Security Agency could learn lessons from Secretary Sebelius. We should not have to rely on anonymous sources to get basic information about what is happening with ObamaCare.

Therefore, I am introducing legislation today to require the administration answer the following questions every week: How many people tried to sign up? How many people did sign up? What level of insurance did they buy? In what ZIP code do they live? What are they doing to fix the problems? This is not complicated information.

In the Internet age, the administration ought to be able to provide this information not every week but every day. In fact, they should be able to provide it every minute. We should not have to pass a law to find these things out. I hope that every Senator will support this simple request that this legislation makes. It is a six-page bill. I will put it in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD today, and everyone will have a chance to read it tomorrow. After everyone has had a chance to read it, I intend to ask unanimous consent to pass it.

This Congress—both sides of the aisle—is dedicated to transparency. This administration has described itself as the most transparent administration in American history. So why should we not unanimously pass legislation to ask for the most basic information about what is happening on the ObamaCare exchanges?

Health insurance companies say that in order to guarantee that everyone has a chance to sign up for insurance before January 1, which is when the law says they must, the application has to be in by December 15. That is not very far away.

The administration has been talking about giving a grace period of a few weeks before the IRS will fine them for not having bought insurance, as

ObamaCare says most Americans must buy health insurance. Still, if the Web site is not fixed, millions of Americans will be required to sign up for health insurance on a Web site that does not work. As a consequence of not being able to sign up for health care, they will be fined by the Internal Revenue Service.

There is a much bigger problem than the fine, and that is millions of Americans may be without any health insurance at all after January 1 because their insurance is being canceled because of ObamaCare. Remember when President Obama said: If you like your insurance, you can keep it? Well, like a lot of things that have been said about ObamaCare, that is turning out not to be the case.

Our staff has counted the announcements by health insurance companies that are ceasing to offer policies on January 1 because they don't qualify under the ObamaCare law. For example, in Tennessee, the State provides 16,000 Tennesseans who have trouble getting insurance with a plan called CoverTN. Because it doesn't meet the exact requirements of ObamaCare, the State is having to cancel that insurance on January 1, and those 16,000 Tennesseans won't have health insurance.

Other Americans—for example, Tennesseans I have talked to—have what we call catastrophic insurance. They have insurance that provides for a catastrophe. That kind of insurance is often not available under ObamaCare. It is not allowed by ObamaCare for most people. An insurance company that offers these policies will not be offering them after January 1, and as a result, millions of Americans will not be able to buy the insurance they now have.

If individuals can't or won't sign up, that will mean that after January 1, many of the sickest people will go into the exchanges. The result will be that the price of insurance—for everyone who has insurance—will go through the roof. We are already seeing that in the insurance markets today.

The bottom line: If the Web site is not fixed, millions of Americans will not only be fined by the IRS for not buying insurance on a Web site that doesn't work, more importantly, they will be without health care insurance on January 1, insurance that many of them have today.

The President has said over the last few days that the Web site will be ready by November 30. You are supposed to have your application in by December 15 and have the insurance bought by January 1, which only gives 2 weeks for millions of Americans to make their way through this maze. We tried to obtain this simple information that I have asked for, yet repeatedly, the requests which I have directed to Secretary Sebelius have come back with no answer at all—no answers, nothing.

Outside analysts tell us that only ½ of 1 percent of the people who logged on to the ObamaCare Web site in the first week were able to enroll, but we really don't know.

Two weeks ago I sent a letter with House Oversight Chairman DARRELL ISSA to Secretary Sebelius, asking for the information she and the President are not giving us Such as how many people have enrolled successfully in the exchanges, what the technical problems are, how much it already costs, and how much it will cost to address these problems. The deadline for a response to our request has passed. Chairman ISSA has said—and I joined him in the letter—that he may consider a subpoena to get that information. The American people deserve an answer to these questions.

Often when the debate comes up, someone will say, Well, the Republicans don't have any proposals of their own. I have often made those proposals. I remember on this floor of the Senate many times proposing steps we should take to change our health care system so more people could afford insurance. We went back and counted the number of times when, during the health care debate, various Republicans talked about our step-by-step proposals for what we should do about health care, and there were 173 mentions of our step-by-step proposals.

The basic problem with what happened with the new health care law was that we—the Democratic Congress did, I didn't; I didn't vote for it—expanded a health care delivery system that already costs too much. That was the wrong thing to do. That was an historic mistake. What we should have done is to make changes, step by step, in the health care delivery system that would reduce the cost of health care for the largest number of Americans so more people could have afforded it. Those were the steps we should have taken. We can still do that. Our health care delivery system is nearly 20 percent of our economy.

ObamaCare is not our health care delivery system. Rather, ObamaCare includes some additions to our health care delivery system. ObamaCare is an expansion of a health care delivery system that already costs too much. The law is making some changes such as the ones I described earlier in my remarks. Those changes have been described as a train wreck, but we can turn the train around and head it in another direction—a direction of more competition, more choices, and lower costs for Americans buying health insurance.

How can we do that? That is a subject for a long discussion, but here are a few of the ideas: Make Medicare solvent. The trustees have said that in 10 years there won't be enough money to pay hospital bills. We have a duty to make Medicare solvent.

Reform Medicare Advantage to increase more choices and put it on a more level playing field with Traditional Medicare. That will provide seniors more options and it should save some money.

Make Medicaid more flexible. I was Governor. I said on the floor that every Senator who voted for ObamaCare ought to be sentenced to go home and serve as Governor and try to implement the law. During my time as Governor, Medicaid was 8 percent of the State budget. I see it has grown to 26 percent today in Tennessee, soaking up money that otherwise would go for higher education or for other needed parts of State government.

We should encourage workplace wellness. We had a lot of debate about that during the ObamaCare debate and we have ended up with a regulation that is too restrictive. We can change that.

We can allow small businesses to pool their resources and offer a larger number of plans to a larger number of Americans at prices they can afford. We can allow Americans to purchase insurance across State lines. That would reduce the cost of health care, which should be our major goal.

We could expand health care savings accounts.

There is bipartisan legislation before the Senate that would define full-time employment for purposes of the health care law—this one or any one in the future—as 40 hours instead of 30 hours. That would be a great help to American business and an even bigger help to the employees who are being forced to go from 40 hours to 30 hours—employees who most need that income, and who, by going to 30 hours, will have to go to a second part-time job, and in many cases, in doing so, lose whatever health care benefits that might be available to them. I don't know where the 30 hours came from. That sounds as though it was made in France. A made-in-America part-time job ought to be up to 40 hours.

Those are just a few of the steps we could take to turn the train around and avoid the wreck and move us in the right direction. We will be making those arguments over time. But for now, we need information about what is happening on the ObamaCare exchanges.

I intend to ask unanimous consent tomorrow to pass a simple, six-page bill. It is legislation which requires the administration to give us weekly reports about how many have tried to enroll, how many have succeeded, what ZIP Code they live in, and what level of insurance they have purchased. Congress needs to know that, if millions of Americans are going to lose insurance on January 1, before they have a way to buy it through a Web site that doesn't work. States need to know it because, as time goes on, these decisions are going to have an effect on the Medicaid Programs that States are a partner in and are operating. Americans need to know it because, in many cases—we have counted at least 1.5 million cases and we expect millions more policies that were available to Americans when the law passed will not be available after January 1. So these

Americans—and this includes people working in the Congress and people who are in the Congress—these Americans are going to have to make decisions before January 1 about what insurance they will have, because the insurance they now have isn't going to be available under the new health care law.

This is a six-page bill, and a pretty simple idea. If RCA knew how many records Elvis was selling every day, if Ford knew before the Internet age how many cars Ford was selling every day, if McDonald's before the Internet age knew how many hamburgers it was selling every day, surely the Obama administration can tell us every week how many are enrolling on ObamaCare's Web site, how many are successfully getting their insurance, where they live, and what kind of insurance they buy. The stakes are much higher than Elvis's records, than Ford's cars, and than McDonald's hamburgers. These are the stakes of health insurance that involve the lives of millions of Americans, and I hope my colleagues will join me tomorrow when I ask unanimous consent to approve legislation that will require these weekly reports.

By Mrs. HAGAN:

S. 1591. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the work opportunity credit to small businesses which hire individuals who are members of the Ready Reserve or National Guard, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. HAGAN. Mr. President, I rise today to highlight the importance of veteran unemployment and to announce the reintroduction of the ''Hire-a-Hero Act''—a bill, which I introduced with Senator Scott Brown of Massachusetts at the start of the last Congress, to make permanent the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, WOTC, for qualified veterans and members of the Ready Reserve and the National Guard.

The issue of veteran unemployment is more important today, than it has ever been.

Though the overall unemployment rate stands at 7.2 percent, the jobless rate among veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan is 10.1 percent, nearly 3 percentage points higher than the national average. Overall, 708,000 veterans are without a job.

This issue is even more important in North Carolina, because of its large active duty and veteran population. More than ⅓ of our population is either in the military, is a veteran, or has an immediate family member who is in the military or a veteran. In addition, North Carolina has 3 percent of the U.S. population, but 5 percent of the unemployed veterans.

Employers know that hiring a veteran is not only the right thing to do, but it also makes good business sense. These men and women are highly motivated, highly-trained, and have succeeded in the most trying circumstances imaginable.

I know the value of hiring veterans myself. I have three veterans and a member of the National Guard currently on my staff who bring unique perspectives to their roles that they acquired during their time in uniform. And it allows them to provide the best possible service to the people of North Carolina.

Unfortunately, the expiration of the WOTC for veterans at the end of this year could make it more difficult for employers to hire veterans.

The WOTC has been in place for many years. The credit for veterans has been subject to periodic short-term extensions. Recognizing the serious unemployment challenges facing veterans in North Carolina and the need for incentives to hire veterans, I introduced the ''Hire-a-Hero Act of 2011'' in February of 2011 to make this important tax credit permanent.

While that bill, did not become law, Congress was able to enact the Vow to Hire Heros Act of 2011 on November 21, 2011. This legislation expanded the WOTC for returning heroes and wounded warriors, by allowing larger tax credits for certain groups and extended the credit through 2012. Recognizing that this credit was set to expire, on January 2, 2013, Congress extended the credit to December 31, 2013, as a part of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012.

This crucial tax credit is set to expire again in just two months. That is why I am re-introducing the Hire-a-Hero Act with the support of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Military Officers Association of America, the National Guard Association of the United States and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. This bill would finally, make the WOTC permanent for veterans and members of the Ready Reserve and National Guard.

I urge my colleagues to consider cosponsoring this important legislation that will help address the unemployment issue among veterans in this country.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 1593. A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to enhance the protections accorded to servicemembers and their spouses with respect to mortgages, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I introduce the Servicemember Housing Protection Act along with my colleagues Senators BEGICH, WHITEHOUSE, DURBIN, and TESTER. Our country has a strong tradition of ensuring that our service members are protected while they serve to keep our nation safe. Building on such laws and efforts, in 1940, as World War II escalated across the globe, Congress enacted the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act ''to protect those who have been obliged to drop their own affairs to take up the burdens of the nation.'' In 2003, Congress passed a new version of this law to reflect the new challenges of post-9/11 service and renamed it the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, SCRA. Since that time, Congress has further amended this law, most recently in August 2012, in order to address the country's high foreclosure rates and their impact on service members.

Additionally, in 2010, when it became evident that military families needed an entity to serve as a watchdog, provide education, and help monitor and respond to concerns, questions, and complaints about consumer financial products and services, I led the bipartisan effort during the Dodd-Frank Act debate to create a new Office of Servicemember Affairs within the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, CFPB.

The Servicemember Housing Protection Act continues in this vein, and seeks to address one such ongoing challenge—helping service members with their housing needs so they can maintain a focus on the difficult task of protecting our country.

First, this bill would make it easier for service members to claim deployment-related financial and credit protections by expanding what could be submitted to constitute ''military orders.'' Currently, creditors require a copy of military orders in order to trigger SCRA protections. However, these orders are often not cut until just before deployment or once the service member is already deployed, placing a burden on some military families as they try to work with banks to secure SCRA protections. Broadening the scope of what could be submitted to trigger protections before orders have been received would further ensure that service members have more time to prepare for deployment and promptly receive SCRA protections, including the interest rate limitation of six percent on qualifying mortgages.

Second, this bill would extend foreclosure protections to surviving spouses. Currently, service members have a 1-year window of foreclosure protection following service, to provide time to reacclimate to civilian life and get their personal affairs back in order. Our bill extends this one-year window of foreclosure protection to a surviving spouse who is the successor in interest to the home. After suffering such an unspeakable loss, a military spouse should not have the additional burden of dealing with immediate foreclosure.

Lastly, this bill would help facilitate the transition from off-base to on-base housing. Due to the shortage of on-base military housing, many service members temporarily find off-base housing until on-base housing becomes available. When a service member on a waiting list is given the chance to move into on-base housing, he or she is sometimes unable to terminate his or her off-base housing lease. Including an

order or opportunity to move from off-base to on-base housing as additional grounds for lease termination would allow service members and their families the chance to move into the military housing community. Several States, including Florida, Georgia, and Virginia, have similar laws, and we should extend this opportunity to service members serving at any of our military bases.

While the men and women of our Armed Forces are protecting our Nation overseas, we should do everything possible to protect their families and homes. I urge my colleagues to join Senators BEGICH, WHITEHOUSE, DURBIN, TESTER and me, as well as the Military Officers Association of America and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, in supporting this bill, and taking these next steps to add protections for our military families.

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S.J. Res. 26. A joint resolution relating to the disapproval of the President's exercise of authority to suspend the debt limit, as submitted under section 1002(b) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2014 on October 17, 2013; placed on the calendar.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the joint resolution be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the joint resolution was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S.J. RES. 26

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves of the President's exercise of authority to suspend the debt limit, as exercised pursuant to the certification under section 1002(b) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2014.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 275—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 29, 2013, AS ''NATIONAL TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION DAY'' TO RECOGNIZE THAT TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION IS CRITICAL TO THE UNITED STATES ECONOMY AND COMMEMORATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF INNOVATION TO PROSPERITY IN THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 275

Whereas the economic growth and prosperity of the United States is dependent on the continued innovation and entrepreneurial spirit of citizens of the United States;

Whereas domestic innovators and their efforts to promote invention have created entire segments of the United States economy;

Whereas many of the greatest companies in the United States have formed in humble labs, garages, and homes, and have come to fruition through the creative and determined efforts of the founders and early workers of such companies;

Whereas great universities, national labs, and research organizations in the United States have contributed to the technological, intellectual, and moral growth of the United States by expanding the frontiers of human knowledge;

Whereas the United States is home to leading corporations that grow by responding to changing times with innovative products and strategies;

Whereas 347 Nobel Laureates, the recipients of more than one-third of all Nobel Prize awards, are citizens of the United States;

Whereas inventions from the United States, such as the light bulb, polio vaccine, laser, communications satellite, and global positioning system, have profoundly and positively benefitted the way of life in the United States and around the world;

Whereas the Internet, an incredible invention that emerged at the end of the 20th century, continues to revolutionize life and pave the way for new industries, businesses, and industrial leaders;

Whereas in the course of completing a project funded by the United States Government, a partnership of universities invented the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET), the precursor of the Internet, demonstrating the creative power of focused government action magnified by the effort of individuals in the United States;

Whereas on October 29, 1969, 2 computers, 1 at the University of California, Los Angeles and the other at the Stanford Research Institute, exchanged electronic messages or ARPANET for the first time; and

Whereas the continued inspiration of citizens of the United States to take risks, pursue dreams, and change the world through improved technology will make the world a richer place: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors United States inventors and entrepreneurs who have taken the initiative to advance technology and productivity in the United States;

(2) designates October 29, 2013, as ''National Technological Innovation Day'';

(3) calls on individuals of the United States to observe the day by participating in activities that celebrate the history of innovation in the United States; and

(4) encourages youth and individuals of the United States to continue to enhance the future with invention, dedication, and entrepreneurship.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet during the session of the Senate on October 30, 2013, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:30 p.m., to consider the following legislation: S. 235, to provide for the conveyance of certain property located in Anchorage, AK, from the United States to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium; S. 611, to make a technical amendment to the T'uf Shur Bien Preservation Trust Area Act, and for other purposes; and S. 920, to allow the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in the State of Minnesota to lease or transfer certain land.

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at (202) 224–2251.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet during the session of the Senate on October 30, 2013, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing to receive testimony on the following bills: S. 1074, to extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe; S. 1132, to provide for the recognition of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, and for other purposes; and S. 161, to extend the Federal recognition to the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana, and for other purposes.

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at (202) 224–2251.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Molly Ganley, Katrina Rogachevsky, and Thomas Hecht of my staff be granted floor privileges for the duration of today's session.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S.J. RES. 26

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following any leader remarks on Tuesday, October 29, the Republican leader or his designee be recognized to move to proceed to Calendar No. 223, S.J. Res. 26, a joint resolution relating to the disapproval of the President's exercise of authority to increase the debt limit; that the time until 12:30 p.m. tomorrow be for debate on the motion to proceed, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees; that at 2:15 p.m. the Senate proceed to vote on adoption of the motion to proceed; that if the motion is successful, then the time for debate with respect to the joint resolution be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the joint resolution be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the joint resolution; finally, that all other provisions of the statute governing consideration of the joint resolution remain in effect.

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

VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2013

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 165, S. 893.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 893) to provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2013, in the rate of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time 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 (S. 893) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 893

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 ''Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

(a) RATE ADJUSTMENT.—Effective on December 1, 2013, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall increase, in accordance with subsection (c), the dollar amounts in effect on November 30, 2013, for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation under the provisions specified in subsection (b).

(b) AMOUNTS TO BE INCREASED.—The dollar amounts to be increased pursuant to subsection (a) are the following:

(1) WARTIME DISABILITY COMPENSATION.—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1114 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1115(1) of such title.

(3) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.—The dollar amount under section 1162 of such title.

(4) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO SURVIVING SPOUSE.—Each of the dollar amounts under subsections (a) through (d) of section 1311 of such title.

(5) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO CHILDREN.—Each of the dollar amounts under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

(c) DETERMINATION OF INCREASE.—Each dollar amount described in subsection (b) shall be increased by the same percentage as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) are increased effective December 1, 2013, as a result of a determination under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

(d) SPECIAL RULE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may adjust administratively, consistent with the increases made under subsection (a), the rates of disability compensation payable to persons under section 10 of Public Law 85–857 (72 Stat. 1263) who have not received compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

(e) PUBLICATION OF ADJUSTED RATES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal Register the amounts specified in subsection (b), as increased under subsection (a), not later than the date on which the matters specified in section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) are required to be published by reason of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act during fiscal year 2014.

NATIONAL TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION DAY

Mr. REID. I now ask unanimous consent to proceed to S. Res. 275.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 275) designating October 29, 2013, as ''National Technological Innovation Day'' to recognize that technological innovation is critical to the United States economy and commemorating the contributions of innovation to prosperity in the United States and abroad.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

(The resolution (S. Res. 275), with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 1592

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am told there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1592) to provide for a delay of the individual mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act until the American Health Benefit Exchanges are functioning properly.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading on this measure and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2013

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, October 29, 2013; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate consider the motion to proceed to S.J. Res. 26, as provided for under the previous order; and that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for our weekly caucus meetings; further, that following the disposition of S.J. Res. 26, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 344, the nomination of Richard Griffin to be General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board, with up to 2 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled in the usual form prior to the cloture vote on the nomination.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. So, Mr. President, at 2:15 p.m. or thereabouts tomorrow we should have two rollcall votes.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:53 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, October 29, 2013, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

UNITED STATES ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

ALFREDO J. BALSERA, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 1, 2014, VICE ELIZABETH F. BAGLEY, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

JEH CHARLES JOHNSON, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY, VICE JANET ANN NAPOLITANO, RESIGNED.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 8081:

To be major general

COL. ROOSEVELT ALLEN, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. PAUL S. DWAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIGADIER GENERAL CATHERINE A. CHILTON
BRIGADIER GENERAL STAYCE D. HARRIS
BRIGADIER GENERAL WILLIAM B. WALDROP, JR.
BRIGADIER GENERAL TOMMY J. WILLIAMS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. LISA L. TURNER

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COLONEL JAMES T. IACOCCA
COLONEL DANIEL G. MITCHELL
COLONEL KURT L. SONNTAG

THE FOLLOWING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be brigadier general

COL. ANTHONY L. HALL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624, 3037 AND 3064:

To be brigadier general, judge advocate general's corps

COL. PAUL S. WILSON

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) REBECCA J. MCCORMICK–BOYLE

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY AS A CHAPLAIN UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be major

JESUS M. MUNOZLASALLE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

WAYNE J. AARON
DIANNE C. DIGIAMBERDEAL
WILLIAM J. ERLE
BRIAN P. GOLDEN
THOMAS J. GREEN
CHRISTOPHER R. HEDRICK
CRAIG J. JACOBSEN
ARTHUR F. KAFF
FRANCIS V. KELLY
JEFFREY S. KOPP
LAURA J. KURZYNA
OWEN D. LEWIS
RICHARD W. LONG
TOBY D. MCCOY
WILLIAM F. OSBURN II
LAMAR D. TURNER
DAVID M. WARD
ANN H. ZGRODNIK

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

JOHN R. DOOLITTLE II
BAUCUM W. FULK

WITHDRAWAL

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on October 28, 2013 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nomination:

RONALD J. BINZ, OF COLORADO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION FOR THE TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2018, VICE JON WELLINGHOFF, TERM EXPIRING, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON JUNE 27, 2013.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF INTERNATIONAL DAY OF RADIOLOGY

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the International Day of Radiology, and draw attention to the vital role that diagnostic imaging and radiation therapy serve in the American health care system. The International Day of Radiology is observed annually on November 8—an important date in medical and world history. On that day in 1895, Professor Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen discovered X-rays, which ultimately led to modern medical imaging and radiation therapy. This year, the 118th anniversary of Roentgen's discovery, will focus on lung imaging, and be commemorated by many groups, including the American College of Radiology (ACR), the Radiological Society of North America and the European Society of Radiology.

Radiologists (physicians with special training in imaging), radiation oncologists (physicians trained to treat cancer with radiation) and the imaging community continue to move medicine forward. Most recently, lung computed tomography (CT) scans were shown by clinical trials to significantly reduce lung cancer deaths among smokers. In response to the positive results generated from these trials, the ACR will issue CT lung cancer screening guidelines and standards. Nationwide, CT screening programs for lung cancer, including teams of health care providers from various medical specialties, will follow. These multidisciplinary screening programs will save tens of thousands of lives each year from the nation's leading cancer killer.

Medical imaging has been shown to help lower many cancer and hospital mortality rates. A 2009 National Bureau of Economic Research (BEA) report found that individuals with greater access to imaging live longer than those with lesser access. Imaging exams also reduce the number of invasive surgeries, unnecessary hospital admissions and lengths of hospital stays, which can lower health care costs.

The U.S. National Academy of Engineering recognized the tremendous contribution of medical imaging when it ranked imaging among the 20 greatest engineering achievements of the 20th century. Most telling, the New England Journal of Medicine named medical imaging one of the top 10 medical advances of the last 1,000 years.

With its incredible impact on patients' health, and significant benefit to the American health care system, I am pleased to recognize the importance of diagnostic imaging and radiation oncology, and call attention to November 8 as the International Day of Radiology.

HONORING THE WORK OF MY LIFE SPEAKS

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, a great society is often given their place in history based on how they serve the least among them. A great people are often judged from how well they serve the least of all. I rise today to honor the work of My Life Speaks as they work to bring aid to orphans in Haiti.

Cited as one of the poorest countries in the world, Haiti has almost 500,000 orphans. With high illiteracy and unemployment rates, the Haitian society struggles with poverty, and the high orphan rate it accompanies. Often forgotten, children with special needs are orphaned and overlooked completely. My Life Speaks works to provide the best quality of life possible to orphans, those with and without special needs, by providing safe housing, quality education, and accessible medical care.

I ask my colleagues to join with me in celebrating the good work of all who follow the call of the Almighty to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and care for the orphan. May our vocations be a light of the old prayer, "at the end of our lives, may we all be found in the service of others."

IN RECOGNITION OF THE KOREAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL NEW YORK

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, during the Korean War, almost two million American soldiers, including myself, fought to defend freedom and democracy for a country and people they did not know. Despite the tragic losses and extreme hardships endured by the Korean people and those who fought in their defense, little is known about the war and its aftermath. I proudly recognize the Korean American Film Festival New York (KAFFNY) and its efforts to educate and inform the New York community about the so-called "Forgotten War" through presenting new opportunities for intercommunity outreach.

Through their organization, the KAFFNY has brought attention to the Korean Diaspora and Korean-American experience, recognizing and supporting new filmmakers and artists in the community. This year, the KAFFNY explores how the reverberations of the Korean War are still felt to this day and how they are explored in the area of film. Their festival taking place from October 24–26, 2013, commemorates the 60th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice. It premiers some of the richest and most diverse selection of films on the Korean War, such as the world premiering of "Fading Away" by Christopher H.K. Lee, a seven-part documentary based on the account of a 13-year-old Korean orphan who fled North Korea to the South.

Putting their own personal time and resources into promoting films which help connect us to other communities-at-large, domestically and globally, the KAFFNY continues to play a vital role in the Great City of New York, as it works to spread the story of the Korean War, which I and my comrades believe should be referred as the 'Forgotten Victory.'

Since returning home from my service in the Korean War over six decades ago, I have witnessed the Korean American community flourish in New York City and across the United States and am very proud of all their contributions to the American fabric.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. EVERETTE J. FREEMAN

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding leader, Dr. Everette J. Freeman, the Eighth President of Albany State University, who will be leaving the school after eight successful and productive years as President. He was honored at a farewell reception on Thursday, October 24, 2013, at Orene Hall on the ASU campus.

Dr. Freeman is a Washington, D.C. native and alumnus of Antioch College with a bachelor of arts degree in sociology and economics. He also earned a master's in labor and industrial relations from the University of Illinois, and a doctorate in education from Rutgers University. He holds a certificate from the Institute for Educational Leadership at Harvard University, as well as a Certificate in Economics from Fircroft College in Birmingham, England.

Prior to his tenure at Albany State, Dr. Freeman made his mark on several institutes of higher learning, serving as senior vice president and provost of the University of Indianapolis, dean of continuing education at Jackson State University, and executive assistant to the president at Tennessee State University. He also acted as interim vice president for university relations and development at Tennessee State.

The Second Congressional District of Georgia gained a valuable and respected leader when Dr. Freeman came to Albany. He has transformed Albany State University, both fiscally and academically. Despite State budget cuts, he initiated new online programs and joint enrollment policies, led the fiscal affairs division from the worst audit ratings to the best, and facilitated the transition of students from technical colleges into the University. Moreover, Dr. Freeman has demonstrated a continued dedication to improving the academic community at ASU. Under his strategic

leadership, the University saw simultaneous annual enrollment increases and higher SAT scores of entering classes.

In addition, Dr. Freeman oversaw $20 million in capital improvements to the Albany State campus, including a state-of-the-art student center, a learning center, and six residence halls. The positive impact of the construction reverberated throughout the student community, as well as in the surrounding city. The relationship between ASU and the Greater Albany area has been significantly strengthened, as the University's economic impact on the city reached $156 million during Dr. Freeman's time as president. Dr. Freeman also worked to establish partnerships with several local businesses, further improving the town and gown relationship between Albany and ASU.

On a personal note, I am proud to call Dr. Freeman a friend and I am so grateful for all he has done for Albany State University and the Albany community. His heartfelt dedication to this school will be felt and remembered for years to come.

Nelson Henderson once said, ''The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit.'' Dr. Freeman has not only planted trees of knowledge whose fruit ASU students and alumni can yield, but he has also planted the seeds of success for future generations of Albany State University Golden Rams.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Dr. Everette J. Freeman for his eight outstanding years as President of Albany State University. His energizing leadership and his commitment to academic excellence has helped to make lasting improvements to Albany State University so to better provide current and future students with the tools they need to lead successful and productive lives.

WILEY COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EXHIBITION DEBATE

HON. LOUIE GOHMERT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, today, we recognize and celebrate the Wiley College and University of Southern California debate teams on their Exhibition Debate. On October 25, 2013 the Wiley College and USC debate teams will reenact their historic debate of 1935.

The 1935 debate was depicted in the 2007 movie, ''The Great Debaters,'' which Denzel Washington starred in and directed. ''The Great Debaters'' tells the story of Wiley's defeat of USC, the then reigning national forensics champion, under the direction of Professor Melvin B. Tolson. Following the release of the movie, Denzel Washington donated $1 million to Wiley College to revive the debate team.

October 25th will not be the first meeting of the teams in recent years. In 2012, USC traveled to Wiley College in Texas' 1st Congressional District for an exhibition match with the great debaters at the Julius S. Scott Sr. Chapel. At the conclusion of the evening, both teams were declared victors and they committed to another match at USC. The Wiley College team also known as the Melvin B. Tolson/Denzel Washington Forensics Society, will be represented by Sophomore Lyle Keinman and Junior Nathan Leal along with team director, Christopher Medina.

Now ranked fourth in the nation, Wiley's debate team completed its 2012–2013 season of competition having amassed 82 national awards, 368 season-long awards, 16 championship trophies, and the first team title by a historically black college. The debate team is affiliated with Pi Kappa Delta, the National Forensics Association, and the American Forensics Association.

We commend both Wiley College and USC in their efforts on enhancing students' critical thinking skills through the medium of debate. We wish the best for both teams and look forward to have such a historical event re-enacted in the California 37th Congressional District.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. BRAD WILLIAMS

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Brad Williams who will be installed as the 2014 Chairman of the Board for the National Apartment Association on November 8, 2013.

As a native of Dallas, Texas, Mr. Williams is a graduate of the University of Texas with a degree in History, holds a Certificate of Real Estate from Southern Methodist University, and has received the Certified Property Manager designation from the Institute of Real Estate Management. He has over 40 years of experience in property management with Lincoln Property Company and is responsible for management of over 50,000 rental units throughout Texas and the Midwest.

Mr. Williams is the past President of the Apartment Association of Greater Dallas and the Texas Apartment Association. In addition, he has served as the Chairman of the National Apartment Association's Political Action Committee for the last three years and currently serves on the Executive Committee for the National Apartment Association. As Chairman of the Board, Mr. Williams will lead the National Apartment Association towards continued success as America's leading advocate for quality rental housing, serving the interests of rental housing owners, managers, developers and suppliers, and promoting a high level of professionalism in the rental housing industry to better serve the housing needs of the public.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my esteemed colleagues to join me in expressing our heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Mr. Brad Williams as he guides the National Apartment Association this upcoming year as Chairman of the Board.

VETERAN HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE JOSEPH K. VRABEL

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Joseph Vrabel. Joe served in the United States Army during the Korean War. Upon his return, he served his fellow veterans by joining the Veterans of Foreign Wars in 1956, and soon thereafter, becoming Post Commander. His service continued as a Life Member of the American Legion Mahoning Valley Post 15, where he served five years as Post Commander, going on to serve as Mahoning County Commander of the Dynamic Ninth District; and then proceeding on to serve as the American Legion Department of Ohio Commander. Joe was an enthusiastic supporter of the American Legion's Buckeye Boys State, promoting the program whenever he could and securing local sponsorships which would allow the youth of this area to gain first-hand experience in state government. Joe was a significant supporter of the Gifts for the Yanks program which provided gifts for hospitalized veterans during the Christmas season. Joe was instrumental in obtaining a van to transport veterans from Youngstown to the Cleveland American Legion, where he served as Post 15 Sons of the American Legion Advisor for 15 years. In addition, he spent countless hours as a member of Mahoning Valley Post 15's Honor Guard and Color Guard, providing final military honors to his fellow veterans. Joe was locally known as the ''Veteran's Veteran'', for his dedicated work with veterans. As the owner of Hillcrest Tavern, Joe was able to support local youth sports teams, mainly golf, bowling, and softball in his hometown of Poland, Ohio. For his significant contributions to the veterans and youth of the Mahoning Valley, Joe is very worthy to be inducted, posthumously, into the 2013 Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame.

HONORING SUNCOAST HIGH SCHOOL IN RIVIERA BEACH, FLORIDA ON CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN PROVIDING SECONDARY EDUCATION

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Suncoast High School in Riviera Beach, Florida on the occasion of its 25th anniversary as an institution of secondary education in Palm Beach County.

This remarkable school is perennially ranked as a top high school in America, as it offers a wealth of coursework in Math, Science and Engineering, Computer Science, International Baccalaureate studies, as well as Interactive Technology magnet programs. Children from across Palm Beach County seek admission to Suncoast for its acknowledged excellence in comprehensively educating students. The school has also become renowned in the community for the diligent attention that the faculty and staff offer to their students.

These students leave prepared for whatever career aspirations they may have. And for those that do choose to pursue an undergraduate degree, Suncoast students do not simply matriculate. They are challenged to succeed in college, and many have gone on to have successful careers in an array of fields. Currently led by Principal Dr. Linda Cartledge and a very talented faculty and staff, Suncoast has earned the respect of professional educators from across the country.

I am always delighted and impressed when I hear about the latest awards and honors accrued by Suncoast High School. Twenty-five years of high-standard education is something we should all admire. Suncoast is representative of the best America has to offer its young people, and its reputation is one to which all schools aspire.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to recognize Suncoast High School for their invaluable commitment to preparing the young minds of Palm Beach County, and their leadership as a positive example for success in secondary education. I congratulate them again and wish them many more years as one of America's top high schools.

HONORING HANNAH KRANZBERG

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Hannah Kranzberg, who today is receiving the Guardian of Democracy award from the New Israel Fund for her longtime service to the global community promoting peace, justice, and social and economic equality.

Before moving to the San Francisco Bay Area from her native New York in the 1970's, Hannah taught in an all-day neighborhood school program in Brooklyn as part of a broader effort to provide enrichment programs to children who lived in disadvantaged communities.

Then, as an activist in the San Francisco Bay Area, Hannah continued her interest in making and supporting social documentaries that brought important issues to the attention of the public. As an artist, she was also one of three principal individuals who painted the People's Park mural in Berkeley in 1976, which is now a local landmark with major historic and cultural significance.

In the last 40 years, Hannah's significant philanthropic work has left a lasting impact on our society. She has supported organizations that advocate everything from human rights and civil rights, economic and social justice, and conflict transformation in a local, national and global context. I am proud to call her my confidant, my supporter, but most importantly, my friend.

As part of her long term efforts to advance women's equality locally and throughout the world, Hannah was a supporter of the San Francisco Women's Building, the first woman-owned and operated community center in the country, which advocates self-determination, gender equality and social justice. She has also supported the Global Fund for Women, a non-profit that provides grants to women-led organizations worldwide to enable women and girls to reach their potential, and to live free of discrimination and violence. In addition, she has been a founding contributor to the Urgent Action Fund for women's human rights, which provides rapid response grants to women human rights defenders throughout the world.

The spectrum of Hannah's philanthropic work is wide-reaching. She contributed to the founding of La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley, California. She is also an ongoing advocate of the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center in Oakland, California, which offers nonviolence classes and civic engagement for youth from diverse racial and cultural communities. She has been a supporter of the Funding Exchange, the Berkeley Community Fund, the Women's Initiative for Self-Employment, the Rosenberg Fund for Children, the American Jewish World Service, Jewish Family & Children's Services of the East Bay, Equal Rights Advocates, the ACLU, The Center for Constitutional Rights, MALDEF, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the United Negro College Fund, the Freedom Archives, California Rural Legal Assistance, and the Southern Poverty Law Center, to name just a few.

Beyond that, Hannah is a coalition builder. She serves on the Regional Board of the New Israel Fund, and as a longtime supporter of the Peace Development Fund, she has sought to bring together communities as well as oppressed and marginalized groups of people to enhance opportunities for movement building.

Hannah continues to be a supporter of innovative community-based cultural institutions, including groundbreaking social documentaries, among them, the Oscar nominated ''Forever Activists: Stories from the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade,'' a documentary about seven American veterans of the Spanish Civil War, ''The Barber of Birmingham,'' a documentary about James Armstrong, one of the unsung heroes of the U.S. civil rights movement, and ''Discovering Dominga: A Survivor's Story,'' about the 1982 Guatemalan massacre of 200 villagers who opposed the construction of a dam sponsored by the World Bank.

Therefore, on behalf of California's 13th Congressional District, I salute you, Hannah Kranzberg. Your 40 years of committed activism for peace, justice, and equality, has made an indelible mark in our community, and you are truly worthy of being called a Guardian of Democracy.

IN RECOGNITION OF LEONARD R. SENDELSKY

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Leonard R. Sendelsky as he is honored by the New Jersey Builders Association with its first Lifetime Achievement Award.

Leonard Sendelsky has been a member of the New Jersey Builders Association (NJBA) Board of Directors since 1960. He has served as secretary, treasurer, second vice president, first vice president, and president. He has also served on various committees, including the Legislative Committee and Codes Committee and helped get the NJ State Uniform Construction Code Act signed by Governor Brendan Byrne in 1975. In 1967 and 1989 he was chosen as NJBA Builder of the Year. He has also been honored with the Silver Hammer Award, Legend of Housing Award and the Golden Hammer Award.

In addition to his service on the NJBA, Mr. Sendelsky is also an active member of the Shore Builders Association of Central New Jersey. He has served on the Board of Directors since 1957, has held various leadership positions and has served as chairman on several committees. He received the Builder of the Year Award in both 1966 and 1989. Likewise, he was a member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Home Builders from 1963 until 2011 and currently serves as the National Area Chairman Representative.

The son of a carpenter and homebuilder, Mr. Sendelsky founded Lenguy Construction Company in 1958 and today owns and operates many additional corporations. He was inducted into the New Jersey Builders Hall of Fame in 1974 and the National Housing Center Hall of Fame in 2004. Mr. Sendelsky is a member of the New Jersey State Uniform Construction Code Advisory Board, a member of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Committee on Uniform Sub-division Site Improvement Standards, Chairman of the Middlesex County Uniform Construction Board of Appeals and is also an active member of his community. He is a long-time resident of Colonia along with his wife of nearly 60 years, Judith Kuhn Sendelsky. They have two sons, Leonard Drew and Guy Sean.

Mr. Speaker, once again, please join me in honoring Leonard Sendelsky for his outstanding contributions to the building industry. He is truly deserving of the New Jersey Builders Association Lifetime Achievement Award and this body's recognition.

HONORING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FINANCE AUTHORITY OF MAINE AND THE 2013 SHOWCASE MAINE AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Finance Authority of Maine as it celebrates 30 years of helping Maine citizens pursue business and higher education opportunities, as well as the recipients of its 2013 Showcase Maine Awards.

The Finance Authority of Maine, also known as FAME, was founded in 1983 as the state's business finance agency. By increasing access to capital, its innovative programs enable the start up and growth of the state's business community. Since 1990, FAME has also been responsible for administering Maine's higher education finance programs, helping Maine students and families meet the costs of higher education through a variety of loan, grant and scholarship programs. It also administers an outreach and counseling program that helps inspire and empower young people to pursue higher education.

Each year, the Finance Authority of Maine honors community members that have been exceptional partners in their efforts to aid the

Maine business community and Maine students at the Showcase Maine Awards. This year's award recipients include: the Hodgdon Group, recipient of the Business at Work for Maine Award; Jim Wellehan, recipient of the Education at Work for Maine Award; the Honorable Mary Nelson, recipient of the Dirigo Legislative Champion Award; and Camden National Bank, recipient of the Financial Institution of the Year Award.

These award-winners exemplify the hard-working and innovative spirit of Maine. Their dedication and leadership make Maine a better place to live and do business.

Mr. Speaker, please join me again in congratulating the Finance Authority of Maine and the 2013 Showcase Maine Award recipients on their outstanding service and achievement.

IN HONOR OF LCPL SEAN ADAMS

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of Georgia's most heroic sons, Combat Engineer LCpl Sean Adams of 1 CEB, 1/8 United States Marine Corps. LCpl Adams is from my District in Gainesville. In Helmond, Afghanistan, LCpl Adams or Big Country as he is called by his platoon, stepped on a 25-pound IED. It nearly killed him. He lay there in the field for sixty minutes before the air evac arrived. He lost both of his legs and sustained numerous other life threatening injuries. He has come back from the dead after 17 months at Walter Reed Hospital. His courage and his family's support have helped pull him from the abyss. He has a passion for football, baseball and his Georgia Bull Dogs. He possesses a need for speed; he loves stock cars and racing. He plans to start a business related to cars when he gets back home. I submit this poem penned in his honor by Albert Caswell.

A PEDAL TO THE METAL MARINE

(By Albert Caswell)

A . . .
A Pedal!
A Pedal To The Metal Marine!
Built for honor!
Built for speed!
Being a grunt,
is but his most heroic of all creeds!
As a Sapper all out on the hunt!
Oh what a combination,
a Bull Dog and a Devil Dog,
to so confront the enemy all at speed!
Clearing the way both night and day!
When every moment counts,
that full amount . . .
all for his Band of Brothers in need!
So serving his home of the brave,
and land of the free,
as one fine Georgian United States Marine!
All in search of the enemy!
From 0 to 60 Sean,
was built for speed!
As one who so locks and loads!
As one who so lives by a code!
A code of Strength In Honor,
all in those most magnificent shades of green!
For he's bad to the bone!
As he puts it to the floor!
While, all at speeds himself he'd so ignore!
Big Country was Georgia born,
and Georgia bred!
Whose colors would not so run even as his blood ran red!
As he loves his stock cars,
and his Bull Dogs!
And loves his country music,
as ever so courageously forth he so charged!
And maybe Toby Keith,
might write a song about him, that bard!
Who so heroically answered his Nation's call!
That Call to War!
But for The Greater Good,
as himself he so ignored!
To so wear those most heroic shades of green!
To become,
one of Nation's greatest of all things!
A United States Georgia Bull Dog Devil Dog Marine!
Oh rahhh!
A Bull Dog and a Devil Dog,
there's nothing more Dognatious so as seen!
All for God and Country Big Country,
you have so fought and bled!
And you have given up so much lying,
lying there so very close to death!
All in what your Strength In Honor has so said!
Let's look under the hood!
And see that engine that we call his heart,
which so gives Sean all of that power he so needs to start!
Start all over again!
From 0 to 60 like no one could!
Yea you're not getting close!
As he puts that pedal to the metal,
oh what a turbo boost!
So sapping all those in his path to recovery!
Making pain and heartache disappear at all speeds!
To get him to the finish line and victory!
With a force of nature,
that which so made the enemy grieve!
For he's a bad boy,
who on a battlefield of honor so lived his creed!
Turbo charged putting it into high gear,
as into those turns as he'd gain speed!
Marching forth so all without fear,
but to so pursue the enemy!
And he so loves his Atlanta Braves,
and would love to throw out the first ball one day!
Or hang out with Falcons,
because both of them are but birds of prey!
And for those Georgia Bull Dogs,
as its for them he now so bleeds!
Making this Dog's heart bark, continually!
Rouuuuughhh Roughhhhh,
watch out in The SEC there's hell to pay!
As it was out on his tour!
As an IED went off and death was almost so assured!
With his two strong legs so lost,
and so many injuries more!
For 60 minutes he lay there without help before!
Before helo picked him up!
As Big Country had a choice,
to so listen to that inner voice!
And put it into gear,
and put it to the floor!
And make it to the finish line for a pit stop,
so he could but live one day more!
Or leave this world for sure!
As one day somehow,
Sean would walk out of that hospital door!
Just like Chip Foose,
he had some OVERHAULING TO DO FOR SURE!
As they took this Hero into the shop,
to a place called Walter Reed which above them all stands high atop,
where the Nurses and Doctors are the cream of the crop!
Where these Heroines and Heroes,
so know how to death to stop!
And how to rebuild and remodel and restore,
and OVERHAUL America's finest of all Heroes so for sure!
And when he came out,
Big Country's work had just begun!
Because,
his engine was running a little rough my son!
And with each new day such pain begun!
But Bull Dog's and Devil Dog's don't know how to run!
And no matter how matter laps he had to take,
he was but in a DOGNATIOUS STATE!
And you could still hear his engine roar!
As he put that pedal to the metal,
in first place to come so for sure!
Crossing that finish line,
because of all what he had endured!
To rebuild and to restore!
Holding that winners cup high above his head!
All in what his faith and courage,
in The Game of Life his had so said!
As straight to victory lap his heart so sped!
And all of you stock car boys and gals,
you most famous drivers all of this world so now!
You gotta give this good old boy some major cred!
Because from 0 to 60,
from the beginning,
all of the way to the very end his heart has led!
And I don't think you want to go up against this Big Country,
this Georgia Bull Dog on the race track of life head to head!
Cause it's going to get pretty bumpy,
if you catch his draft!
Because, until you've been through,
what he's been through . . .
nothing stops you in your path!
Because, in The Game of Life . . .
all at such high speeds Sean gave all that he would so need!
Was asked!
And when all out in front of him in that fast lane,
pity and sorrow was strewn all across his path!
He took it up high,
and put it into gear . . .
and blew past all of that sorrow and loss he so sped!
Leaving them all in his dust,
as he put that pedal to the medal . . .
and with a tears in his eyes he put it into turbo thrust!
As to all of that heartache and sorrow,
said goodbye!
Because, he's got a life to lead!
And because its all in his DNA,
all in Big Country's need for speed!
As now he's in his victory lap called recovery!
While, down in Georgia they all scream and shout . . .
Big County's coming home so soon no doubt!
And On The Road of Life,
look for him way up out ahead!
For there's so much we can all so learn from him,
all in what his short life has said!
In life we all must make those final choices!
When up ahead there lies such forces . . .
Do we so listen to our most inner voices?
Will we down shift and lose our path?
Or we take it up high,
and leave heartache and sorrow so far behind as her we so pass?
And put that pedal to the medal,
making those Angels up in heaven so smile and laugh!
Sean the results are in,
the checked flag is now waving you home . . .
waving you in!
As the next part of your new great life,
is all so ready to so begin!

Go ahead!
START YOUR ENGINES!
And put that pedal to the metal,
you most Dogmatic of all ones!
I low bout them Dogs!
ROOOGHHH ROOOGHH!
For you are one of Georgia's Most Heroic Sons!

VETERAN HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE ROGER H. GARDNER

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished military service of Roger Gardner as he is inducted into the 2013 Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame. Roger has been a member of the American Legion Post 540 Honor Guard in Cortland since 1957, and served as Commander and Captain since 2000. Under his leadership, the Honor Guard has participated in 2,281 funerals. He is actively involved in local Memorial Day and Veterans Day activities each year. As a Post Commander, he was instrumental in the construction of several veterans' memorials in the area, most notably the Korean War Monument in Trumbull County Veterans Park. Roger has logged over 8,000 volunteer hours between the Warren Community Base Outpatient Clinic and the Youngstown VA Clinic. He is an active speaker in the "Tell America" program in local schools, where he shares his military experiences and encourages patriotism among young people. He has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors, some of which include the Mahoning County United Veterans Council Veteran of the Year; the Tri-County Funeral Directors Association Award for Community Service for his diligent work as Captain of American Legion's Post 540 Honor Guard; and the Warren Tribune-Chronicle Community Star Award for his significant contributions to the Warren area. Roger is deeply committed to serving the veterans of Trumbull County and is very worthy of being inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ORLANDO DAY NURSERY

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible contributions of the Orlando Day Nursery.

Founded in 1921 as an all-volunteer organization, Orlando Day Nursery Association, Inc. (ODN) has provided early childhood care and education services to working-poor families living in Central Florida for 91 years. The Nursery has been recognized as the oldest childcare in the South Eastern U.S. by Childcare Exchange. President George H.W. Bush recognized ODN as the 909th Daily Point of Light Award and America's Promise Alliance honored ODN with the Keeping the Promise Award.

ODN makes a concerted effort at laying a positive foundation for low income preschoolers in order to ward off the negative self-concept and academic problems these children often face. ODN's HighScope curriculum is backed by over forty years of studies proving its effectiveness in preparing at-risk children for school and life. Monthly parenting classes and family activities organized by ODN help Central Florida parents improve their parenting skills and become better equipped to fulfill their role as their child's first teacher.

In order to better care for children outside of the classroom, ODN started an afterschool program in 2011 and a tutoring program in January of 2012. ODN has also initiated an Early Head Start classroom and began offering a transitional kindergarten program for children who are five-years-old but not ready for the public school structure.

ODN partners with many local organizations to meet the needs of its students and their families. The University of Central Florida (UCF) sends nursing students to help track obesity rates at ODN. UCF's Audiology and Speech students also screen all of the children at ODN and provide services to children with speech and language delays. The Winter Park Day Nursery partners with ODN for staff training and curriculum development.

ODN works hard to keep fees low so that no child is left without quality care and early education. ODN provides childcare services for the Salvation Army's homeless shelter, Harbor House, and the Coalition for the Homeless.

The Board of Directors of ODN is a committed group of outstanding citizens that work to achieve ODN's mission: to develop the whole child by providing high-quality, affordable care and early childhood education services in the Orlando area. ODN supports the whole family, as they are the foundation from which our children develop.

I am proud to honor the Orlando Day Nursery for all of its outstanding accomplishments and its contributions to the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF DR. JONATHAN D. JANSEN

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished public service of Jonathan D. Jansen as he receives this year's Alice and Clifford Spendlove Prize in Social Justice, Diplomacy and Tolerance presented by the University of California, Merced (UC Merced). Dr. Jansen is the Vice Chancellor and Rector of the University of the Free State and South Africa's first black dean.

Dr. Jansen was born on September 29, 1956 in the town of Montagu in the Western Cape province of South Africa. It was here in the Cape Flats where he had to face chaos and was stripped of his family, land, and property. Even in the face of adversity, Dr. Jansen believed that he could achieve great things.

Higher education was of utmost importance to Dr. Jansen. He attended the University of the Western Cape where he received his Bachelors of Science degree in Botany and Zoology, and then completed his qualifications for teaching through the University of South Africa. Later, he went on to receive his Bachelors of Education from the University of South Africa and his Masters of Science from Cornell University. As if that were not enough, he even received his PhD from the Stanford University School of Education.

Dr. Jansen's passion for upholding strong race relations shined in all of his work. His books offer a detailed account on the social and political change in post-apartheid South Africa and addressed how education served a role in confronting the hardships of the past. His effective role goes well beyond the written word: Dr. Jansen also serves as President of the South African Institute of Race Relations. He is well known for his work to advance education in South Africa and his Nelson Mandela-like attitude of "reconciliation over revenge."

UC Merced established the Alice and Clifford Spendlove Prize in Social Justice, Diplomacy and Tolerance to honor a scholar, author, artist, or citizen who dedicates his or her work to the delivery of social justice, diplomacy, and tolerance in local and global society. Dr. Jansen is deserving of this recognition as he is someone who truly wants to make this world a better place.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Dr. Jonathan D. Jansen for his contributions to society and to congratulate him on receiving this most prestigious award.

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS S. FOLEY, 57TH SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to former House Speaker Thomas "Tom" S. Foley, the 57th Speaker of the House of Representatives and a man whose love for this chamber and whose commitment to public service was unsurpassed. Speaker Foley died Friday, October 18, at his home in Washington, D.C. He was 84 years old.

Tom Foley was in every sense of the word a gentleman. He believed in bipartisanship. He treated everyone equally and with respect. Upon relinquishing the Speakership, he left these parting words of advice to this successor, incoming Speaker Newt Gingrich: "Remember, you are the Speaker of the whole House and not just one party."

The environment of the House of Representatives under the leadership of Speaker Foley was marked by mutual respect and cooperation, which enabled the Congress to work with the President and pass legislation that made our country better.

During Tom Foley's speakership, the Congress passed, and the President signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991; the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT); the 1994 Crime Bill which put 100,000 new police offers on the streets and banned assault weapons and reduced crime rates by more than a third; and the 1993 Clinton Economic Plan that led to the creation of 22 million jobs, four balanced budgets, and the longest period of sustained economic prosperity in the post-war period.

Thomas Stephen Foley was born March 6, 1929, in Spokane, Washington. He attended a Jesuit preparatory school, where he acquired the nickname ''the senator'' for his intellect and the way he solved problems. He is reported to have overcome a lisp to excel in debate and to earn his baccalaureate degree from the University of Washington in 1951. Six years later, Tom Foley was admitted to the bar after graduating from the University of Washington School of Law. He practiced law in Spokane prior to becoming a prosecutor and later an assistant state attorney general.

In 1960, he joined the staff of his mentor, the legendary Senator Henry ''Scoop'' Jackson (D–WA), and moved to Washington, D.C., where he met his future partner in life, his beloved Heather, whom he married in 1968, and who remained by his side for the next 45 years and was with him when he died.

Mr. Speaker, in 1964 Tom Foley defeated an 11-term incumbent and was elected by the people of the 5th Congressional District of Washington to represent them in the House of Representatives. He was reelected to the next succeeding 14 Congresses.

Over those 30 years, Tom Foley compiled a truly impressive record. He sought and obtained a seat on the Agriculture Committee to advocate on behalf of his constituents in the wheat-growing region of eastern Washington.

Tom Foley was an accomplished legislator. One of his major achievements as a member of the Agriculture Committee was the grand bargain he crafted which led to the enduring partnership between conservative farmers and progressive supporters of nutrition programs.

Mr. Speaker, Tom Foley was an unwavering advocate for progressive policies and a formidable opponent of policies he believed were harmful to the interests of the poor, workers, or women. He supported President Johnson's Great Society Programs and voted for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. He also supported a strong national defense and sensible foreign policy, which is why he opposed the escalation of the Vietnam War.

After the watershed election of 1974, he was elected by his colleagues to chair the Agriculture Committee, a position he held until 1981, when he was appointed Majority Whip by then Speaker Thomas P. ''Tip'' O'Neill. When Speaker O'Neill was succeeded by Majority Leader Jim Wright (D–TX), Tom Foley was elevated to the post of Majority Leader and served in that post until June 6, 1989 when he was elected Speaker of the House upon the resignation of Speaker Wright.

Tom Foley was Speaker of the House in 1991 when President George H.W. Bush launched Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the first Persian Gulf War. Thanks in large part to the spirit of bipartisanship that Tom Foley embodied, the nation remained unified throughout the Persian Gulf War.

Following Speaker Foley's service in the House of Representatives he served with distinction as U.S. ambassador to Japan during the second Clinton Administration. In recognition of his exceptional service to our country, in 2001 the federal courthouse in Spokane, Washington was renamed the Thomas S. Foley United States Courthouse.

Today, one of the things cited most as being what is wrong with Congress is the environment of hyper partisanship which is threatening the ability of the House to fulfill its function.

It is my hope that we all remember and learn from the example of Speaker Foley that civility is a virtue, that compromise is not weakness, and that it is possible for persons of goodwill to disagree without being disagreeable.

Thank you, Speaker Thomas S. Foley, for your service to our nation. You made the People's House a better place by promoting mutual respect and cooperation.

IN HONOR OF HENRY TEICHERT

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise in honor of Henry Teichert, who recently passed away in Sacramento at the age of 96. As his family, friends, and the entire Sacramento community gather to celebrate his life and legacy, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mr. Teichert.

Henry Teichert was born on September 6, 1917 in Sacramento to Augusta and Adolph Teichert Jr. He was married to Wendy Downey for 56 years until her passing in 2003. Together they had five children, Frederick, Jonathan, Isaiah, Rose and Wendy-Marie, 17 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren. Mr. Teichert graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 1939, where he earned a degree in English and proudly served our country as an intelligence officer in the United States Army Air Corps during World War II. After the war he earned his law degree from Boalt Hall Law School and returned to his hometown of Sacramento where with several other attorneys, formed one of the first group law practices in the region, which later became McDonough Holland & Allen.

Mr. Teichert's law career ended when he took over the family construction business, A. Teichert and Son, when his father passed away in 1953. A. Teichert and Son, now Teichert, Inc., has been serving the Sacramento region for over one hundred and twenty-five years and holds the oldest active contractor's license in the state, No. 8. Mr. Teichert served as the corporation's president and chairman of the board for thirty-five years. He had the business acumen to turn Teichert from a company to a corporation which includes Teichert Construction, Teichert Materials, StoneBridge Properties, and the Teichert Foundation. Together, these companies are leaders in the fields of construction, aggregate production, and real estate development, while also being one of the most charitable organizations in Sacramento.

Beyond being a stellar businessman and committed father, Mr. Teichert was a civic minded individual. He belonged to many social organizations, including the Sacramento Rotary Club for over fifty years, the Sutter Club and he was an active member of Sacramento's Trinity Cathedral. He was a founding board member of the Sacramento Region Community Foundation. In 1968, Mr. Teichert helped establish the Sacramento Chapter of the National Urban League with the goal of improving job and education opportunities for Sacramento's African American community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in paying honor to Henry Teichert for being an exemplary member of the Sacramento Community. I ask that we all take a moment and give our utmost respect and condolences to his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. His life and commitment to Sacramento are an inspiration to us all.

VETERAN HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE ALEXANDER P. KISH

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the exemplary military service of Alex Kish as he is inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame. After serving in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, Alex returned to his home in Newton Falls, Ohio, and served as Commander of the AMVETS Post 112 and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3332. Since then, he has devoted his life in efforts to honor both the living and deceased veterans. Alex is dedicated to recognizing the contributions of veterans and caring for those less fortunate. He has organized an Honor Guard serving multiple veterans organizations in an effort to provide full military honors during burials at the National Cemetery in Rittman, Ohio. Alex was instrumental in raising funds that provided more than 400 phone cards for veterans and active duty soldiers. He arranged for transportation, hotel accommodations, and admission tickets for World War II veterans to attend the dedication of the World War II Memorial and to tour Washington, D.C. Alex organized a fundraiser that provided a summer camp experience for underprivileged children of Trumbull County. He has served as Vice President of an organization that provides transportation to medical appointments and shopping for senior citizens. Alex is deeply committed to serving the veterans of Trumbull County, Ohio and is very worthy of being inducted into the 2013 Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame.

RECOGNIZING ERIE CANAL HARBOR DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AS 2013 BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) on its many accomplishments including being recognized by the Amherst Chamber of Commerce at its 2013 Business of the Year Awards Ceremony. The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation is being honored with the Stewardship Award at the Chamber's event on October 28, 2013.

In 2005, as part of the NYPA settlement agreement, we called for a dedicated revenue stream to fund waterfront development in the city of Buffalo. But perhaps more importantly, we called for a locally controlled, waterfront development corporation, whose express purpose was to enhance public access to Buffalo's Inner and Outer Harbor waterfront areas. The Corporation's primary objective

would be the design and construction management of physical improvements to the Buffalo waterfront areas to create private and public sector recreational and commercial development along the Lake Erie shoreline.

Fortunately, we won that settlement and in 2007 the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation was created. Since that time, ECHDC has taken an aggressive approach to waterfront development and is credited with remarkable projects along Buffalo's Inner and Outer Harbors that are reinvigorating our city and residents and visitors alike.

ECHDC is responsible for the work on the Erie Canal Redevelopment Project, which revitalized 12.5 acres of idle waterfront space into a highly trafficked downtown destination now known as Canalside. This site incorporates historic elements of the original Erie Canal and celebrates Buffalo's role as the western end of the canal.

The Corporation has successfully managed development of 23 acres at the Inner Harbor for public, commercial and mixed uses. ECHDC oversaw demolition of the Buffalo Memorial Auditorium, ongoing construction of historically aligned canals to be used as unique water features and public ice staking destinations, and improvements to the public landscape including a vibrant central wharf at Canalside that accommodates large concerts, public markets, and hundreds of other popular events throughout the year.

As a result of the groundwork laid by ECHDC, work is now underway on HARBORcenter, an over $170 million private sector investment on the Webster block that builds off of the success of Canalside.

Thanks to the hard work of the ECHDC, we now have increased business and recreational activity on the Inner and Outer Harbors including 1,000 feet of boat dock installments at Canalside, two new restaurants, the development of Wilkeson Pointe, a 20 acre parcel of parkland on the Outer Harbor among many other public access improvements and amenities. Given ECHDC's record of accomplishment in the waterfront development business, the Corporation was recently entrusted with devising a plan for the future use of approximately 130 acres of Outer Harbor lands.

Mr. Speaker, the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation has worked tirelessly in their mission to revitalize the City of Buffalo's Inner and Outer Harbor areas and restore economic growth to Western New York. The region has benefited from the leadership and innovative vision of the Corporation, its staff and Board of Directors. I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation for their dedication to Western New York and congratulate them in receiving the Stewardship Award from the Amherst Chamber of Commerce.

HONORING THE 3RD ANNIVERSARY OF RICHMOND AREA HEALTH CENTER'S STAR PROGRAM

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Richmond Area Health Center as it celebrates its third year of providing outstanding medical care through its "Star Program."

The Richmond Area Health Center is a Federally Qualified Healthcare Center site, providing primary care to 3,500 people in a medically underserved community. The Health Center has worked over the last several years to improve health outcomes and lowers costs by inspiring individuals to change their lifestyles. The Health Center's "Star Program" incorporates healthy lifestyle strategies and affirmations into every primary care visit to improve patients' health and well-being.

This no-cost program has helped approximately 900 patients collectively lose more than 11,000 pounds. By helping patients make lifestyle changes, the team at Richmond Area Healthcare Center has been able to reduce the number of medications it prescribes and diagnostic tests it orders. The Health Center's model of lowering costs and empowering patients is now serving as a model for several similar programs throughout the state of Maine.

On October 18, 2013, the Richmond Area Health Center celebrated three years of exceptional healthcare by hosting a reception with patients and members of the greater community. I am delighted to recognize the accomplishments of this dedicated team of healthcare workers and look forward to their continued success in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the Richmond Area Health Center on three years of exceptional patient care.

HONORING WILLIE HESELMEYER AND ELDA ZEPLIN

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the lasting love and commitment of two great Texans.

On November 2, 1938 millions of Americans recalled the thrilling race the day before between thoroughbreds Seabiscuit and War Admiral. Others were still recovering from Orson Welles' legendary War of the Worlds radio broadcast from the previous weekend.

Willie Heselmeyer and Elda Zeplin of Taylor, TX had bigger things on their minds. They were joining hands at the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (founded by Elda's family in 1894) to become husband and wife.

75 years later, they still walk together hand in hand. Willie, with Elda constantly by his side, worked the land as a cotton, corn, and milo farmer. They brought two sons into the world and were united through feast and famine. Together they witnessed their nation's brave soldiers defend freedom on foreign shores, watched a humble midwesterner take mankind's first steps on another world, and marveled at technological advances beyond any of their dreams.

What began in 1938 continues strong into a new millennium. Willie and Elda still live independently in their home on their farm east of Taylor. They play dominoes with friends nearly every day. Family and faith remain at the center of their happy life together.

Willie and Elda will gather this November with friends and family at the Fellowship Hall of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Taylor to celebrate 75 years of love and commitment. Marriages like the Heselmeyers are the foundations of one of our most cherished institutions and give us all an ideal to which we can aspire. They make both Texas and our nation strong. Erika and I, who will celebrate a half century of marriage in a few years, congratulate Willie and Elda on 75 years together and wish them the best in the years to come.

HONORING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BLACK MEN OF LABOR

HON. CEDRIC L. RICHMOND

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Black Men of Labor as they celebrate 20 years of service in preserving art and culture in the city of New Orleans.

The Black Men of Labor was established in 1993 by musicians Fred J. Johnson Jr., Benny Jones Sr., and Gregory Stafford. For the past twenty years, they have honored the contributions of African American men in the work place while promoting and preserving traditional jazz music.

Rooted in the historic neighborhood of Treme, America's oldest African American community, these men celebrate their West African heritage with yearly parades throughout the streets of New Orleans.

I want to commend the Black Men of Labor for their commitment to preserving the living, breathing birthright of the city of New Orleans, jazz music. Through our triumphs and tragedies, it is our rich legacy in the arts that keeps us grounded as a community. Organizations like the Black Men of Labor are at the core of this commitment.

On Sunday, October 20th, the streets once again came alive to the sound of music as the Black Men of Labor celebrated their 20th anniversary. I want to join the New Orleans community in celebrating their contributions.

In 1987, the United States Congress designated jazz as a rare and valuable national treasure to which we should devote our attention, support, and resources to make sure it is preserved, understood and promulgated. Today, I echo that sentiment and applaud these men for their dedication to empowering their communities through music and the arts.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 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 $17,087,891,889,205.15. We've added $6,461,014,840,292.07 to our debt in 4 years. This is $5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

RECOGNIZING PEOPLE INC. AS RECIPIENT OF THE 2013 THE HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES AWARD

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize People Inc. in being awarded the 2013 Health and Health Services Award from the Amherst Chamber of Commerce.

People Inc. began in 1970 to ensure that people with disabilities or special needs have an available support so they can succeed.

The organization provides services to people of all ages, from children and adults with disabilities to senior citizens. These services include residential, employment/vocational, community outreach, health care and recreation programs. Their comprehensive services are well-known throughout Western New York.

Over the years, People Inc. has grown to expand their services. They have increased their populations served, spectrum of services, geographic locations and number of sites.

Since 2010, People Inc. has been recognized as one of New York State's certified Compass Agencies. Compass stands for Consumerism, Outcome, Management Plan and Agency Self Survey, and conveys People Inc.'s effective model of person centered planning, managed outcomes, and advocacy involvement by individuals and their families to accomplish their mission.

Those involved with People Inc. strive toward a future where all persons whose needs limit their integration into the community reach their highest potential as responsible members of society. These individuals deserve to become contributing and active members in their communities, enjoy the greatest possible degree of independence, and acceptance in all aspects of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to honor People Inc. for being awarded the Health and Health Services award and commend them for their great work on behalf of all Western New Yorkers.

HONORING SANDRA GOVE CHAMBLEE FOR HER SERVICE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN HER COMMUNITY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pride to rise today to recognize Ms. Sandra Gove, a resident of Belle Glade, Florida. Sandra recently received the Athena Award from the Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches. This distinguished award honors individuals for professional accomplishment and service to improve the quality of life for others in the community. It warms my heart to learn that Sandra was the individual to receive it this year.

For the last 14 years, she has served as Executive Director of the Glades Health Initiative, an agency that provides HIV prevention services. Since her retirement, Sandra has continued devoting herself to volunteer work with the Arc of the Glades, American Cancer Society and Visiting Nurse Association. In addition, she is also the longtime president of the General Federation of Women's Club of Belle Glade.

Over the course of her life, she has earned the love and respect of her fellow residents of Belle Glade and people throughout the Glades area. She is a remarkable individual who continues to devote her time and energy to numerous important agencies and projects. Always an advocate for the Glades, she represents their best interest on numerous county boards and committees. For all of these reasons, I am very proud to recognize Sandra as a Hastings' Hero, and to be her representative in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I am most grateful to Sandra for her continued service to the Glades community. She has selflessly helped so many people, and I am honored to recognize her for her service.

TRIBUTE TO OAIL ANDREW ''BUM'' PHILLIPS, TEXAS ICON, HOMESPUN PHILOSOPHER, AND LEGENDARY COACH OF THE HOUSTON OILERS

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to inform the House of the sad news that America has lost one of the most beloved, successful, and colorful coaches in the history of the National Football League. Oail Andrew ''Bum'' Phillips passed away last Friday, October 18, 2013, at his ranch home in Goliad, Texas. He was 90 years old.

The Houston Oilers was not a very good team when Bum Phillips was named head coach and general manager in 1975. In fact, they were one of the worst teams in the league. But within the space of three short years, Bum turned the Oilers into a powerhouse and transformed the downtrodden franchise into one of the most popular and entertaining teams in the NFL.

Along the way, Bum Phillips' mastery of the one-liner endeared himself to his fans and the media. He once quipped in response to a question about the Dallas Cowboys, ''that other team up North'': ''The Dallas Cowboys may be America's team but the Houston Oilers are Texas's team!'' On another occasion, when he was asked to describe the great Earl Campbell, his star running back, he said: ''He may not be in a class all by himself, but it don't take long to call the roll.''

As coach of the Houston Oilers, Bum Phillips was the winningest coach in franchise history (59–38 record), leading the team to the American Football Conference Championship game in 1978 and 1979 but losing each time to the eventual Super Bowl champion Pittsburgh Steelers.

Who can ever forget the sight of Bum Phillips patrolling the sidelines with his trademark buzz cut, decked out in work shirt, blue jeans, cowboy boots, and white Stetson, which he wore except when the Oilers played in the Astrodome? Asked to explain why he did not wear his cowboy hat in the Astrodome, Bum replied: ''Mama always said that if it can't rain on you, you're indoors.''

Oail Andrew Phillips was born on September 29, 1923, in Orange, Texas, the son of a truck driver, also named Oail, which is pronounced ''Awl.'' He got his nickname when his younger sister, Edrina, tried to say ''brother,'' only to have it come out as ''bumble'' and later ''bum.'' In recounting the story, Bum remarked, ''I don't mind being called Bum, just as long as you don't put a 'you' in front of it.''

Bum Phillips played football at Lamar College in Beaumont, Texas but left to serve in the Marines during World War II. Upon his return he played for Stephen F. Austin State College in Nacogdoches, Texas, graduating in 1949. He then embarked upon a career coaching high school football in Texas. In 1958, he was hired as an assistant coach by Texas A&M head coach Paul ''Bear'' Bryant, who would go on to become the legendary coach of the Alabama Crimson Tide. In 1962, Bum Phillips was the head coach of Texas Western University (now the University of Texas at El Paso).

Three years later in 1965, Bum Phillips made the jump to professional football when he was named defensive coordinator for the Houston Oilers of the American Football League. In 1967 he was hired by San Diego Chargers head coach Sid Gillman to be his defensive assistant and in 1974 followed Gillman back to the Houston Oilers as the team's defensive coordinator, replacing him as head coach the following year.

Bum Phillips' Oilers teams were known for their physical style of play and outstanding defense anchored by Robert Brazile and future Hall of Famers Elvin Bethea and Curley Culp. Bum was a ''players coach''; his players loved him because he kept them fresh by shunning overly long practices and encouraged camaraderie.

The unquestioned leader and star of the team was running back Earl Campbell, the 1977 Heisman Trophy winner from the University of Texas and the first player selected in the 1978 NFL draft. The ''Tyler Rose,'' who still holds every major Oilers rushing record and is one of the greatest running backs in NFL history, also would go on to be enshrined in the NFL Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

About Earl Campbell, who ushered in the ''Luv Ya Blue!' era and dazzled a Monday Night Football national television audience with a breathtaking display of speed and power in rushing for 221 yards and leading the Oilers to a wild 35–30 victory over the Miami Dolphins, Bum Phillips once said: ''That young man is the difference between losing your job and winning the national championship.''

After 5 years as head coach of the Oilers, Bum Phillips was offered and accepted the head coaching job of the New Orleans Saints, whom he almost led to the playoffs for the first time in the history of that franchise. In 1985 he resigned as coach of the Saints but remained connected to the game by working as a TV and radio analyst for the Oilers. Asked what he planned to do in his retirement, Bum said, ''Nothing. And I don't start before noon!''

In addition to his wife Debbie, Bum Phillips is survived by his son, Wade, a former head coach of the Dallas Cowboys, the Denver Broncos and the Buffalo Bills, and five daughters from a previous marriage, Susan, Cicely, Dee Jean, Andrea and KimAnn; many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, more than three decades have passed since Bum Phillips strolled the sidelines of the Astrodome as the head coach of the Oilers and the beloved leader of "Luv Ya Blue!" Nation, but he will always be remembered as the man who put the Oilers on the map and embodied the spirit and civic pride of Houston, the greatest city in the greatest country in the only world we know.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for a moment of silence in memory of Oail Andrew "Bum" Phillips.

Luv Ya Blue!

RECOGNIZING THE VILLAGE OF WILLIAMSVILLE'S PICTURE MAIN STREET PROJECT

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Village of Williamsville: Picture Main Street Project as the Amherst Chamber of Commerce's choice for the Revitalization Award for their 2013 Business of the Year Awards for their efforts to transform the main commercial strip of the Village of Williamsville into a more vibrant and vital urban village core.

Through the process of placemaking, the village of Williamsville initiated a citizen-driven effort to create a vision for what Main Street should be and to create a plan to make that vision a reality. More than 36,000 vehicles travel down Main Street each day, and residents and businesses identified the lack of a pedestrian environment as a detriment to both commerce and the viability of the future of the village.

The Community Plan was devised in 2005 which identified a solution to the traffic problems on Main Street. Picture Main Street directly addressed those issues by seeking to make the state road more equitable for both drivers and pedestrians. The plan called for numerous improvements to make the shopping district more accessible to pedestrians which include $7,000,000 streetscape enhancements, aggressive tree planting, bulbouts, a mid-block signal for pedestrians, lighting, gateways, pocket parks, and even a smartphone application or valet parking in the village. Changes could also result in the creation a "village-square" or second shopping district around the Historic Williamsville Water Mill.

Although pending approval by the state, the changes are set to go into effect next spring. Within the waiting period, thousands of residents took part in "taking back Main Street," an old-fashioned block party that closed the thoroughfare to traffic and invited residents out onto the street.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to recognize the Village of Williamsville: Picture Main Street Project's effort to revitalize the Village of Williamsville. Their innovation and determination are not only admirable and deserving of such praise, but an incredible asset to the future success of Western New York. I congratulate the Village of Williamsville: Picture Main Street Project as the recipient of the Revitalization Award for the Amherst Chamber of Commerce's 2013 Business of the Year Awards.

IN SUPPORT OF UKRAINE'S EUROPEAN ASPIRATIONS

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, as Ranking Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats, I rise along with the co-chairs of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus, Representatives KAPTUR, LEVIN, and GERLACH, to voice my support for Ukraine's European aspirations.

As long-time advocates for the democratization and economic liberalization of Ukraine, we welcome the progress that has been made to date and encourage Ukraine's continued efforts in the coming weeks to realize the final steps necessary to enter into an Association Agreement with the European Union (EU) at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius this November.

By strengthening Ukraine's bilateral relationship with the EU, we are confident that through greater economic integration and political cooperation, Ukraine will be able to achieve a stronger relationship with current EU Member States, as well as transatlantic partners, such as the United States, through a shared respect for democratic principles, rule of law, good governance, human rights, and essential freedoms. As such, we believe that the signing of an Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU will continue to serve as a catalyst for democratic and human rights reforms, enhanced economic development, and improved welfare for all Ukrainians.

Over the last year, we have observed with interest Ukraine's efforts to meet the EU's conditions for this agreement, and as the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius draws near, we wish to encourage all parties to continue to cooperate and work swiftly to complete all remaining reforms, in law and in practice.

Recognizing that key progress has been made in certain areas, including the enactment of a new criminal procedure code, we support further tangible action by Ukraine to address critical issues and incorporate the reforms necessary to improve its electoral system, governing institutions, and its system of justice. In particular, we believe that a crucial step towards such reform would be the pardon and release of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko under mutually acceptable terms.

The signing of an Association Agreement with the EU marks a significant opportunity for Ukraine to fulfill its commitments to democracy and human rights and is in the strategic interests of Ukraine, the EU, and the United States. We offer our support and encouragement to Ukraine in the coming weeks as it takes the final steps towards a stronger and enhanced relationship with the EU.

MONICA BARLETTA

HON. LOU BARLETTA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Monica Barletta, longtime parishioner of the Holy Rosary Church in Hazleton, Pennsylvania.

Monica Barletta has been a member of the Holy Rosary Church for over 70 years, joining in 1943 to receive her First Communion. She and her late husband Fred Barletta Sr. have been instrumental in every major project undertaken by Holy Rosary Parish. Mrs. Barletta has been a member and officer of the Christian Woman's Society for over 50 years, and has served as a lector for nearly 25 years. Additionally, she was an active member of the committee which initiated the annual Holy Rosary Bazaar in 1978 and she held the position of Bazaar chairperson. She was one of the founders of the church's annual Mother's Day Carnation Sales that support the Pennsylvanians for Human Life organization, an effort which has raised tens of thousands of dollars for the local pro-life movement over the past 30 years. She is also currently a member of the Holy Rosary Parish Council.

Mr. Speaker, for her dedicated work at the Holy Rosary Church in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, I commend Monica Barletta.

RECOGNIZING COL. PAULETTE SCHANK

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a career dedicated to service to our country. After more than two decades of service, Colonel Paulette Schank will be retiring from her command, but her service and commitment to others will not soon be forgotten. Colonel Schank, a Bucks County resident, is the Commander of the 514th AMDS, Aerospace Medicine Squadron based out of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. Her detachment provides medical support for over 2,600 Airmen, ensuring their medical readiness to meet mission requirements both stateside and abroad.

As both a civilian nurse-anesthetist at Saint Mary Medical Center in Langhorne and an Air Force reserve officer, Colonel Schank has dedicated her life to caring for others—be it in Bucks County or around the world. During her tenure with the Air Force she has provided medical assistance in times of war and in humanitarian efforts—from Iraq to Haiti, Mozambique to Peru.

Colonel Schank is a vital part of my Veterans Advisory Board and a trusted consultant when it comes to pursuing legislation that benefits my district's veterans and military members.

On behalf of a grateful community, a grateful nation, and a grateful world I thank Colonel Paulette Schank for her service and wish her the best in her retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEPHEN LEE FINCHER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. FINCHER. Mr. Speaker, on October 23, 2013, I was unavoidably absent and missed

the following rollcall votes: No. 556, the DeFazio Amendment No. 2; No. 557, the Flores Amendment No. 3; No. 558, the Hastings Amendment No. 6; No. 559, the Richmond Amendment No. 16; and No. 560 on final passage of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act. Had I voted, I would have voted ''nay'' on rollcall vote No. 556, ''aye'' on rollcall vote No. 557, ''nay'' on rollcall vote No. 558, ''aye'' on rollcall vote No. 559, and ''aye'' on rollcall vote No. 560.

IN HONOR OF UNITED STATES ARMY COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR DONALD R. WINGROVE

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of United States Army Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Donald R. Wingrove and commemorate his valiant service to our great nation.

CSM Wingrove was born on November 12, 1936, and enlisted in the United States Army two short months after turning eighteen. After basic training, CSM Wingrove quickly rose up the ranks, training and serving from Fort Bragg, North Carolina to Thailand. In November of 1970, CSM Wingrove heroically put himself in harm's way and displayed immense dedication to this nation in a clandestine mission to rescue American prisoners of war in North Vietnam.

CSM Wingrove was awarded the Silver Star Medal, the third highest military decoration for valor, for his extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty in the face of enemy forces.

I applaud CSM Wingrove's bravery and service, and I thank him for his heroic and selfless actions. We are fortunate to have brave men and women like CSM Wingrove who stand committed to defending our great nation at home and abroad. His dedication and sacrifice represent the best our nation has to offer.

Mr. Speaker, CSM Wingrove was one of the greatest American soldiers and patriots, but he was also a loving father and husband, and a faithful friend to many. North Carolina is no stranger to heroes like CSM Wingrove. Our state boasts some of the finest warfighters the nation has ever seen. We are forever indebted to him and other American soldiers who dedicate their lives to defend our freedom, secure our homeland, and protect our democracy.

HONORING COLONEL TIMOTHY E. TARCHICK, USAF

HON. PHIL GINGREY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Colonel Timothy E. Tarchick and to recognize his lifetime of service to our country in the United States Air Force.

On October 31, Col. Tarchick will retire from the United States Air Force after more than 35 years of dedication and sacrifice for our great nation.

While Col. Tarchick currently serves as the Commander of the 94th Airlift Wing at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, he has worked in many other capacities. After enlisting in the Air Force Reserve in 1978, he became an X–Ray Technician, and would later serve as a Loadmaster with the 910th Tactical Airlift Group in Ohio. After graduating from Officer Training School in 1984, he served in many units as Squadron Training Officer, Wing Plans Officer, Tactics Instructor, Flight Examiner, Chief Navigator, 4th Air Force Operations Staff Officer, Director of Operations, and Operations Group Commander.

Throughout his career, Col. Tarchick was always ready to meet the call of duty. During hurricanes Katrina and Rita, he led the first Air Force rescue efforts that saved more than 1,000 people. And at his current position, he has successfully converted the 94th Airlift Wing from a training wing to a combat-coded tactical wing. Under his leadership, the 94th Airlift Wing hasn't suffered a single casualty. For his exceptional service, Col. Tarchick has earned the Legion of Merit, the Aerial Achievement Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, and the Air Force Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster, and many other awards.

Col. Tarchick will surely be missed. He has played an invaluable role in the U.S. Air Force for decades, and his effective leadership has left a positive example of leadership that will be passed to all of those who served under him.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Georgia's 11th Congressional District, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to Col. Tarchick for devoting his life to the upholding of our Constitution and to the protection of our American way of life. I wish him a happy—and well-deserved retirement.

IN MEMORY OF TADEUSZ MAZOWIECKI

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Tadeusz Mazowiecki, who passed away today at the age of 86.

Tadeusz Mazowiecki played a pivotal role in the Round Table talks that paved the way for Poland's peaceful democratic transition. He was an architect of the agreement that led to Poland's first partially free elections in June 1989 and went on to serve as Poland's first post-communist prime minister.

Throughout his life, Mazowiecki was a courageous advocate for workers' rights and human dignity. He was the leader of a small group of Polish intellectuals who traveled to Gdansk in 1980 to show their solidarity with striking shipyard workers. He was one of the first to be arrested when communist authorities declared martial law in December 1981 and one of the last to be released a year later. Throughout the 1980s, Mazowiecki served as an advisor to Lech Walesa and played a leading role in Solidarity movement. As prime minister, Mazowiecki sped political reforms, enacted civil and political rights, and laid the groundwork for Poland's successful transition to a free market economy. Poland's peaceful revolution sparked a chain reaction throughout Central Europe, culminating in Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the United States and Europe owe Tadeusz Mazowiecki an immeasurable debt of gratitude. The world today is safer and more free because of him and Polish patriots like him. His memory serves as an inspiration to those who fight—often against all odds—for rule of law and human dignity in their own countries, and as a reminder to all that the blessings of liberty and democracy should not be taken for granted.

YVONNE ''BONNIE'' GONZALEZ

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retiring CEO of Workforce Solution Yvonne ''Bonnie'' Gonzalez. She has been CEO of Workforce Solution since 2003 and is ending her tenure after ten years. Her tireless efforts have improved the community and served to better the development and progress for south Texas.

''Bonnie'' Gonzalez was born in Rio Grande City, Texas. Gonzalez earned a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing from The University of Texas at Austin in 1981, and was recruited by Harvard University to attend the John F. Kennedy School of Government where she earned a Master of Public Administration in 1993. Prior to becoming the CEO for Workforce Solutions, she served as founding President/CEO of the RGV Empowerment Zone Corporation from 1995–2003. Under her direction, the Empowerment Zone took a $40 million dollar federal investment and leveraged an additional $416 million in local, state, national, and private sector investment into Empowerment Zone communities. From establishing the Teenage Parent Alternative Program, a state recognized program for McAllen I.S.D. in 1988; to being a founding member of South Texas Community College, now South Texas College; to testifying before state and federal officials on development, community and economic development, and education, Ms. Gonzalez continues to be an advocate for the Valley.

As CEO, Gonzalez plays an integral role in leading change and leveraging strategic partnerships within the workforce development industry and in the Rio Grande Valley. Gonzalez is a devoted public servant and community leader. Gonzalez challenges the organization to be innovative, efficient and effective in the programmatic and fiscal oversight of workforce development services for Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties in South Texas. She, together with the Board of Directors, strives to ensure that public dollars go directly to the development of the local workforce, in training, job seeker, and business services. Workforce Solutions was recently recognized as one of the highest performing workforce boards in Texas and one of only 26 national grantees for the 2012 Workforce Innovation Fund.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Ms. Yvonne ''Bonnie'' Gonzalez, retiring CEO of Workforce Solution. Her years of dedication

and commitment to our community have truly impacted the quality of lives for the people of the city. Thank you for this time.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF POLISH GENERAL KAZIMIERZ PULASKI

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, during this month of October, the American people honor the life of Polish General Casimir (Kazimierz) Pulaski whose love of liberty, bravery and military prowess in founding the American cavalry played a pivotal role in winning our American Revolution. Let his timeless story inspire generations to come. May the eagles that soar over both our lands—as symbols of liberty—strengthen our partnership in freedom's cause. Onward.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF POLISH GENERAL KAZIMIERZ PULASKI

Thank you to all who have gathered here today to remember and to commemorate the contributions of General Casimir Pulaski to our nation's victory in the American Revolution and to passing to us the blessings of liberty. As a young child, I first learned his name as the street on which our grandparents lived which was named ''PULASKI''.

Kazimierz Pulaski was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1745, 268 years ago, son of Polish Count Jozef Pulaski and Marianna Zielinska. Within a little more than two decades, he would come to be known as a freedom fighter and ''the father of the American cavalry.'' Through his family in Poland, Pulaski became involved at a very early age—age 15—in political and military activity. He accompanied his father and other members of the Polish nobility to publicly oppose the Prussian, Russian, and Austrian empires' designs on dominating their Polish homeland. Pulaski pushed for Polish independence, free of outside interference. When he was outlawed in his homeland by the Russian empire after initial uprisings failed, he decided to travel to Paris, France, in a self imposed exile. In so doing, he came to befriend Benjamin Franklin, a father of our country, who also had travelled to France imbued with the spirit of the French Revolution and its values of liberty, equality, fraternity. They both were seeking alternatives to the empire-driven political systems of the European continent. Franklin was captivated with the ideas of the Enlightenment as he tried to help lead a fledgling nation, casting off the oppression of Great Britain's monarchy. Franklin was impressed by Pulaski and wrote of him to George Washington: ''Count Pulaski of Poland, is an officer famous throughout Europe for his bravery and conduct in defense of the liberties of his country against the three great invading powers of Russia, Austria and Prussia . . . he may be highly useful to our service.''

A century before their encounter, new ideas of how people should live, and govern themselves, were brewing and emerging on a European continent fraught with empires and suppression of individual liberty. These ideas were transformational concepts in human history. They revolved around how people should live and govern themselves. The new concepts emphasized democracy not monarchy; equality not subservience nor serfdom; liberty not repression; freedom of thought and reason, not dogma nor emotion; freedom of expression not regimented thought; freedom of press, not propaganda; and full separation of church and state, not theocratic control of government. For those of us living in the 21st century, with our nation an heir of Enlightenment thinking, perhaps we have become so accustomed to our way of life that we forget how radical these thoughts were at the time. Let us remember what a price was paid for their emergence globally.

Pulaski's life reminds us of that early struggle of our founders to build a new America, casting off the remnants of old empires. Pulaski volunteered his services in the Revolutionary War of the United States. America's founders were about building a brand new nation girded by Enlightenment ideals. That struggle did not happen overnight. In fact we should recall that almost 4 decades after Pulaski first volunteered, the new America was still fighting for its future. The ballad ''Battle of New Orleans'' recounts America's fight to finally drive the British from its territory. You might recall the words from the last great land Battle in the War of 1812 . . .''in 1814, we took a little trip, along with Colonel Jackson down the mighty Mississip. We took a little bacon and we took a little beans, and we caught the bloody British in a town called New Orleans.'' Of course, this year of 2013, our region of the United States is commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Lake Erie, when Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry defeated the British in Lake Erie, the only time the British Navy has ever lost a battle on the high seas. The British monarchy finally was driven out of the westernmost reaches of the new America.

So, imagine, Casimir Pulaski fighting bravely 33 years earlier before the War of 1812, at the dawn of the American Revolution. To my knowledge, there are no ballads written yet about his achievements, though they are legendary and worthy of expression.

Pulaski travelled in 1777 to Philadelphia—America's first capital—a decade before our Constitution was drafted and signed. He wrote to Washington: ''I came here, where freedom is being defended, to serve it, and to live or die for it.'' Washington knew that the colonies had no trained cavalry, so he met with Pulaski and introduced him to Marquis de Lafayette and John Hancock. Pulaski showed off some of his riding abilities, and tried to convince Washington of the superiority of the cavalry over the infantry. And in Sept. 1777 Washington persuaded the Continental Congress to give Pulaski temporary command of the Cavalry. On that very same day, Pulaski pushed back the Birdshot at the Battle of Brandywine in which he came to the aid of Washington's forces and demonstrated his brilliant military tactics. He saved Washington's Army from defeat, and some have recorded he took a bullet aimed at George Washington himself. Congress acknowledged Pulaski's leadership and commissioned him as a Brigadier General. He was placed in command of four light cavalry regiments. But, Pulaski as a foreigner had difficulty with the Continental Congress allowing him to fight. So he asked Washington to allow him to start his own legion. He even offered to pay for them. Congress finally agreed. With 68 horses and 200 foot soldiers, the Pulaski Legion would become the colonists' first fully trained cavalry. He spent the winter of 1777 to 1778 at Valley Forge with most of the army. He was then ordered to defend Little Egg Harbor in New Jersey and then Minisink on the Delaware; Washington then ordered him to proceed South to Charleston, South Carolina. During the Battle of Savannah, on October 9, 1779, Pulaski was wounded by cannon as he charged into battle on horseback. He fell to the ground, mortally wounded. He died from complications from that wound. But Pulaski was so respected for his courage, even by his enemies, that he was spared the musket and permitted to be carried from the battlefield. He died on Oct 15, 1779 at age 34. There is a Pulaski Monument erected in his honor, on Monterrey Square in Savannah, Georgia.

In 1791, twelve years after his death, his homeland in Poland adopted a new constitution modeled on that of the U.S. Constitution, which just had been adopted in 1789. The Polish Constitution too was a revolutionary document as Poland became the first nation in Europe to outlaw serfdom. Indeed, her constitution was so threatening to Europe's empires, Poland was wiped off the map of Europe for 126 years emerging as a nation after World War I and the Peace Treaty of Versailles due significantly to the friendship between U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and Polish pianist Ignacy Paderewski.

Many national recognitions of Pulaski's contributions to America's victory in our Revolution have been accomplished. On October 29, 1779, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution that a monument be dedicated to him. The first memorial was built in 1854 and a bust of Pulaski was added to busts of other heroes in the U.S. Capitol in 1867. In 1910, President William Taft of Ohio unveiled a Congress-sponsored General Casimir Pulaski statue. In 1929, Congress passed a General Pulaski Memorial Day. There is a federal observance of General Pulaski Memorial Day commemorating Pulaski's death from wounds suffered at the Siege of Savannah on October 9, 1779. After a previous attempt failed, on Nov. 6, 2009, President Barack Obama signed a joint resolution of the U.S. Senate and House conferring on Pulaski an honorary American citizenship, 230 years after his death, making him the 7th person so honored.

Today, we, here in the heart of Cleveland, again bear witness and respectfully remember General Casimir Pulaski. We express our gratitude in America's third century for his bravery and vision. And we collectively join together, as eagles fly above both our nations, to say: Long live his memory, long live America, long live Poland and long live liberty.

HONORING THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF MINNESOTA, NORTH DAKOTA, AND SOUTH DAKOTA

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota (PPMNS) on the 85th anniversary of its founding.

In 1928, Minnesota's first clinic was established, providing women with access to reproductive care. Since then, additional clinics in Minnesota, South Dakota, and North Dakota have opened ensuring women, men and their families have access to affordable, comprehensive care. Each year, more than 60,000 patients access a broad range of health services including preventative screenings, reproductive care, and routine exams.

Over the past 85 years, the caring staff, advocates, and volunteers have been invaluable to the success of PPMNS. Their dedication ensures that women and their families have

access to the health services and information they need regardless of race, gender, or economic status.

Mr. Speaker, please join me to honor the critical work of Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota as we celebrate their 85th anniversary today.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE BRAVERY OF UNITED STATES ARMY CORPORAL WONG SUEY LEE

HON. RON BARBER

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor United States Army Corporal Wong Suey Lee, a veteran who resides in my district of Southern Arizona. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and esteem that I request this body recognize Corporal Lee for his courageous service and tremendous bravery.

Corporal Lee is a veteran of the Korean War and saw firsthand the brutality of battle. He was one of more than 1 million heroic Americans who committed to support their nation in a time of war halfway around the world to face an unknown enemy in a strange land. Six months into his service with the U.S. Army, and nearly a year after the communist invasion of South Korea, Corporal Lee faced mortar and small arms fire to rally his platoon and continue the advance of his unit toward the Iron Triangle, a key communications and transportation hub in the Yonchon-Cheorwon area of the Korean peninsula.

Through testimonials by his fellow soldiers, a stirring picture has been painted of what transpired on June 3rd, 1951 and of Corporal Lee's fierce determination and grit. As point man for the lead platoon of the lead company of his assault battalion, Corporal Lee encountered a number of enemy positions, drawing heavy fire and killing an enemy soldier.

Having cleared enemy forces from two entrenched positions, taking fire from small arms and mortar rounds, Corporal Lee gallantly exposed himself to that fire and rallied his squad leaders to take on a third enemy position upon a nearby steep hill. Corporal Lee tended to the wounded around him, as the platoon took aim and neutralized the enemy on the small hill. He then scaled that hill, dodging grenades and coming face-to-face with enemy soldiers, killing three at point-blank range.

From the portrait laid out in the testimony of his many colleagues, it is clear that Corporal Lee was instrumental in keeping together his platoon and showed immense leadership in the face of incredible hardship. Indeed, two days later, Corporal Lee was severely wounded in battle and returned to the United States.

Everyone in this great nation owes Corporal Lee and his family a debt of gratitude for his selfless sacrifice. I call on my fellow colleagues and all Americans to rise today and thank Corporal Lee for helping to secure freedom for millions of people worldwide.

IN RECOGNITION OF GEORGIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 28, 2013

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of Georgia on the conduct of the October 27 presidential election. International observers, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, characterized the election as "positive and transparent," noting that freedom of expression, movement and assembly were respected, and that candidates were able to campaign without restriction.

The election's successful conduct—and the pending peaceful transfer of power—demonstrate the growing maturity of Georgia's democracy. This is an important indication that Georgia is indeed ready to initial an Association Agreement with the European Union at the November 28–29 Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. The Association Agreement, which includes deep and comprehensive free trade provisions, will give the Georgian people new tools and new incentives to strengthen their democratic institutions, fight corruption, and uphold the rule of law.

Mr. Speaker, I also congratulate Giorgi Margvelashvili on his electoral victory. I call on all political parties to work together to advance Georgia's interests and the interests of the Georgian people.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, October 29, 2013 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's record.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

OCTOBER 30

9:15 a.m.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Business meeting to consider S. 1562, to reauthorize the Older Americans Act of 1965, S. 1557, to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize support for graduate medical education programs in children's hospitals, S. 1561, to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve provisions relating to the sanctuary system for surplus chimpanzees, H.R. 2094, to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the preference given, in awarding certain asthma-related grants, to certain States (those allowing trained school personnel to administer epinephrine and meeting other related requirements), S. 1302, to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for cooperative and small employer charity pension plans, H.R. 2747, to amend title 40, United States Code, to transfer certain functions from the Government Accountability Office to the Department of Labor relating to the processing of claims for the payment of workers who were not paid appropriate wages under certain provisions of such title, and the nominations of Michael Keith Yudin, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, and James Cole, Jr., of New York, to be General Counsel, both of the Department of Education, and Chai Rachel Feldblum, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and any pending nominations.

SD–430

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment

To hold hearings to examine the ''JOBS Act'' at a year and a half, focusing on assessing progress and unmet opportunities.

SD–538

Conferees

Meeting of conferees on S. Con. Res. 8, a concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2014, revising the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal year 2013, and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2015 through 2023.

HC–5

11 a.m.

Committee on Finance

To hold hearings to examine the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

SD–215

1 p.m.

Conferees

Meeting of conferees on H.R. 2642, to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018.

1100–LHOB

2 p.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold hearings to examine pending health care and benefits legislation.

SR–418

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

To receive a briefing on the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, focusing on how the movement has impacted Europe and the continuing work of the United States in advancing human rights for minorities in Europe.

RHOB–2255

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Indian Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 235, to provide for the conveyance of certain property located in Anchorage, Alaska, from the United States to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, S.

611, to make a technical amendment to the T'uf Shur Bien Preservation Trust Area Act, and S. 920, to allow the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in the State of Minnesota to lease or transfer certain land; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine S. 1074, to extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Easter Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe, S. 1132, to provide for the recognition of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, and S. 161, to extend the Federal recognition to the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana.

SD–628

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of John B. Owens, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, Matthew Frederick Leitman, Judith Ellen Levy, Laurie J. Michelson, and Linda Vivienne Parker, all to be a United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, and Peter Joseph Kadzik, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice.

SD–226

OCTOBER 31

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine housing finance reform, focusing on a government guarantee for mortgage-backed securities.

SD–538

Committee on Foreign Relations

Business meeting to consider S. Res. 268, condemning the September 2013 terrorist attack at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, and reaffirming United States support for the people and Government of Kenya, and the nominations of Gregory B. Starr, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, Mark Bradley Childress, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the United Republic of Tanzania, Thomas Frederick Daughton, of Arizona, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia, Matthew T. Harrington, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho, Eunice S. Reddick, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Niger, John Hoover, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone, Michael Stephen Hoza, of Washington, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon, Tomasz P. Malinowski, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Crystal Nix-Hines, of California, for the rank of Ambassador during her tenure of service as the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Pamela K. Hamamoto, of Hawaii, to be Representative to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, with the rank of Ambassador, Philip S. Goldberg, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of the Philippines, Robert O. Blake, Jr., of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia, Karen Clark Stanton, of Michigan, to be Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Timothy M. Broas, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Donald Lu, of California, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Albania, Robert A. Sherman, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Portuguese Republic, Anne W. Patterson, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, Adam M. Scheinman, of Virginia, to be Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation, with the rank of Ambassador, Rose Eilene Gottemoeller, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, Frank A. Rose, of Massachusetts, to be Assistant Secretary for Verification and Compliance, Dwight L. Bush, Sr., of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco, James Walter Brewster, Jr., of Illinois, to be Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, Brian A. Nichols, of Rhode Island, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Peru, and Carlos Roberto Moreno, of California, to be Ambassador to Belize, all of the Department of State.

SD–419

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine attaining a quality degree, focusing on innovations to improve student success.

SD–430

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine government clearances and background checks, focusing on the Navy Yard tragedy.

SD–342

Committee on the Judiciary

Business meeting to consider S. 42, to provide anti-retaliation protections for antitrust whistleblowers, S. 822, to protect crime victims' rights, to eliminate the substantial backlog of DNA samples collected from crime scenes and convicted offenders, to improve and expand the DNA testing capacity of Federal, State, and local crime laboratories, to increase research and development of new DNA testing technologies, to develop new training programs regarding the collection and use of DNA evidence, to provide post conviction testing of DNA evidence to exonerate the innocent, to improve the performance of counsel in State capital cases, and the nominations of Robert Leon Wilkins, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit, Brian J. Davis, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, Timothy L. Brooks, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Arkansas, James Donato, Beth Labson Freeman, and Vince Girdhari Chhabria, all to be a United States District Judge for the Northern District of California, Pedro A. Delgado Hernandez, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico, Carolyn B. McHugh, of Utah, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit, Pamela L. Reeves, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee, and James Maxwell Moody, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas.

SD–226

10:15 a.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine Syria.

SD–419

2 p.m.

Select Committee on Intelligence

To hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters.

SH–219

2:15 p.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Daniel W. Yohannes, of Colorado, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, with the rank of Ambassador, Department of State.

SD–419

NOVEMBER 6

10 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Bureau of Prisons and cost-effective strategies for reducing recidivism.

SD–226

NOVEMBER 7

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the impact of sequestration on the national defense; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217, following the open session.

SD–G50

NOVEMBER 20

3:30 p.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining

To hold hearings to examine S. 182, to provide for the unencumbering of title to non-Federal land owned by the city of Anchorage, Alaska, for purposes of economic development by conveyance of the Federal reversion interest to the City, S. 483, to designate the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Conservation Area in the State of California, S. 771, to provide to the Secretary of the Interior a mechanism to cancel contracts for the sale of materials CA–20139 and CA–22901, S. 776, to establish the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness in the State of New Mexico, to provide for the conveyance of certain parcels of National Forest System land in the State, S. 841, to designate certain Federal land in the San Juan National Forest in the State of Colorado as wilderness, S. 1305, to provide for the conveyance of the Forest Service Lake Hill Administrative Site in Summit County, Colorado, S. 1341, to modify the Forest Service Recreation Residence Program as the program applies to units of the National Forest System derived from the public domain by implementing a simple, equitable, and predictable procedure for determining cabin user fees, S. 1414, to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal land in the State of Oregon to the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, S. 1415, to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal land in the State of Oregon to the Cow Creek Band

of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and S. 1479, to address the forest health, public safety, and wildlife habitat threat presented by the risk of wildfire, including catastrophic wildfire, on National Forest System land and public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management by requiring the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to expedite forest management projects relating to hazardous fuels reduction, forest health, and economic development.

SD–366

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7563–S7582

Measures Introduced: Eighteen bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 1576–1593, S.J. Res. 26, and S. Res. 275. **Page S7574**

Measures Reported:

Special Report entitled ''Activities of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs During the 112th Congress''. (S. Rept. No. 113–115)

S. 376, to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 113–114) **Page S7574**

Measures Passed:

Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act: Senate passed S. 893, to provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2013, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans. **Page S7581**

National Technological Innovation Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 275, designating October 29, 2013, as ''National Technological Innovation Day'' to recognize that technological innovation is critical to the United States economy and commemorating the contributions of innovation to prosperity in the United States and abroad. **Page S7581**

Debt Limit Authority—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 10:00 a.m., on Tuesday, October, 29, 2013, the Republican Leader, or his designee, be recognized to move to proceed to consideration of S.J. Res. 26, relating to the disapproval of the President's exercise of authority to increase the debt limit; that the time until 12:30 p.m., be for debate on the motion to proceed, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two Leaders, or their designees; that at 2:15 p.m., Senate vote on adoption of the motion to proceed; that if the motion is successful, then the time for debate with respect to the joint resolution be equally divided between the two Leaders, or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the joint resolution be read a third time, and Senate vote on passage of the joint resolution; and that all other provisions of the statute governing consideration of the joint resolution remain in effect. **Page S7580**

Estevez Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Alan F. Estevez, of the District of Columbia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense. **Page S7565**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Wednesday, October 30, 2013. **Page S7565**

Archuleta Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Katherine Archuleta, of Colorado, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management. **Page S7565**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Alan F. Estevez, of the District of Columbia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense. **Page S7565**

Wheeler Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Thomas Edgar Wheeler, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission. **Page S7565**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Katherine Archuleta, of Colorado, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management. **Page S7565**

Lew Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Jacob J. Lew, of New York, to be United States Governor of the International Monetary Fund; United States Governor of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; United States Governor of the Inter-

American Development Bank; United States Governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. **Pages S7565–66**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Thomas Edgar Wheeler, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission. **Page S7566**

Watt Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Melvin L. Watt, of North Carolina, to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency. **Page S7566**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Jacob J. Lew, of New York, to be United States Governor of the International Monetary Fund; United States Governor of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; United States Governor of the Inter-American Development Bank; United States Governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. **Page S7566**

Millett Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Patricia Ann Millett, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit. **Page S7566**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Melvin L. Watt, of North Carolina, to be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency. **Page S7566**

Griffin Nomination—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Richard F. Griffin, Jr., of the District of Columbia, to be General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board, scheduled for 5:30 p.m., on Monday, October 28, 2013, be scheduled to occur on Tuesday, October 29, 2013, at a time to be determined by the Majority Leader, in consultation with the Republican Leader. **Page S7566**

A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that following disposition of S. J. Res. 26, relating to the disapproval of the President's exercise of authority to increase the debt limit, Senate resume consideration of the nomination with up to two minutes of debate, equally divided and controlled in the usual form, prior to the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination. **Page S7566**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Alfredo J. Balsera, of Florida, to be a Member of the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy for a term expiring July 1, 2014.

Jeh Charles Johnson, of New Jersey, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

7 Air Force nominations in the rank of general.

5 Army nominations in the rank of general.

1 Navy nomination in the rank of admiral.

Routine lists in the Army. **Pages S7581–82**

Nomination Withdrawn: Senate received notification of withdrawal of the following nomination:

Ronald J. Binz, of Colorado, to be a Member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the term expiring June 30, 2018, which was sent to the Senate on June 27, 2013. **Page S7582**

Messages from the House: **Page S7573**

Measures Referred: **Page S7573**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Page S7573**

Measures Read the First Time: **Page S7573**

Executive Communications: **Pages S7573–74**

Petitions and Memorials: **Page S7574**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S7574–77**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S7577–80**

Additional Statements: **Pages S7572–73**

Notices of Hearings/Meetings: **Page S7580**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S7580**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 2 p.m. and adjourned at 6:53 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, October 29, 2013. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S7581.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

U.S. MILITARY OPERATIONS IN LIBYA AND SOMALIA

Committee on Armed Services: On Thursday, October 17, 2013, Committee received a closed briefing on United States military operations in Libya and Somalia from Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, and A. Elizabeth Jones, Acting Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs, both of the Department of State; Garry Reid, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict, Brigadier General Scott A. Howell, USAF, Deputy Director for Special Operations/Counterterrorism, Joint Staff, and Rob Park,

Acting Deputy for Legal Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, all of the Department of Defense; Robert J. Holley, Deputy Assistant Director of Counterterrorism Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice; and Nicholas J. Rasmussen, Principal Deputy Director, National Counterterrorism Center.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 18 public bills, H.R. 3343–3360; and 2 resolutions, H.J. Res. 99; and H. Res. 392, were introduced.

Pages H6827–28

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H6828–29**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H. Res. 391, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 992) to amend provisions in section 716 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act relating to Federal assistance for swaps entities, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2374) to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide protections for retail customers, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 113–253). **Page H6827**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Wolf to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H6777**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:01 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H6777**

Committee to attend the funeral of the late Honorable C.W. Bill Young—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment on October 24, 2013 of the following Members of the House to the committee to attend the funeral of the late Honorable C.W. Bill Young: Representatives Ros-Lehtinen and Boehner; The members of the Florida delegation: Representatives Brown, Hastings, Mica, Crenshaw, Miller, Diaz-Balart, Wasserman Schultz, Bilirakis, Buchanan, Castor, Posey, Rooney, Deutch, Nugent, Ross, Southerland, Webster, Wilson, Grayson, DeSantis, Frankel, Garcia, Murphy, Radel, and Yoho; and Representatives Cantor, Pelosi, Hoyer, McCarthy (CA), Young (AK), Sensenbrenner, Rogers (KY), Wolf, Visclosky, Bishop (GA), Calvert, McKeon, Frelinghuysen, Jackson Lee, Latham, Price (NC), Aderholt, Granger, Sessions, Carter, Cole, King (IA), Gohmert, Roe (TN), Nunnelee, and Womack. **Page H6778**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:09 p.m. and reconvened at 4:01 p.m. **Page H6778**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Authorizing and requesting the President to award the Medal of Honor to Bennie G. Adkins and Donald P. Sloat of the United States Army for acts of valor during the Vietnam Conflict: H.R. 3304, to authorize and request the President to award the Medal of Honor to Bennie G. Adkins and Donald P. Sloat of the United States Army for acts of valor during the Vietnam Conflict and to authorize the award of the Medal of Honor to certain other veterans who were previously recommended for award of the Medal of Honor; **Pages H6778–80**

Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2013: H.R. 1742, to exclude from consideration as income under the United States Housing Act of 1937 payments of pension made under section 1521 of title 38, United States Code, to veterans who are in need of regular aid and attendance; **Pages H6780–82**

Establishing a commission or task force to evaluate the backlog of disability claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs: H.R. 2189, amended, to establish a commission or task force to evaluate the backlog of disability claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 404 yeas to 1 nay, Roll No. 561; **Pages H6782–94, H6806**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "To improve the processing of disability claims by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.". **Page H6806**

Veterans Economic Opportunity Act of 2013: H.R. 2481, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to codify and improve the election requirements for the receipt of educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance program of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

Pages H6794–H6804

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "To make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to benefits, and for other purposes.". **Page H6799**

Amending title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include an appeals form in any notice of decision issued

for the denial of a benefit sought: H.R. 1405, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include an appeals form in any notice of decision issued for the denial of a benefit sought; and **Pages H6800–04**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include a notice of disagreement form in any notice of decision issued for the denial of a benefit sought, to improve the supervision of fiduciaries of veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.". **Page H6804**

Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act of 2013: H.R. 2011, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a two-year extension of the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 404 yeas to 2 nays, Roll No. 562. **Pages H6804–06, H6806–07**

Recess: The House recessed at 5:47 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Page H6806**

Moment of Silence: The House observed a moment of silence in memory of Major Owens, former Member of Congress.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H6806 and H6807. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 9:51 p.m.

Committee Meetings

SWAPS REGULATORY IMPROVEMENT ACT; AND RETAIL INVESTOR PROTECTION ACT

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 992, the "Swaps Regulatory Improvement Act; and H.R. 2374, the "Retail Investor Protection Act".

The Committee granted, by voice vote, a closed rule for H.R. 992. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided among and controlled by the chairs and ranking minority members of the Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on Financial Services. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill. The rule provides one motion to recommit. In section 2, the rule granted a structured rule for H.R. 2374. The rule grants one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113–23 shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule makes in order only the further amendment printed in the Rules Committee report, if offered by Representative George Miller of California or his designee, which shall be considered as read, shall be separately debatable for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendment printed in the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. In section 3, the rule provides that a motion to proceed with regard to a joint resolution of disapproval specified in section 1002 of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2014, may be offered even if the joint resolution has not been reported or discharged, shall be in order only on the legislative day of October 29, 2013 or the legislative day of October 30, 2013, and shall be debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent. In section 4, the rule provides that on any legislative day during the period from October 31, 2013, through November 11, 2013: the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment. Finally, in section 5, the rule provides that the Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by section 4 of the resolution. Testimony was heard from Representatives Hensarling, Waters, and Conaway.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D997)*

H.R. 2775, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014. Signed on October 17, 2013. (Public Law 113–46)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2013

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine housing finance reform, focusing on the essentials of a functioning housing finance system for consumers, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet, to hold hearings to examine broadband adoption, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights, to hold hearings to examine "Stand Your Ground" laws, focusing on civil rights and public safety implications of the expanded use of deadly force, 10 a.m., SH–216.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled "Twenty-five years of Acquisition Reform: Where do we go from here?", 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation, hearing entitled "Report from SIGAR: Challenges to Securing Afghan Women's Gains in a Post-2014 Environment", 1 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, hearing entitled "Nuclear Weapons Modernization Programs: Military, Technical, and Political Requirements for the B61 Life Extension Program and Future Stockpile Strategy", 3:30 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions, hearing entitled "Strengthening the Multiemployer Pension System: How Will Proposed Reforms Affect Employers, Workers, and Retirees?", 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Energy and Power, hearing on H.R. 3301, the "North American Energy Infrastructure Act", 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled "EPA's Regulatory Threat to Affordable, Reliable Energy: The Perspective of Coal Communities", 1 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled "Federal Housing Administration: Implications of a $1.7 billion Taxpayer Bailout", 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit, hearing entitled "Examining Legislative Proposals to Reform the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau", 3 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled "Next Steps on Egypt Policy", 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa; and Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, hearing entitled "After the Withdrawal: The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Part II)", 2:15 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled "Guo Feixiong and Freedom of Expression in China", 2:30 p.m., 2255 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Full Committee, markup on the following legislation: H.R. 1095 to amend title 49, United States Code, to direct the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration) to transfer unclaimed money recovered at airport security checkpoints to nonprofit organizations that provide places of rest and recuperation at airports for members of the Armed Forces and their families, and for other purposes; H.R. 1204, the "Aviation Security Stakeholder Participation Act of 2013"; H.R. 1791, the "Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act"; H.R. 2719, "Transportation Security Acquisition Reform Act"; H.R. 2952, the "Critical Infrastructure Research and Development Advancement Act of 2013"; H.R. 3107, the "Homeland Security Cybersecurity Boots-on-the-Ground Act", 10 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 3309, the "Improving the Patent System to Promote American Innovation and Competitiveness Act", 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Full Committee, hearing entitled "Are More Judges Always the Answer?", 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation, hearing entitled "Threats, Intimidation and Bullying by Federal Land Managing Agencies", 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Water and Power, hearing entitled "A Roadmap for Increasing our Water and Hydropower Supplies: The Need for New and Expanded Multi-Purpose Surface Storage Facilities", 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, markup on the following legislation: The Stop Unworthy Spending Act of 2013; H.R. 3316, the "Grant Reform and New Transparency Act of 2013"; H.R. 2860, the "OPM IG Act of 2013"; H.R. 3343, to amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to clarify the rules regarding the determination of the compensation of the Chief Financial Officer of the District of Columbia, 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment; and Subcommittee on Energy, hearing entitled "EPA Power Plant Regulations: Is the Technology Ready?", 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, hearing entitled "Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Authorization Issues", 10:30 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Full Committee, markup on the following legislation: H.R. 3300, the "FEMA Reauthorization Act of 2013"; H.R. 311, the "Farmers Undertake Environmental Land Stewardship Act"; H.R. 935, the "Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2013"; and H.R. 2026, the "Silviculture Regulatory Consistency Act of 2013"; 2 p.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Ways and Means, Full Committee, hearing entitled "Status of the Affordable Care Act Implementation", 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Full Committee, hearing entitled "NSA Programs", 1:30 p.m., HVC–210.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD

Week of October 29 through November 1, 2013

Senate Chamber

On *Tuesday*, at approximately 10 a.m., Senate will begin consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S.J. Res. 26, relating to the disapproval of the President's exercise of authority to increase the debt limit. At 2:15 p.m., Senate will vote on adoption of the motion to proceed to consideration of S.J. Res. 26, to be followed by a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Richard F. Griffin, Jr., of the District of Columbia, to be General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board.

During the balance of the week, Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Senate Committees

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: October 29, to hold hearings to examine housing finance reform, focusing on the essentials of a functioning housing finance system for consumers, 10 a.m., SD–538.

October 30, Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment, to hold hearings to examine the ''JOBS Act'' at a year and a half, focusing on assessing progress and unmet opportunities, 10 a.m., SD–538.

October 31, Full Committee, business meeting to consider the nominations of Wanda Felton, of New York, to be First Vice President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and Katherine M. O'Regan, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine housing finance reform, focusing on a government guarantee for mortgage-backed securities, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: October 29, Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet, to hold hearings to examine broadband adoption, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

Committee on Finance: October 30, to hold hearings to examine the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, 11 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: October 31, business meeting to consider S. Res. 268, condemning the September 2013 terrorist attack at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, and reaffirming United States support for the people and Government of Kenya, and the nominations of Gregory B. Starr, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, Mark Bradley Childress, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the United Republic of Tanzania, Thomas Frederick Daughton, of Arizona, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Namibia, Matthew T. Harrington, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho, Eunice S. Reddick, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Niger, John Hoover, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone, Michael Stephen Hoza, of Washington, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon, Tomasz P. Malinowski, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Crystal Nix-Hines, of California, for the rank of Ambassador during her tenure of service as the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Pamela K. Hamamoto, of Hawaii, to be Representative to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, with the rank of Ambassador, Philip S. Goldberg, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of the Philippines, Robert O. Blake, Jr., of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia, Karen Clark Stanton, of Michigan, to be Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Timothy M. Broas, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Donald Lu, of California, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Albania, Robert A. Sherman, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Portuguese Republic, Anne W. Patterson, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, Adam M. Scheinman, of Virginia, to be Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation, with the rank of Ambassador, Rose Eilene Gottemoeller, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, Frank A. Rose, of Massachusetts, to be Assistant Secretary for Verification and Compliance, Dwight L. Bush, Sr., of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco, James Walter Brewster, Jr., of Illinois, to be Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, Brian A. Nichols, of Rhode Island, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Peru, and Carlos Roberto Moreno, of California, to be Ambassador to Belize, all of the Department of State, 10 a.m., SD–419.

October 31, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine Syria, 10:15 a.m., SD–419.

October 31, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Daniel W. Yohannes, of Colorado, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, with the rank of Ambassador, Department of State, 2:15 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: October 30, business meeting to consider S. 1562, to reauthorize the Older Americans Act of 1965, S. 1557, to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize support for graduate medical education programs in children's hospitals, S. 1561, to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve provisions relating to the sanctuary system for surplus chimpanzees, H.R. 2094, to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the preference given, in awarding certain asthma-related grants, to certain States (those allowing trained school personnel to administer epinephrine and meeting other related requirements), S. 1302, to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for cooperative and small employer charity pension plans, H.R. 2747, to amend title 40, United States Code, to transfer certain functions from the Government Accountability Office to the Department

of Labor relating to the processing of claims for the payment of workers who were not paid appropriate wages under certain provisions of such title, and the nominations of Michael Keith Yudin, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, and James Cole, Jr., of New York, to be General Counsel, both of the Department of Education, and Chai Rachel Feldblum, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and any pending nominations, 9:15 a.m., SD–430.

October 31, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine attaining a quality degree, focusing on innovations to improve student success, 10 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: October 31, to hold hearings to examine government clearances and background checks, focusing on the Navy Yard tragedy, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on Indian Affairs: October 30, business meeting to consider S. 235, to provide for the conveyance of certain property located in Anchorage, Alaska, from the United States to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, S. 611, to make a technical amendment to the T'uf Shur Bien Preservation Trust Area Act, and S. 920, to allow the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in the State of Minnesota to lease or transfer certain land; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine S. 1074, to extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Easter Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe, S. 1132, to provide for the recognition of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, and S. 161, to extend the Federal recognition to the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana, 2:30 p.m., SD–628.

Committee on the Judiciary: October 29, Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights, to hold hearings to examine ''Stand Your Ground'' laws, focusing on civil rights and public safety implications of the expanded use of deadly force, 10 a.m., SH–216.

October 30, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of John B. Owens, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, Matthew Frederick Leitman, Judith Ellen Levy, Laurie J. Michelson, and Linda Vivienne Parker, all to be a United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, and Peter Joseph Kadzik, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, 2:30 p.m., SD–226.

October 31, Full Committee, business meeting to consider S. 42, to provide anti-retaliation protections for antitrust whistleblowers, S. 822, to protect crime victims' rights, to eliminate the substantial backlog of DNA samples collected from crime scenes and convicted offenders, to improve and expand the DNA testing capacity of Federal, State, and local crime laboratories, to increase research and development of new DNA testing technologies, to develop new training programs regarding the collection and use of DNA evidence, to provide post conviction testing of DNA evidence to exonerate the innocent, to improve the performance of counsel in State capital cases, and the nominations of Robert Leon Wilkins, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit, Brian J. Davis, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, Timothy L. Brooks, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Arkansas, James Donato, Beth Labson Freeman, and Vince Girdhari Chhabria, all to be a United States District Judge for the Northern District of California, Pedro A. Delgado Hernandez, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico, Carolyn B. McHugh, of Utah, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit, Pamela L. Reeves, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee, and James Maxwell Moody, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: October 30, to hold hearings to examine pending health care and benefits legislation, 2 p.m., SR–418.

Select Committee on Intelligence: October 29, to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

October 31, Full Committee, to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2 p.m., SH–219.

House Committees

Committee on Energy and Commerce, October 30, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''PPACA Implementation Failures: Answers from HHS'', 9 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, October 30, Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats, hearing entitled ''China's Maritime and other Geographic Threats'', 10 a.m., 2255 Rayburn.

October 30, Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa; and Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled ''Establishing a Syrian War Crimes Tribunal?'', 1:30 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, October 30, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications; and Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies, hearing entitled ''Cyber Incident Response: Bridging the Gap Between Cybersecurity and Emergency Management'', 9 a.m., 311 Cannon.

October 30, Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency, hearing entitled ''Facility Protection: Implications of the Navy Yard Shooting on Homeland Security'', 9:30 a.m., 210 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, October 30, Over-Criminalization Task Force, meeting entitled ''Regulatory Crime: Identifying the Scope of the Problem'', 9:30 a.m., 2237 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, October 30, Full Committee, markup on the following legislation: H.R. 298, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to evaluate the significance of the Mill Springs Battlefield located in Pulaski and Wayne Counties, Kentucky, and the feasibility of its inclusion in the National Park System, and for other purposes; H.R. 585,

the ''Anchorage Land Conveyance Act of 2013''; H.R. 1308, the ''Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Preservation Act''; H.R. 1846, the ''Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site Amendments Act''; H.R. 2798, to amend Public Law 106–206 to direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to require annual permits and assess annual fees for commercial filming activities on Federal land for film crews of 5 persons or fewer; H.R. 2799, to establish the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council Advisory Committee to advise the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture on wildlife and habitat conservation, hunting, recreational shooting, and for other purposes; and H.R. 2954, to authorize Escambia County, Florida, to convey certain property that was formerly part of Santa Rosa Island National Monument and that was conveyed to Escambia County subject to restrictions on use and reconveyance; 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, October 30, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''A Culture of Mismanagement and Wasteful Conference Spending at the Department of Veterans' Affairs'', 9:30 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, October 30, Subcommittee on Energy, hearing entitled ''Providing the Tools for Scientific Discovery and Basic Energy Research: The Department of Energy Science Mission'', 9:30 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, October 30, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, hearing entitled ''Focused Issues on Dignified Burials: A National Cemetery Update'', 10 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Joint Meetings

Conference: October 30, meeting of conferees on H.R. 2642, to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018, 1 p.m., 1100–LHOB.

Conference: October 30, meeting of conferees on S. Con. Res. 8, a concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2014, revising the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal year 2013, and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2015 through 2023, 10 a.m., HC–5, Capitol.

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: October 30, to receive a briefing on the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, focusing on how the movement has impacted Europe and the continuing work of the United States in advancing human rights for minorities in Europe, 2 p.m., 2255, Rayburn Building.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Tuesday, October 29

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Senate will begin consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S.J. Res. 26, Debit Limit Authority. At 2:15 p.m., Senate will vote on adoption of the motion to proceed to consideration of the joint resolution.

Following disposition of S.J. Res. 26, Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Richard F. Griffin, Jr., of the District of Columbia, to be General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board.

(Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for their respective party conferences.)

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Tuesday, October 29

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Consideration of H.R. 2374—Retail Investor Protection Act (Subject to a Rule).

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